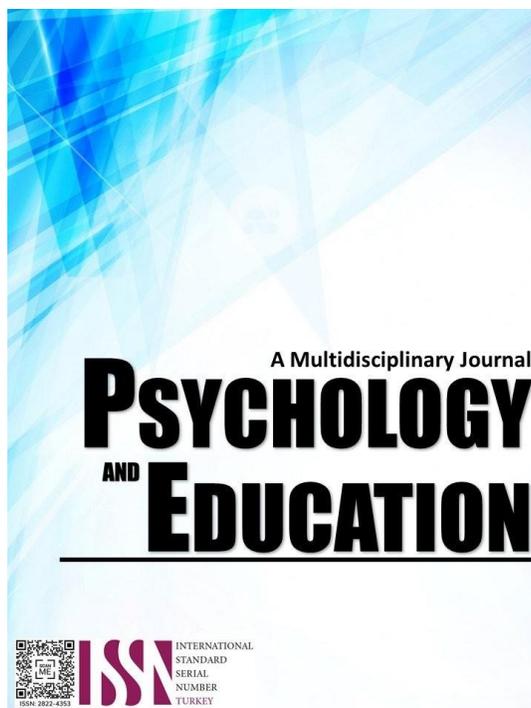


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In Between Spotlights: The Experience of Ingratiation of Middle Children in the Family

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Abstract

This study explored and described the experiences of ingratiation of middle children in the family. The findings of the study gained insights from the six residents of Koronadal City who grew up being a middle child in the family. This study utilized qualitative descriptive research design exploring the experiences of the participant. The researchers sought to describe the experiences of ingratiation of middle children in the family as young professionals. Thematic analysis, coding, and categorization of the transcript from the semi-structured interview conducted by the researchers were administered. The result showed that middle children have developed a sense of self-reliance upon themselves instead of being dependent to family support. The thing self-reliance found to be the stepping stone of what they have become today. Furthermore, it was shown in the result that middle children have an innate nature of striving because of their driving force, regardless of their upbringing.

Keywords: *ingratiation, middle children, experiences, family, young professionals*

Introduction

For the last 25 years, about 20-25 percent of children were middle children and that number has not dropped until today (Cohen, 2018). In a study conducted in the United States, second-born children are often labeled as the peacemakers among the siblings, they are also generalized as sociable, not as family-oriented as their other siblings, feeling overshadowed, and receiving less attention from their parents. Being a middle child is often linked to experiencing the so-called “middle child syndrome” as stated in the theory of Alfred Adler. Middle child syndrome is often perceived as pitiful or negative. Because of this, middle children tend to show interest in gaining the attention of their parents. Due to those circumstances, they would strive to please others beyond their limits to be accepted this phenomenon is called Ingratiation. Middle-born children are more likely to commit this phenomenon. Oftentimes, this leads to serious issues that could damage the person (Tsang, 2011).

The process of ingratiating by a middle child is affected by many factors that could breed negative or positive reactions. A positive reaction is frequently manifested in being strong-willed to strive for a better outcome just as excelling in studies, honing talents/skills, and working hard even without the supervision of the parents to do good to others, especially to the family that they please. On the other hand, negative reactions could lead to being rebellious, cocky, and ignorant. They stated that middle children experience a sense of unworthiness that may stem from the fact that their accomplishments, personality, and talents may be overshadowed by other family members. The feeling of unworthiness is invoked by being caught in the middle of the limelight of attention span and validation of the eldest and the youngest sibling coming from the parents which is why their presence is undervalued among the siblings that causes them to ingratiate in the family. (Cayato et. al., 2021).

In a family, middle children experience comparison because their parents have expectations from their children given the fact that older siblings set the standard and younger siblings tend to be seen as the “baby”, middle children are expected to do or achieve the same stage as the older sibling (Blah, 2019). Culturally, Filipino families are fond of favoritism in which they give much attention to the eldest and youngest. Most attention was given to the firstborn since they are expected to support the family which is why they were given privileges and ensured good education, while the youngest are the ones who are showered with attention and blessings. Unlike these two, middle children were often not seen in the family (Wiener, 2012). With this, the researchers would like to know the experiences of ingratiation in middle children, given that they are most neglected in the family as mentioned by Adler in his theory, and how is it experienced by them. Moreover, they will discuss what is the driving force for middle children to ingratiate in certain ways, whether positive or negative. Furthermore, there has not been much research conducted on this specific situation; thus, the researchers seek to contribute to existing literature.

Research Questions

This study aimed to describe the ingratiation experience of middle children in the family.

Methodology

Research Design

This study aimed to explore the experience of ingratiation of middle children in the family. The researchers utilized a qualitative research design using descriptive phenomenology. The descriptive phenomenological design focuses on understanding the phenomena that have touched an individual. Descriptive research design aims to systematically obtain information to describe a phenomenon or situation. More specifically, it helps answer the what, when, where, and how questions regarding the research problem rather than the why.

Descriptive phenomenology allows the researchers to analyze facts and helps researchers in developing an in-depth understanding of the research problem and it enables researchers to determine the behavior of people in a natural setting. Its goal is to obtain the most uncontaminated data possible. Sometimes researchers record personal notes about what they learn from the subjects. This increases the data's trustworthiness and enables researchers to filter out these influences to create objective narratives. The researchers have thought well that this particular design is the most appropriate to use in determining the experiences of the ingratiation of middle children in the family.

Participants

In determining the participants of the study, the researchers utilized purposive sampling in which participants are selected on purpose for the main reason that they have the characteristics and qualities that are needed in the study. The target number of participants is six (6) who are middle children in the family. The researchers provided inclusion criteria as a basis.

The common characteristics of the participants are categorized as young professionals working in different sectors. The chosen participants were required to have an occupation for them to properly express how they ingratiate to their family as an adult. Also, the requirement of them having a job towards taking part in this study serves to avoid the sense of being overlooked by the family for having the lack of something to prove to them. The aspect that defined their uniqueness is their very own experience varying from being a middle child in the family. Participants who reside within Koronadal City were also considered. Another factor that specifies the participants is the age range. The basis of the age range is from 23 to 30 years old.

Participants in this study were given the freedom whether or not to be in this study, if they volunteered to be in this study, they will be participating in the whole interview duration and validation of analysis, and they may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits of which they are otherwise entitled. They may also refuse to answer any questions that they do not want to answer. There is no penalty if a participant withdraws from the study.

Individuals who do not have any siblings, individuals who only have one sibling or more but are not a middle child are not fit to be participant of the study. It also excludes individuals who are 22 years old and below and do not have a job. Moreover, individuals who live outside Koronadal City. These are the exclusion criteria that were considered in selecting participants.

Instrument

The researchers used a semi-structured interview guide as a tool in this study to collect data. The interview guide contains questions that answer the statement of the problem. In order to gather the data for this academic paper, the appropriate way to obtain the information needed is to conduct an interview with the participants as it enables them to expound and explain further their own perspective of their lived experiences as a middle child of the family that may have gone through the phase of ingratiation.

The interview guide questionnaires were validated through the guidance and clarification of Professors and experts in order to deliver correct and appropriate questions to be administered. The interview guide was divided into four (4) categories: Category A questions was intended to describe the family background of middle children, Category B questions are intended to describe the situation of middle children as they grew up, Category C are intended to describe the feelings of middle children growing up, and lastly, Category D is to describe the realization of middle children upon growing up. The interview guide questions aimed to create a story out of the context of the participants' answers.

Procedure

In order to have a successful data gathering, the researchers followed the steps to produce quality paper and unbiased results from the participants. The data gathering collection required the participants to participate for one (1) day as an expected duration of participants' involvement to ensure accurate and reliable data. The following are the steps that were followed:

First, the researchers identified potential participants for the study. With the use of permits that was reviewed by the Ethics Board, the researchers prepared forms for the participants to sign. The researchers then went to the place of the potential participants and build rapport.

Second, the researchers first provided informed consent, which includes information about the study's purpose, the procedures involved, the risks and benefits, and their rights as a participant in this study. The participants were given an option whether they want to provide basic demographic information such as name, age, course, year, and occupation, or they would neglect to comply

After determining the final participants, the participants were reminded about their consent form, reviewed the content of the form, and were informed that they can withdraw from this study whenever they are uncomfortable talking about their experiences. An in-depth interview was then conducted, following the content of the objectives, and it answered the statement of the problem. The duration of the study is initially estimated within three months. The researchers had made sure not to offend or have insensitive actions or words in the process of asking questions.

After this, the researchers gave a token of appreciation to the participants. Debriefing and desensitizing were included if ever there will be an emergent event happening after the interview. The researchers made sure to tell the participants that the data gathered would only

be used for educational purposes and not on other platforms that may harm the participants.

Data Analysis

This section enumerates and explains the steps of collecting, decoding, analyzing, and encoding the data being gathered by the researchers for the growth of this research study. The process of transcribing the data required the use of in-depth interviews, audio recordings, notes, and encoding. Within the interview, the researchers were able to comprehend the verbal responses of the participants and explore the meanings behind the answers. In using notes, the data coming from the answers of the participants would be written by the assigned researcher just in case of any technical malfunction of the device used in capturing their responses.

The researchers utilized the audio recordings that served as another tool to use in getting the data from the participants because they immortalized the verbal statements of the participants in an electronic device and also, it was able to replay some unclear words said so the researchers were able to have a clear understanding of the recorded statements. Moreover, the recordings were used as a source of information that helped the study to delve deeper to its purpose. In encoding all the gathered information, it will need filtering just in case some of the statements are rhetoric and unnecessary to include in the research paper. Another one is the use of thematic analysis. Within the use of it, the ideas will be clustered so that they will be in a proper order of thoughts arranged by the researchers to become more comprehensible for the future readers of the study.

Furthermore, a thematic analysis enabled the researchers to look through sets of data patterns that will be decoded to find their meaning and interpret the themes being shown resulted by conducting this kind of study. The researchers utilized the Braun and Clarke thematic analysis method which includes a process consisting of six steps: First becoming familiar with the data. Second generating codes. Third generating themes. Fourth reviewing themes. Fifth defining and naming themes. Lastly, locating exemplars.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher secured an exemption certification from the ethics committee regarding the possible effects of the data gathering procedure on the participants of the study.

Before participating in the study, the researchers provided informed consent that includes every important detail that has been included in the study. This form emphasized the title of the study, the objectives, the goal, the process, and reminders that participants should know. The form also served as a reminder that participants are free to refuse whenever they feel uncomfortable. Also, this reminds them that participating in this study is voluntary and the researchers do not force any participant to join.

Following the Codes of Ethics, the following are observed in the process of this study; Respect for rights and dignity. The researchers make sure that there will be no biases, prejudices, or stereotyping that will happen throughout the interview. The researchers ensured respect for every participant, including their opinions and differences. Furthermore, participants are free to withdraw anytime if they feel uncomfortable during the process. Confidentiality was observed. Any misleading information and biased data must be avoided to assure honesty, transparency, and integrity. In this study, transparency was observed. It was considered vital for the researcher that all parties would be transparent in their environment in the study to ensure that the process, the nature of the study, and the extent of participation are clear and understandable to the participants. The researcher made it clear that the participants would be transparent, especially the information that they may have. In this study, the privacy and confidentiality of the information gathered from the participants were ensured to be kept confidential. Names and other personal information were asked but their identities were safeguarded to enable them to participate without any fear of revelation or involvement. Any information that was required to be confidential was handled with utmost confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Presented below are the answers of the participants based on the questions from the Interview Guide Questions. The statement of the problem, that aims to describe the ingratiation experience of middle children in the family. The Interview Guide Question was divided into four categories to answer the Statement of the Problem. Each category consists of questions that focus mainly on the thought idea of the category.

This section presents the interpretation and findings the researchers have made from the gathered data. Themes emerged from the data are presented in answering the statement of the problem.

The table illustrates the themes emerged from the data, specifically in terms of family relationship tight-knitted kind of relationship within the family, and strained relationship because of such conflicts that the participant mentioned.

Tight-knitted was one of the themes that emerged in this section as mentioned by the participant. Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 mentioned their closeness with their family, and how they cherish each other. Participants 1 and 6 shared that they are still close with their family even when they have their own families, maintaining their relationship as a family most especially with their siblings. Participants 2 and 5 also mentioned their closeness as a family. Participant 5 also mentioned their sweetness every time they saw each other. Participant 4 is also close with his family since they live in the same household, and that their closeness with his sister got stronger, also with their younger sibling whom they help with his assignments.

Table 1. *Category A. Family Background; a. Family Relationship*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Close man kami sang mga utod ko biskan may kanya kanya na kaming pamilya na magkapatid.	Closeness of siblings remains even they have their own family now	Tight knitted
P2: Close man kami ngayon ng mga kapatid ko pati parent ko ah.	Remained close with the family	
P4: Sa subong mas close kami ni ate. Sa manghud ko naman kung gapatudlo siya assignment lang. Sa parents ko okay lang man daw normal lang kay siyempre ara lang kami sa isa nga balay.	Family relationship is fine because they live in one house	
P5: Close gid tamon pag updanay kami diri sa balay, talagsa lang man kami gakitaay pero kung magkitaay amo na ih close kag sweet gid kami.	Siblings are very close and cherish one another	Strained Relationship
P6: Kami sang mga utod ko close gid na pero kay subong may mga sarili na nga pamilya kis nalang gakitaay.	Remains close although they seldom see each other	
P3: Sa amon ano kami, lahi na gid before na grabe amon closeness kesa subong kay daw budlay na mag heal ang tungsod sa inaway.	The past arguments made it hard for the family to regain their prior propinquity	

The last theme that emerged in this section is Strained Relationship, in which Participant 3 shared about their conflicts that made them in conflict with. She also mentioned how their father felt dismayed about how their relationship as a family drifted away just because of different priorities they have.

The participants grew up in different households with different family relationships, and that made them who they are right now. There are participants who grew up having conflicts with their siblings which affected their relationship as a family and made their father feel dismayed. There are also participants who grew up having a close bond with each of his/her siblings, yet they still strive to ingratiate and prove themselves. It is for this reason that regardless of how middle children were raised within their family, there is innate nature of them to strive even without imposing pressure on them.

Table 1.1. *Category A. Family Background; b. Family Status*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Noong mga bata pa kami maremember ko pag uwian naga madali gid kami ng kapatid ko kasi magtulog pa kami sa bukid.	The siblings were trained to have a responsibility towards helping their parents to work on the farm	Financially challenged
P3: Hindi man gid kami datu, pobre man lang kami. Pero si nanay kag tatay naga tinguha gid sa amon nga maprovide-dan kami.	The family is underprivileged but both parents work diligently to provide just enough for their children's needs.	Financially stable
P2: Ginabigay man nila mga needs naming pero gina una nila si ate ganyan. Ma provide muna una kay ate bago sa amin.	Parents can provide for the needs of their children but the firstborn child is prioritized among the siblings.	Survival
P5: Nagdako kami broken family na kami mo, hiwalay na si mama kag papang pero kaya man ni mama nga buhion kami.	Mother can sustainably provide the needs of her children by herself.	
P6: Okay lang man gyapon biskan wala amon ginikanan kay hindi bala kami nagdako sa ila	Siblings were fine without the presence of their parents	

This section describes the family status in the life of each participant. There are three themes that emerged financially challenged, financially stable, and survival.

Financially Challenged is one of the themes that emerged in this section. Participant 1 and 3 described their struggles as a family as they grew up. Participant 1 described how they were trained to go home early from school to help provide for their needs. The same goes with Participant 3 who stated that they were not rich before but their parents strived to provide and support them financially, even at the minimum stage of providing.

The second theme is Financially Stable, in which Participants 2 and 5 shared the same thoughts on how their parents can provide for their necessities. Participant 2 described how their parents would provide, although her elder sister benefits it first, they are still provided. Participant 5 also described how they grew up being in a broken family yet their mother provided them with what they wanted. As mentioned in the first table, Participant 5 grew up being close with his siblings in which they were provided equally by their mother.

The last theme is Survival, in which Participant 6 describes how they were fine without their parents. They survived with their helping-each-other mindset and their willingness to survive without the help of other people. There is a need for survival in the case of Participant 6 since they do not have parents to depend on, they just have themselves as siblings, striving to get a better life. Linking this to study, middle children are surrounded by diverse personalities and varying demands. This environment forces them to adapt quickly and flexibly to different situations. This adaptability nurtures resilience, open-mindedness, and a willingness to embrace change, allowing them to excel in dynamic and unpredictable environments (Adams, 2023). Based on Participant 6, he learns to adapt in different social situations more easily and navigate various personalities and perspectives, developing strong social and communication skills early on.

These themes that emerged from the statements of the participants reflected on how they perceived their family status while growing up. From that, middle children saw reasons why they needed to strive and become employed individuals to support their families and siblings.

Table 1.2. *Category A. Family Background; c. Relationship with parents*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Si papa ang favorite ko gid kay si papa abi maunawain tapos okay lang na magkamali pero si mama kasi noon grabe kastrikto sa amin, konting mali magalit agad.	Grew up with opposite parent characters. Father is lenient while mother is strict	Balance parenting
P2: Close kami noon dati ni mommy kay pakiramdam ko gud na si mama yung masandalan ko sa lahat ng bagay. Takot ako kay daddy, masabi ko gid na stikto siya.	Grew up with her mother being someone to lean on while the father has a stern personality.	
P4: Mas close ko kay mama kay comfortable ko sa iya magshare problem kay si papa strikto.	Feels comfortable to share with his lenient mother than to his firm father	Kinship care
P5: May pamilya na nga lain si papa pero galakat gyapon siya sa amon kung may okasyon	The father is still present during occasions even if he currently has another family	
P6: Actually, wala man kami nagdako sa parents namon, sa lola kag lolo kami gid nagdako tatlo.	Parents abandoned their responsibility to their own children	

Relationships with parents is something that middle children would look at if there is something wrong with how their parents treat them and how they perceive their parents as they grow up. This table shows the themes that emerge from the statements of the participants upon asking their relationship with their parents. There are three themes namely: balanced parenting, and kinship care.

Balanced Parenting, as explained by Giroux (2022), is about finding the right mix to meet a child's needs. It focuses on creating a healthy balance between love and discipline. Just as how the participants stated that one parent is gentle, while the other is strict for instance, the statement of Participant 1, he describes his closeness to his father because of being lenient, and how he perceives his mother as strict. Participant 2 also describes her relationship with her mother, since she felt like she can depend on her, while her father is firm. Participant 4 also describes how he felt comfortable upon sharing problems with his mother, while his father is also firm. Based on the participants, they have one gentle, dependable, and comfortable parent, and one firm and strict parent, which balances in the relationship. Participant 5 described how their relationship in their father is different. He often just comes whenever there are occasions in the family. Knowing that Participant 5 grew up with a broken family, he stated their relationship with their father, whom they only see every time there is an occasion in the family.

The last theme that emerged is Kinship care, in which Participant 6 also grew up with a broken family like Participant 5. In this case, both parents left them without any support and gave up their responsibility. Their relationship as siblings was strong and close, but with their parents, it is the opposite. The obligations and responsibilities that their parents should do, it was passed on to their grandparents in which they grew up with them.

Memorable incidents occur when an individual never forgets one or more event in his/her life that even now, it is marked in his/her mind. In this section, the participants described their memorable incidents while growing up, and the themes that emerged are Self-reliant, Special Occasion, being Valued, Reminiscence, and Strong sibling relationship. As Participants 1 and 2 describe their memorable incidents, they tackled being Self-reliant at a young age. Participant 1 never forgets the feeling of being independent when he worked at Ace to support his family. Knowing that he took the role of his elder brother in supporting their family financially, he learned to be independent and applied for jobs just to provide. The same goes with Participant 2 upon realizing that nobody will be there to attend to her needs, she better learned to stand on her own and to never give up. She never forgets that realization upon a certain situation and that drove her to be independent and support herself by building her own business.

Participant 3 described the Special occasion as her memorable incident since her elder sister received a celebration during her birthday and she considered it special since that was the only time their whole family gathered to celebrate. Although she felt insecure about the

celebration that their parents prepared for her sister, she still considered it special thus valued the moment that the because ther able to spend rime to settle.

Table 2. *Category B. Situation Growing Up; a. Memorable Incident*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Nung time na nagawork na ako pero sa ACE, guard ako noon mga 18 ata edad ko, di ko siya makalimutan kay na feel ko na independent ako that time.	Have attained financial freedom and can	Self-reliant
P2: Basta hindi ko lang gid makalimutan nagtatak lang gid sa akin nga situation noon nga kahit ano kahirap ng buhay, hindi gid talaga mag give up kasi hindi man ako asikasuhin nila mommy ko kaya ayushin ko sarili ko.	Independently support himself Determined to persevere in striving alone without her mother's guidance	
P3: Kis a lang kami magtapok nga lima, siguro kung mga birthday lang. Si ate abi biskan at the age of 27, biskan tigulang na si ate ginahandaan gid siya.	The whole family gathers during the birthday of the eldest sister	Special Occasion
P4: Sa family ko tung 21 st birthday ko kay di ko abi expect nga tagaan ko sang flower nga may kwarta.	Receiving unexpected gift from parents during his debut	Valued
P5: Atung family picture ko sang gamay pa ko kay kumpleto kami.	A complete presence of his family	Reminiscence
P6: Siguro tung kada magpuli si kuya diri sa Marbel ginalibre niya kami sang bunso namon nga maglagaw sa mga nami nga destinations na gusto namon makadtuan	Eldest brother treats them to their desired destination	Strong sibling relationship

Being Valued is being appreciated and cherished by people, and it was the theme that emerged from the answer of Participant 4 upon asking about his memorable incident. He described how he felt during his 21st birthday when his parents prepared a surprise for him, giving him a bouquet of money, and considered it as his memorable incident.

Participant 5, who grew up having a broken family and an intermittent father, valued their family picture as Reminiscence when they were still together as a family. With that, he considered it as his memorable incident since they are not complete anymore and their father is only present on occasions. Having their family picture reminded him of them, being a complete family, and that emerged as a theme in this section.

Lastly, Strong sibling relationship emerged as a theme from the response of Participant 6 as he considered their travels as his memorable experience, especially whenever his elder brother came home and treated them to places that they wanted to visit. Each participant has different answers with regard to their memorable incident, which also leads to having different themes that emerged in this section. Each theme answers the question of their memorable incidents as they grew up.

Table 2.1. *Category B. Situation Growing Up; b. Family Handling Conflicts*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Pag may gaaway sa pamilya ginahayaan naman lang kay normal man lang ang bikilanay kag maayos man na in time.	Family does not delve on the conflict as it will be resolved	Conflict management
P3: Si tatay abi ginaisturya niya ko sina kay sa amon tatlo, ako gid nang dali isturyahon. Dali ko lang maintindihan kag dali lang ko magpaubos.	The father gently talks to the middle child because she is the empathetic one among the siblings	
P5: Kung kunwari may galain sa amon buot sa pamilya namon, may isa ka adlaw nga daw meeting. Ginasturyahan namon na siya kung ano problema para bala before kung may mag halin okay na ang tanan.	The family gathers to resolve the problems and arguments that arises	
P2: Hindi sila bias sila mommy kapag may mag away sa amin magkapatid noon. Tatak yan nila sa isip namin na kung sino magkamali, dapat may parusa gid. Tapos, wala nila ginapafeel sa amin na may ginakampihan sila.	Family has no favoritism among the siblings and punishes them fairly if one is at fault	
P4: Pag gaaway kami, ginahambalan kami nga pantay-pantay kami nga palangga ah.	Parents view their children fairly even at the time of conflicts	Equal treatment
P6: Actually, pag gaaway kami, wala gid sing may labot kay hindi man nila bal-an kay siyempre si mommy ara sa abroad tas si papa naman ara	Parents casted aside their responsibility	Responsibility

sa Agusan.	with their children and is not involved with their matters	relinquishment
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Every family handle conflicts differently, which is why in this table, it shows a different way on how each family of the participants handle conflicts. Themes are conflict management, equal treatment, and responsibility relinquishment.

Participants 1, 3, and 5 shared the same theme, Conflict management, in which they have their own ways of resolving conflicts. Participant 1 described how his family does not delve much into the conflict itself and let time pass and the conflict will solve itself. It is their way of managing their conflict, through letting time pass for their conflict to be solved. Participant 3 described how her father would talk to her and would instill humility and understanding towards her siblings. She was the one who could easily understand every situation and that gave her father the chance to talk about it and how he would manage conflicts between his children. Participant 5 also describes how their family would settle their problems; they would talk about it until they solved their conflicts.

The second theme that emerged from the data is Equal treatment, in which Participants 2 and 4 shared almost the same experience about being treated equally by their parents. Participant 2 elaborated on how their parents would punish the ones who are at fault and are not biased in handling sibling conflicts. She also added how their parents would not make them feel like they have their favorites, they were seen equally and unbiased. Participant 4 described how they were told by their parents that they were loved equally, especially those times of conflict.

Responsibility relinquishment is the last theme to emerge based on the statement of Participant 6. Growing up having a broken family means having conflicts that no one knows about. Since their parents are far from each other, their responsibilities in handling their children’s conflicts were not fulfilled, which leads the siblings to handle it on their own. As what Participant 6 mentioned in the previous tables, they instilled a solid bond among siblings and that they support and help each other in order to survive on their own since they do not have their parents to guide them.

Table 2.2. Category B. Situation Growing Up; c. Alliances between siblings

Text Segments	Code/Concept	Themes
P1: Kung sa kampi kampi naman, ang magulang ko nga utod ang mahilig sina pero kung sa ginikanan wala sila gapakialam, garemind lang na sila nga magbigay galang kung sino mas nakakatanda sayo. Kis a garalain man ko kay may time nga mali siya pero kay tawag nga kuya no choice gid.	The eldest sibling is more likely to be favored because of being the firstborn child in the family.	Unfair treatment
P3: Ang bunso namon bal an niya kung sino ang tama didto siya gakampi. Pero kung kami mag away sang bunso, si ate sa bunso lang gid siya gakampi. Lisod kay gakampi na siya against sa akon. Sakit gid siya sa dughan ko, feel ko di nila ko utod amo na ginahuna huna ko.	The youngest takes side to who is in the right while the eldest always takes the of the youngest in every quarrel	
P4: Oo ang manghod namon gakampi gid na siya sakon kay hindi na siya kay ate kay maldita gid abi na.	The youngest always takes side of the middle sibling because the eldest is ill-tempered	Equal treatment
P2: Kung kami gaaway ni ate, kapag nagasobra na si ate ng mga salita na sabihin niya na nagalabas sa bibig niya, nandiyan si JR na magpagitna.	The youngest sibling is the mediator when the feud escalates	
P5: Wala gid may ginakampihan kay kami gid na magsturyahanay nga mag-ulutod.	There is no occurrence of taking sides between siblings in an argument	
P6: Wala man kay siyempre wala kami nagdako sa ginikanan. Ang mindset nalang namon sina kay kami nang mag-utod, magkampihanay hindi nga mag-inaway pa ba.	No bias or taking sides arises amidst a sibling argument.	

Alliances between siblings as experienced by middle children have two contradicting themes, which are equal treatment and unfair treatment.

Participants 1, 3, and 4 had matching themes, Unfair treatment, in which they described how alliances among siblings happen in the family. Participant 1 stated "Kung sa kampi kampi naman, ang magulang ko nga utod ang mahilig sina pero kung sa ginikanan wala sila gapakialam, garemind lang na sila nga magbigay galang kung sino mas nakakatanda sayo. Kis a garalain man ko kay may time nga mali siya pero kay tawag nga kuya no choice gid" In their family the eldest sibling is more likely to be favored because he is the eldest. Participant 3 said "Ang bunso namon bal'an niya kung sino ang tama didto siya gakampi" which means when two people argue, the youngest always sides with the person who is in the right, whereas the eldest always sides with the youngest. Participant 4 affirmed "Oo ang manghod namon gakampi gid na siya sakon kay hindi na siya kay ate kay maldita gid abi na" due to the eldest's bad temper, the youngest always sides with the middle sibling.

The subsequent theme that emerged is Equal treatment, in which Participants 2, 5, and 6 has the same experience, Participant 2 said "kapag nagasobra na si ate ng mga salita na sabihin niya na nagalabas sa bibig niya, nandiyan si JR na magpagitna" which means when

the rivalry grows, the younger sibling acts as the mediator. Participant 5 stated "Wala gid may ginakampihan kay kami gid na magsturyahanay nga mag-ulutod" this indicates that in their household, there is no taking sides in sibling conflicts. Participant 6 shared his experience, he says "Wala man kay siyempre wala kami nagdako sa ginikanan. Ang mindset nalang namon sina kay kami nang mag-utod, magkampihanay hindi nga mag-inaway pa ba" which means a sibling argument does not lead to any prejudice or taking sides.

Table 2.3. *Category B. Situation Growing Up; d. Struggles as a Middle Child*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Ang struggle ko lang abi is si kuya abi namon may bisyo, daw ako ang nag take in charge sa responsibilidad niya biskan minor palang ko gawork na ko sina.	Took the responsibility of the eldest in supporting the family	Familial duties
P5: Ang naging struggle ko lang gid subong siyempre is ang magulang ko nakaplastar na tapos ako waay pa. Ginaisip ko man sa sarili ko kung makasulod ba dayon ko sa ubra kay siyempre ang akon ginikanan gaexpect nga makaubra ko dayon kag makabulig sa pamilya.	Parental expectation for employment and self-imposed pressure	
Ako ang gaadjust sa ila kag ginapaagi ko nalang sa pagkasweet ko. Pag ang isa may ginabatyang, ginapamangkot ko sang ano gusto niya. Halimbawa kay mama gapamangkot ko "Ano gusto mo hilton taka mang?" mga amo bala sina haw.	Providing an act of service to please the family and relate with them	
P2: Yung naging struggle ko kasi is yung icompare ang kakayahan ni ate ko compared sa akin na mas bata.	Being compared with the capabilities of the eldest sibling	Sibling Comparison
P3: Habang gadako ko, ako gid na pirme ginakigan tapos ako na gid ginapalimpyo balay. Struggle ko man na ginacompare ko sa magulang ko kay siyempre biskan ano ko pa ka effort hindi bala makita.	Doing deliberate efforts to please her parents but still compared with the eldest sibling	
PS4: Sa subong is pirme ko maakigan sang ginikanan ko kung maglagaw. Porket may income na ko kailangan na maging focus ko sa dira lang na bagay kag kabalo daw dapat magbalance. Ang sa isip ko man kay may right man ko mag enjoy sa sarili ko samtang wala pa ko pamilya.	Struggles to have freedom and self-enjoyment	
P6: Siguro sang ginapabay an lang kami sang parents pero nang mga selos selos nga struggle daw wala gid tana sa isip ko.	Being neglected by parents but did not foster envy to siblings	Parental negligence

According to the theory of Adler, middle children face different struggles in the family, which is why in this section, the participants describe their struggles during their upbringing as a middle child. There are four themes that emerged based on the participants' statements:

Familial duty is the first theme that emerged in the data, describing the struggles of Participants 1 and 5. Participant 1 describes how he took the responsibility of his elder brother in supporting their family financially, he worked at a young age to fulfill his brother's duty. Similarly, Participant 5 also describes how he wanted to have a job after passing his exam since his family expected him to help and support as soon as he passed his exam.

The second theme is Sibling comparison in which Participants 2 and 3 considered their struggle being a middle child. Participant 2 describes how she was compared to her elder sister about their capabilities. Participant 3 was also compared to her elder sister, that pushed her to exert effort and please their parents. Even with all of her efforts and actions, her sister is still the one who is in the spotlight and she is continuously compared to her. Participant 4 considered lack of freedom as his struggle being a middle child. He elaborated how his parents scold him for wandering most of the time, and he was reminded constantly to balance his time and income. He thought about letting himself enjoy as much as he can since he doesn't have his own family yet.

The last theme that emerged is Parental negligence as described by Participant 6, referring to the struggle of being jealous of his other siblings. He focused on how their parents neglected their responsibilities towards him and his siblings. It was his primary struggle since it affected them as they grew up, their negligence led him to survive, managing sibling conflicts, and striving in order to achieve his goals.

Significant feelings were also asked to the participants, which led the researchers to extract themes from their statements. Participants 1 and 2 describe their feeling of being Delighted as they perceive their struggles in a more positive way. They have gained insightful lessons and developed their sense of perseverance in order to go through life and obstacles.

The second theme that emerged is the feeling of Insecurity, in which Participant 3 described how she struggled from being compared to her sister and how her father would talk to her and is expected to be humble by lowering her pride during conflicts. She felt insecure that she could not feel the love and attention from her parents.

The last theme that emerged is Recognition, in which Participants 4, 5, and 6 recognize the concept of sibling comparison, and that

they have experienced it as well. Although they all experienced being compared and being the least favorite, they realized that it was no use since it was their siblings after all. They think positively and strived on their own, instead of dwelling on that fact.

Table 3. *Category C. Feelings Growing Up; a. Significant feeling*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Happy despite sa mga struggle ko as middle child bal'an ko nga kung wala sa mga experience ko nga di ko maka learn.	Perseverance is the way to ingratiate	Delighted
P2: Happy ako kasi natuto ako pero sad kasi sa part na bata pa ko di ko na experience ang mga dapat ih experience ng normal na bata.	Gained insightful life lesson apart from childhood regrets	
P3: Nagastruggle man ko sa pagpa appreciate sa ginikanan ko kay ginahimo ko man best ko. Si ate ang ila pirme makita pero nagahambal man si tatay nga pauyunan ko lang si ate amuna gapaubos nalang ko.	Strives for also gaining the same spotlight just like the elder sister's	Insecurity
P4: Daw nautod ang compare sa amon ni ate kag daw at ko man nga may compare.	Accepted the fact that there is sibling comparison	
P5: Ma realized ko gyapon nang sa manghod ko man gyapon to ah alangan selosan ko pa nang mga amo na.	Doesn't hold envy towards other siblings in terms of comparison	Recognition
P6: Wala gid ko gaisip sinang selos, maka hambal nalang ko sina nga tama gid akon isip nga dapat kami nga mag-urotod mag buliganay kay kami lang man gyapon ga uropdanay. Ng mga mga selos wala na dapat positive thinker ka lang para mag asenso	Not affected by the thought of comparison because they cherish their bond.	

This table discusses the codes and themes obtained from the text segments of the participants towards their experience of gaining favor from their family. There are four (4) themes that emerged from the participants' answers which are as follows:

The need to prove, Participant 1 and 3 refers to their experience in proving themselves to their parents through showing the determination in achieving something greater than what is expected from their capacity. Supporting this, proving other people wrong is what middle children often do, they are believed as forgotten, rebellious, and unable to cope with their siblings, and middle children tend to prove them wrong. In fact, stereotypes often tell us that middle children aren't as smart, connected to the family, capable as leaders, or likely to follow rules as their older or younger siblings (Vanbuskirk, 2022). The participants were able to strive for themselves and in order for them to prove that they could be someone other than being compared to their siblings. Participants strive to prove their families wrong on how they perceive them. They wanted to prove themselves that they can accept criticisms from people around them and used it to prove them wrong.

Table 3.1. *Category C. Feelings Growing Up; b. The Situation of Gaining Favor*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Gusto ko man nga makita sang ginikanan ko kung gaano ako kapursigido nga mag asenso kay gusto ko man makita nila nga kaya ko mag asenso.	Gaining the satisfaction of parents and the drive to be successful in life	The need to prove
P3: Gasali sali ako dati contest pero sang nag highschool ko wala nalang ko gana mag sali kay hindi man gyapon makita, biskan ano ko pa kapati sugo ang manghod kag ate ko gid makita nila.	Joins contests to gain the satisfaction of parents because of the spotlight given to the eldest and youngest sibling	
P2: Kung noon kailangan ko gid mag depende sa kanila kay magalit man sila kung hindi ako magsabi. Pero ngayon hindi na kay kaya ko naman sarili ko maka desisyon na ako.	Used to ask for her parent's consent, before not until she grew up.	Resilience
P4: Dati gapanghinayang sila sa negosyo ko pero subong ara na suporta nila sa akon.	Parents doubted his business at first but supported it later on as they see their son's growth in it	Perseverance
P5: May ara gid nga time nga kailangan maka pabor man ang panahon sa akon nga matupad man akon gusto kag ma recognize nila nga kung ano gina expect ila saakon. Kag kis a ara gid sa isip ko nga malamangan si kuya ng dapat taas ako standard sa iya kay syempre ikaw ikadalawa kay daw wala bala na satisfied si mama Saiya dapat ako taas kay para ma satisfied si mama.	Manifesting his goals and aspirations to be achieved to give sense of fulfillment to his mother	
P6: Wala gid na time nga ako gina apinan, favorite gid ko na nila pangyawyawan. Wala man kay isip ko bulig nalang na kung si kuya bala kaaway ko no masabat gid ko sina kag tanan nga away gina take as positive.	Takes scolding as a positive experience for gaining insights	Lenience

Resilience, Participant 2 refers to her development of resilience as she grew up as a way to show her parents that she is not over reliant on their support but instead, she can also rely upon herself.

Perseverance, Participant 4 and Participant 5 have commonalities in their situation in supporting the emergence of the theme. Participant 4 experienced doubt from his parents at the start of his business but as they saw his perseverance to grow in the business, they finally supported him. On the other side, Participant 5 wants to be recognized by his family and strives harder to achieve a higher standard that exceeds his brother's in order to satisfy his mother

Lenience, Participant 6 is always the one being scolded but he did not take those words as negative but instead, he took it positively as an inspiration for his self-growth. He was the one who always listened and never talked back, unless it was his older brother that he argued with. Instead of holding grudges, he took their argument into a positive direction to realize and reflect upon himself.

Table 4. *Category D. Realization within Oneself; a. Driving Force*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Kay wala na choice kung hindi ko mag ubra paano sila kag ara saakon ang kaluoy sa ginikanan amo na nga biskan mabudlayan ko mabulig gyapon ko sa akon ginikanan	The will to help and the sympathy towards the family as his driving force	Filial Duty
P2: Gusto magkahonor para makita nila daddy nga may ibuga din ako sa pag aaral ko.	Strived academically in order to prove something	Determination
P4: Subong nag lago ang small business ko kaya napatunayan ko na. Amo to daw na proud man ang pamilya ko kay syempre medyo nag success na.	Making his family proud from his success and proved himself	
P5: Ang ginahimo ko lang is dapat maka pasar ko kay ga review ko subong, expect na nila nga maka pasar ko kag makaubra.	Pressured upon expectation in helping the family	
P6: Ang mga negative nga ginahambal saakon wala ko na gina take as negative gina himo ko na positive kag maprove sarili ko.	Made negativities as inspiration and positive mindset to grow and prove himself	
P3: Kay tungod love akon ginapangita sa tuod lang sang ginikanan kay syempre halin pagngamay ko si ate lang gid makita.	Love from the parents that was focused more to the elder sister.	Unfair treatment

This table shows the driving force of middle children in ingratiating namely: filial duty, the need to prove, and unfair treatment. These themes incorporate the reason and how middle children cope with negative labels that surround them.

Participant 1, Filial duty relates to his experiences he stated "Kay wala na choice kung hindi ko mag ubra paano sila kag ara saakon ang kaluoy sa ginikanan amo na nga biskan mabudlayan ko mabulig gyapon ko sa akon ginikanan" this indicates that what kept him going was his desire to assist and his passion for the family. Supporting this theme, children have special duties to their parents there are things that children ought to do for their parents, but not for just anyone. Three competing accounts of filial duty appear in the literature: the debt theory, the gratitude theory, and the friendship theory. Each is unsatisfactory, each tries to assimilate the moral relationship between a parent understood conception of duty, but this relationship is different in structure and content from any that we are likely to share with anyone apart from a parent (Keller, 2006). In relation to this, Participant 1 showed filial duty based on his statement that he tackled working at a young age to support his family, and supporting the family financially.

Participants 2, 4, 5, and 6 have shared a common theme, Determination. Participant 2 stated "Gusto magkahonor para makita nila daddy nga may ibuga din ako sa pag aaral ko" means pushing themselves academically to prove a point. Participant 4 also encountered the same experience, he said "Subong nag lago ang small business ko kaya napatunayan ko na. Amo to daw na proud man ang pamilya ko kay syempre medyo nag success na" which means demonstrating his worth and making his family proud of what he had accomplished. Participant 5 affirmed "Ang ginahimo ko lang is dapat maka pasar ko kay ga review ko subong, expect na nila nga maka pasar ko kag makaubra" this indicate that he wa persevering on the expectation of the family in reaching his accomplishment quickly. Participant 6 mentioned that "Ang mga negative nga ginahambal saakon wala ko na gina take as negative gina himo ko na positive kag maprove sarili ko" this implies he used criticism as motivation to improve and adopt a positive outlook in order to establish his credibility.

Unfair treatment, Participant 3 said "Kay tungod love akon ginapangita sa tuod lang sang ginikanan kay syempre halin pagngamay ko si ate lang gid makita" this means the parents' love was mostly directed toward the oldest sister. Supporting this, when parents have a favorite child it can create a lasting impact on less favored children and the favorite child as well. Less favored children feel diminished and unfairly treated compared to their favorite children (Pickhardt, 2011). Associations among differential parenting practices, perceptions of the fairness of these practices, and parent-child relationship quality were assessed from the perspectives of adolescent siblings and their parents. Although the direct relations between parents' differential treatment and youth's maladjustment have been well established, the mechanisms underlying these associations remain unclear (Kowal, et. al., 2004).

Upon ingratiating, middle children benefited from their course of actions, which reflected in this section. Participant 1 described how he benefited from his hard work and also how his family benefited from it as well. To support this theme, middle children are more likely to be Selfless than their siblings, in a way that they become the mediator in the family, a good negotiator, and more likely to show concern and help to others the reason is that middle children tend to not have 'huge egos' because they're less likely to get

attention at home compared to their other siblings (Chandler, 2017).

Table 4.1. *Category D. Realization within Oneself; b. Benefits of Ingratiation*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Naka benefit gid ako eh kag hindi lang ako pati man ang buo nga pamilya ko	Gained benefits not just for himself but also for his family.	Selflessness
P2: Yung sa pag bake oo, kasi parang yun na gid yung kaagapay ko, kasi sa baking hindi lang happiness ko nabibigay, pati yung matulungan nya ako financial na kahit wala na sila mommy kaya ko na.	Gained companionship, happiness and financial support	Contentment
P3: Oo kay daw karon kay daw na okay na ko kag peaceful ang mind ko nga daw biskan wala tao daw gusto ko ako nalang kay daw kaya ko naman. Kay tana magamit ko gid sya.	Gained independence and peace of mind	
P4: Very fulfilling sya saakon kay sa amuna nga bagay may napatunayan ko. Nami sya sa feeling. Kay makita ko man ab isa parent ko nga na proud man sila sa akon.	Gained fulfillment upon seeing his parents proud	

The second theme is Contentment, in which Participants 2, 3, and 4 describes how they feel content and fulfilled by their actions. Participant 2 describes how she gained companionship in baking and felt content by this. Participant 3 described how she gained peace of mind upon her independence and was content by her feelings and realization. Participant 4 felt fulfilment upon proving himself and made his parents proud from what he achieved.

Table 4.2. *Category D. Realization within Oneself; c. Realization from Ingratiating*

<i>Text Segments</i>	<i>Code/Concept</i>	<i>Themes</i>
P1: Hindi hadlang kung ano ka sa pamilya mo kag kung ano nga pagtrato nila sa aton ang isipon ta lang nga maging maayo ta nga tao biskan ano nga tion kay ang panahon. Wala na kinalaman ng pagiging middle child kung kita tanan mamakas sa pangabuhi.	Unconcerned attitude towards birth order and kept a positive belief Does no longer strive to impress others and accepts self-reliance.	Optimism
P2: Kahit anong gawin mo kung wala yung attention ng tao sayo useless lang, so dapat focus lang gid kung sa anong meron ka para makaka survive ka sa living mo parang ganon nalang.	Does no longer strive to impress others and accepts the fact that she cannot have the favor/attention that her sister received.	Acceptance
P3: Hindi ko kinihanglan makipag kumpitensya sa igsoon ko kag hindi man gid kailangan mag effort para palanggaon kay kay kung love ka love ka gid.		
P5: Ang na realized ko lang nga daw nahimo ko naman mga part ko kag kailangan ko buligan akon mga utod kag parent.	Realization of role in helping the family	
P6: Kay hindi ko gusto nga maging burden ko saila amo na ga strive gid ko para sa self ko, wala gid sila may gin hatag biskan piso kay basi bala ginaisip nila hindi ko kaya ng diskompyado sila saakon kay syempre kilala ko nila nga daw dungol sa pamilya.	Strive against the mislabeling and avoidance of being a burden	
P4: Sa kinabuhi ta dapat maging independent na gid ta sa amo ni nga edad.	Having independent mindset	Independence

Pleasing others and excessive efforts from the participants lead them to realize a different mindset that helped them in becoming who they are in the moment. It is rooted from their experiences in the family setting, their situations as they grow up, and how they compensate. In this section, it shows the realization of participants which formulated themes.

Optimism, as Participant 1 describes how he neglected the birth order, and how parents would treat their children as long as an individual perceives and strives in becoming a better person. Relating this to a study, middle children possess strong sharing behaviors and are less likely to break under pressure according to White (2022). These kinds of traits allow the middle children to endure expectations from their parents and quickly establish relations with others without minding sharing something with them. Just as how the participants nurture themselves with such a mindset that they need to become successful and regard their struggles as their way of becoming a better person. Participant 1 shows a sense of optimism when he sees his struggles as a way of learning to strive to become a better person. He also mentioned that he was happy that he was able to experience hardships because that molded him into the person that he is at the moment.

Acceptance, as what Participants 2, 3, and 5 described, they accepted the fact that they could not compete with their siblings just to get the attention or favor of their parents. Supporting this theme, middle children might strive to be a lot like the older sibling, but more typically they go the opposite direction (Monica, 2019). They accepted that fact and instead of going in the direction where the firstborns are, they created their path and did not dwell on competition, they wanted peace of mind. Acceptance for middle children means they are more likely to go with the flow rather than act stubbornly (DiNuzzo, 2021). It was based on the answers of the participants in which

they conveyed the idea of acceptance, accepting the fact that whether they exert effort or not, their parents' attention and favor are still on their siblings. They also accepted the fact that they needed to take the role of being the one helping the family.

Independence, as described by Participant 4 and 6, he strived to become independent and to avoid being a burden in the family. It linked to the fact that they grew up without their parents and that he developed independence. Linking this to a study, being a middle child often experiences a lack of attention from their parents which results in developing their sense of independence. They tend to build healthy relationships outside the home but fuse less with their parents (Davis, 2017). They are neither overcompensating in terms of taking the family responsibility from the oldest and depend on others like the youngest. Participant 6 stated that their parents didn't support them even with a single penny and he strived by himself.

The Experiences of Ingratiation of Middle Children in the Family

The participants were given the chance to share, describe, and elaborate their experiences of ingratiation in the family. They talked about how they felt about the experiences that they have encountered as they grew up. All the participants ingratiate in their different ways for different reasons, and how their actions affected their desired outcomes. This study utilized a grand tour question that encompasses family background, situation growing up, feelings growing up, and the realization of middle children upon experiencing ingratiation. With this, the researchers included each question that derives different themes and answers the process of experiencing ingratiation.

As it is shown in the tables that each category has its sub-category that tackles on different situations of middle children. Deriving themes from each category is overwhelming yet it responded to the statement of the problem. Linking this to Adler's theory of Birth Order, a child's birth order has an impact on how they develop and who they become. Adler also insisted that a child's personality is significantly shaped by factors from their family, neighborhood, and social environment (Brennan, 2021). Middle children are most likely to please people around them just to be noticed and gain attention which can also be found in the statements of the participants.

From the significant statements of the participants, it is shown that even in this generation, Adler's theory about Middle Children is relevant and this study supported his theory. The experience of ingratiation of middle children comes in different forms and ways, in which Adler discusses the different characteristics of middle children and what they called "Middle Child Syndrome". Moreover, according to Jones with his theory of ingratiation, there are five strategies on how a person ingratiates, one is to show interest, in which middle children in this study show interest towards their parents as they wanted to be noticed for being interested in such things. Second is doing favors to help, some of the participants do favors for their parents, for instance, Participant 5 offers services towards his siblings. Third strategy is showing support, the participants mentioned how they supported their parents and their siblings in many ways that they can. Fourth strategy is to make people smile, relating it to how the participants felt fulfilled whenever they see their parents proud of what they have done. Middle children tend to prioritize other people rather than themselves. And lastly, expressing admiration to people. These strategies of ingratiation were observed from the participants' statements, although they have different ways and strategies applied. Following Adler's Birth Order Theory, the following are themes that emerged from each table that are linked to the theory itself, the situation of middle children, how they were treated and their characteristics.

Upon gathering themes from each category, it was grouped by the researchers depending on how they answered the questions, which then led to a process. Using these themes as a process by understanding the background of the middle child, their relationship with each of their family members, and how they were handled and treated by their parents. From that, the researchers gained insights into the root and reasons of middle children to ingratiate, based on how their relationship with their family. Category B focuses on the situation of middle children as they grow up, sharing insights regarding how they connect with their families. Category C focuses on the feelings of middle children as they grow up, gaining insights into how and what they felt upon growing up. The researchers considered Category B and C as the driving force of middle children to ingratiate. Lastly, Category D focuses mainly on the realization of middle children upon ingratiating, the researchers considered this category as the outcome of their ingratiation.

Through this analysis, the theory of Alfred Adler about Birth Order is still relevant in today's generation. Middle children possess characteristics that enable them to stand on their own feet and adapt to certain situations. This study supports the Birth Order Theory. Apart from that, it was shown that middle children ingratiate in different ways for different reasons, regardless of how they were raised and their family background. The study also found out that middle children are innate to be driven to prove themselves even without being pressured by others. Furthermore, the results have proven them to have the capacity to be self-reliant in facing reality. Lastly, the study discovered that most middle children are optimistic about perceiving their advantages and disadvantages within the family.

This framework shows the process of ingratiation of middle children and the common aspects they have that lead them to ingratiate. In the first process, the two common factors are responsible parenthood and strained relationships. The next step shows that middle children have an innate nature to strive regardless of the two primary factors. Following the second process are the filial duty, the need to prove, and unfair treatment. These factors are the different experiences faced by them as it instigates them to strive to do something that may be appealing to the family. The final process is considered as the outcome of the ingratiation they have done to their family. These factors are illustrated as independence, acceptance, and optimism. In the depiction of independence, the participants learned to strive on their own and be self-reliant. Another one is acceptance, the realization of participants that leads them to accept the reality of being a middle child such as the experience of unfair treatment, least priority, and comparison. Lastly, optimism illustrates how middle

children grew to perceive their life struggles as a positive experience that helps them conquer the obstacles that lead them to attaining success.

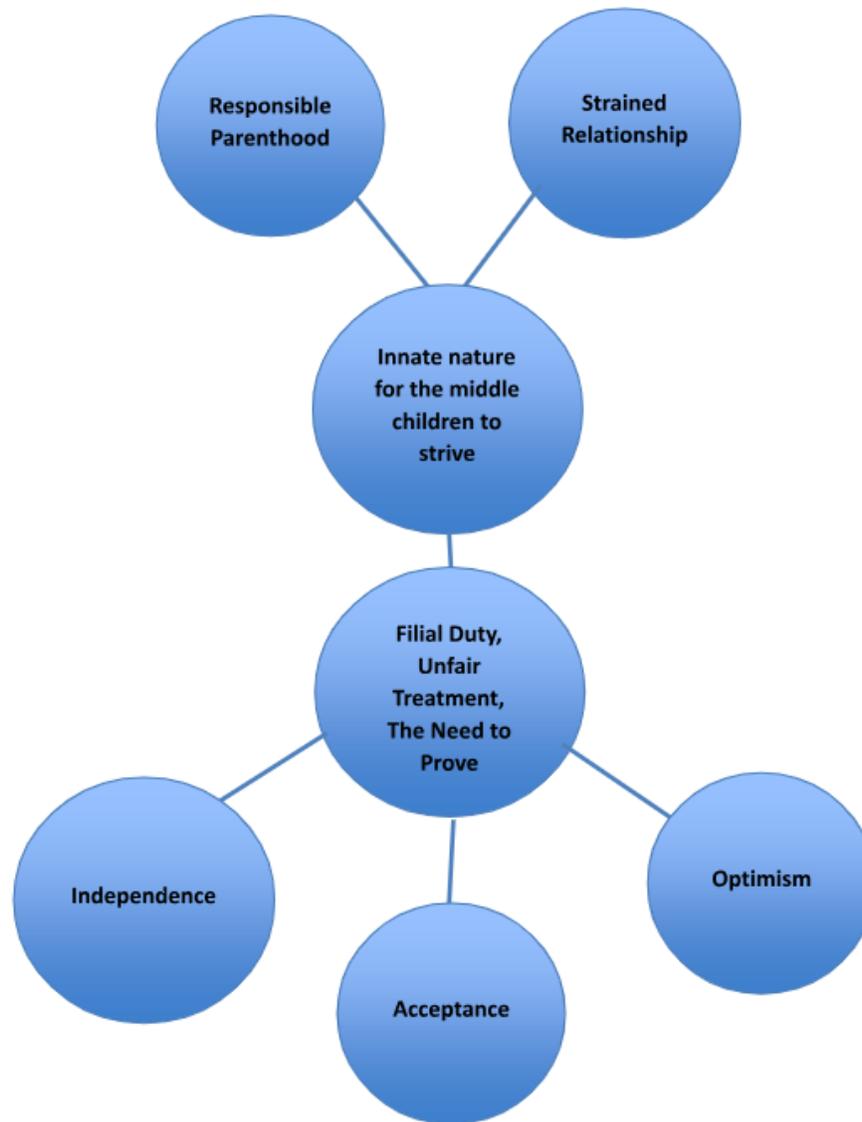


Figure 1. *Formulated Conceptual Framework*

Conclusions

This study aimed to describe the experiences of ingratiation of middle children in the family. Upon deriving themes and results, the researchers found out that middle children indeed strive to please other people and become selfless just to help and support those who are important to them. Regardless of how they were raised and treated in their family, there is an innate nature in them that kept them striving and proving themselves even without having the pressure from their family, and without being underestimated. This led the researchers to pursue this study, and found out that the findings support the Theory of Adler about Birth Order.

This study suggests that the Theory of Adler is still relevant and applicable in this time, and that middle children have this innate nature of being a pleaser. With this, the researchers found out that middle children do ingratiate in the family and exert efforts to gain the approval, favor, and attention of their parents. Through this, the researchers found out that middle children have this process in ingratiating, starting from their family which is considered as the root, and their reasons of ingratiation and their outcome. This process is the product brought out from the categories and themes.

This study implies that the middle child syndrome exists in the family subconsciously. The middle children's innate trait to ingratiate was evident according to their own experiences. The occurrence of this phenomena is further proven through the results of this study that rooted out from the similarity of responses of the participants. Also, the findings of this study will serve as a new local source for emerging studies that relate to the topic of middle children.



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