



The Lived Experiences of Breadwinner Students at University of Cabuyao

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Abstract

This study investigates the lived experiences of breadwinner students at the University of Cabuyao, examining how they navigate the intersecting demands of academic and financial responsibilities. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with five purposively selected participants and analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Hermeneutical analysis. The findings reveal that breadwinner students face significant challenges, including role strain, mental and physical fatigue, and difficulties managing overlapping responsibilities. Participants relied on coping mechanisms such as effective time management, peer and family support, and self-care practices like spiritual reliance to mitigate these pressures. Additionally, Hermeneutical analysis uncovered deeper emotional struggles, including hidden resentment—stemming from unspoken frustrations over conflicting priorities—and erosion of self, where personal aspirations are often overshadowed by familial obligations. Despite these struggles, participants demonstrated resilience and adaptability, experiencing personal growth, financial independence, and increased motivation, which positively influenced their academic and personal lives. However, the dual roles they fulfill expose them to risks of burnout and academic setbacks. These results underscore the importance of institutional and familial support systems to alleviate their burdens and enhance their well-being. This study provides a deeper understanding of breadwinner students' unique challenges, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support their academic success and emotional resilience.

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1. Introduction

In today's era, numerous students face significant challenges in meeting their academic needs due to financial constraints, often necessitating employment alongside their studies to support their families. These students, instead of focusing exclusively on their education, take on the role of breadwinners, contributing substantially to household expenses such as food, utilities, and even educational costs for siblings. This dual responsibility creates a complex situation where academic pursuits are intertwined with pressing financial demands, leading to persistent role strain and emotional fatigue.

This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in the Philippines, where cultural values emphasize familial duty and mutual support. Many Filipino households expect capable or older children to assume the responsibility of providing for the family. This cultural norm, deeply rooted in social traditions, turns financial support into not just a personal endeavor but a collective obligation that strengthens family unity and solidarity. Thus, for student breadwinners, supporting their families goes beyond earning income—it becomes integral to upholding familial honor and fulfilling inter-generational expectations.

The challenges faced by these students are multifaceted. Balancing rigorous academic requirements with part-time or full-time employment leads to significant time constraints.

Managing multiple responsibilities—attending classes, completing assignments, and fulfilling work commitments—often leaves little room for rest or personal development. This constant juggling frequently results in sleep deprivation, decreased academic performance, and long-term mental and physical stress. According to the Commission on Higher Education (2022), approximately 216,000 students in the Philippines, constituting 8% of the college population, work while studying. These students navigate demanding work schedules alongside academic responsibilities like homework, research, reviews, and exams. For many families, contributing financially is both a cultural expectation and a means for young individuals to share responsibilities and alleviate burdens.

Given these circumstances, this study focuses on exploring the lived experiences of breadwinner students at the University of Cabuyao. It aims to uncover the specific challenges they encounter, ranging from difficulties in time management and setbacks in academic performance to emotional distress and feelings of social isolation. The study also investigates the coping mechanisms these students employ in response to these challenges.

Ultimately, the study's objective is to document and analyze the intricate relationship between academic responsibilities and familial financial obligations among breadwinner students. Insights gathered from their narratives are expected to lay the groundwork for developing effective support systems that ensure these students can achieve academic success without compromising their personal well-being. By gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with balancing multiple roles, the study aims to facilitate interventions that foster a more equitable and supportive educational environment. This research endeavors to shed light on the complexities faced by breadwinner students, offering pathways to enhance support structures and promote a conducive environment where academic achievement and personal welfare can thrive concurrently.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

Phenomenological research is a type of qualitative study where the researcher tries to understand the core essence of human experiences related to a particular phenomenon. This is done by listening to and analyzing the descriptions of these experiences provided by the participants in the study. The phenomenological approach in this study was applied to grasp the day-to-day experiences of breadwinner students at the University of Cabuyao. Creswell J. and Creswell D. (2022) describe this qualitative design as one that seeks to understand the essence of human experiences from the perspective of those involved. It was chosen for its effectiveness in providing a clear picture of the student's challenges and strategies in managing their dual roles as breadwinners and learners.

B. Research Locale

The research locale for this study is the University of Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao), located within Katapatan Mutual Homes, Brgy. Banay-Banay, Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines

The University of Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao) has been selected to conduct a study on the lived experiences of breadwinner students. Renowned for its commitment to academic excellence and comprehensive education, the university offers an ideal environment to delve into the unique challenges faced by these students.

C. Population and Sampling

The researchers implemented a purposeful sampling design to select participants. As explained by Cohen, Schneider, and Tobin (2022), a sample is chosen based on the belief that it is representative of the population. It is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research study. This method is particularly suitable for qualitative research where the focus is on depth and richness of data rather than generalizability. The target population comprised of breadwinner students enrolled at the University of Cabuyao. The inclusion criteria for the study were designed to ensure that the participants had a significant financial responsibility within their family units. To be included, participants needed to be the primary financial contributors to their family household, have siblings, currently hold the role of a breadwinner, and be actively enrolled at the University of Cabuyao. These criteria were set to capture the unique challenges and experiences associated with students who support their families financially and balance academic responsibilities.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria were established to narrow down the participant pool to those who most accurately represented the target demographic for the research. Individuals without siblings, working students but not the primary financial providers, and those who had previously been breadwinners but no longer held that status were excluded from the study. This ensured that the research focused on current breadwinner students who were actively navigating the complexities of their roles.

D. Research Participants

The researchers utilized a pre-survey to identify breadwinner students within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), specifically those enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Psychology program. This approach was practical and strategic, as the researchers are part of the CAS, facilitating easier access and communication. The pre-survey served a crucial role in identifying potential participants who fit the criteria of being breadwinners, aligning with the study's focus.

E. Research Instrumentation

The researchers used a semi-structured interview format, utilizing open-ended questions to delve into the lived experiences of breadwinner students. The interview questions for the research were carefully crafted to align with the theoretical framework guiding the study. They were designed to elicit responses that address the research questions. The questions will range from 10 in number, ensuring a depth of inquiry without overwhelming the participants. These questions explored the experiences, perceptions, and impacts of being a breadwinner student to uncover rich, qualitative data that speaks to the core themes of the study.

Before the interviews, informed consent was obtained from the five selected participants. The interviews were scheduled to accommodate the convenience of both the researchers and the participants. During the interviews, the conversations were recorded for accuracy, and researchers also took detailed notes on body language to capture the full spectrum of the participants' expressions. After the interviews, the researchers transcribed the recordings verbatim. Participant validation was conducted to ensure the authenticity of the data, allowing interviewees to review and affirm the accuracy of the transcriptions.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers began their data gathering with a face-to-face preliminary survey in each College of Arts and Sciences class covering first-year and fourth-year students. They visited each section to determine who identifies as a breadwinner among the students. The purpose of the study was explained clearly, and students were assured that participation was entirely voluntary. Only those who were comfortable were asked to provide their names and contact details.

After the initial survey, the researchers chose five

(5) breadwinner students from those identified for in-depth interviews. Before each interview, the researchers reviewed the informed consent form in detail, explained the study's goals and how participants' responses would be kept confidential and asked permission to record the conversations. If participants prefer not to be recorded, the researchers respect their wishes and take detailed notes. Also, the researchers allowed participants to withdraw at any time. If someone decides to leave, the researchers will immediately delete any recorded or noted data related to that person and find a replacement from the remaining candidates.

G. Ethical Consideration

All participants have the right to withdraw from the study without any obligation to continue. Researchers ensured that participants understood that opting out would not negatively impact them. It was clear that their participation was entirely voluntary and that leaving the study would not have any adverse effects. Participants were provided information about the study and had the opportunity to ask questions before deciding whether to sign a consent form. Additional measures were taken to ensure informed consent was obtained adequately for vulnerable populations. Informed consent is essential for ensuring participants are well-informed and establishing trust between researchers and participants.

3. Results and Discussions

In this section, the findings from the research on the lived experiences of breadwinner students at the University of Cabuyao are presented and discussed. The analysis begins with the demographic profiles of the study participants, providing context for their individual narratives. It then moves on to the identification of seven emergent themes, followed by an exploration of two hermeneutic findings that offer deeper insights into the internal struggles faced by these students.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Name	Gender	Year level	Civil Status
Participants 1	Female	3	Single
Participants 2	Female	4	Single
Participants 3	Male	2	Single
Participants 4	Female	3	Single
Participants 5	Female	2	Single

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the five breadwinner student participants. The data indicate that four participants are female while one is male, highlighting a predominance of female representation in this sample. All participants are single, which suggests that their familial responsibilities are primarily directed toward supporting parents and siblings rather than spouses or children. In terms of academic standing, one participant is in the fourth year,

with the remaining four representing earlier stages of their undergraduate studies.

Table 2: Themes and its Subordinate Themes

Themes	Subordinate Theme
Development of Time Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing and Prioritizing Tasks Flexibility in Work Schedule
Motivation and Emotional Upliftment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Energy from Interactions Motivation Boost
Encouragement and Sense of Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional Resilience Through Family Encouragement Consistent Encouragement
Skill Development and Financial Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining Financial Independence Practical Skills Application
Collaborative Support System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Collaboration and Assistance Emotional Support from Friends
Self-Care and Resilience Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith and Inner Strength Time for Self-Care
Strategic Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Planning Tools Flexibility in Scheduling

The thematic analysis of the interview data yielded seven primary themes. Table 2 summarizes these themes along with their subordinate subthemes. Below is an in-depth discussion of each theme, with specific references to participant narratives.

Theme 1: Development of Time Management Skills

Participants uniformly emphasized the importance of developing robust time management skills to juggle their dual roles.

- **Organizing and Prioritizing Tasks:** Participant 4 stated, "Natutunan ko na maging mas organized at mag-manage ng time, kung paano magplano. Kailangan ng mag-set ng priorities." This reflection illustrates how careful planning and setting priorities enable these students to allocate sufficient time for academic tasks despite work demands.
- **Flexibility in Work Schedule:** Participant 3 explained, "Flexible naman 'yung working hours ko bilang Food Panda rider, kaya may time din naman ako gawin lahat ng pendings ko." This flexibility in work arrangements is crucial in allowing students to adjust their schedules according to academic deadlines. The ability to manage time effectively is a fundamental adaptive strategy. The systematic organization of tasks coupled with the flexibility of work hours helps alleviate the inherent tension between academic obligations and financial responsibilities. This skill is pivotal in preventing burnout and sustaining academic productivity.

Theme 2: Motivation and Emotional Upliftment

Positive experiences in the work environment significantly influence the emotional state and motivation of these students.

- **Positive Energy from Interactions:** Participant 4 remarked, "Ang positive energy ko rito sa work ay minsan nadadala ko sa school, kaya mas good mood ako at mas madali kong natatapos ang mga activities at tasks." This quote shows how uplifting work experiences can have a beneficial spillover effect on academic engagement.
- **Motivation Boost:** Participant 5 added, "Kapag maganda yung experience ko sa work, nagbibigay 'yon sa'kin ng motivation... kapag successful ako sa work

nadadala ko rin siya sa magandang mood at focus sa pag-aaral.” These observations indicate that the emotional boost from positive work interactions serves as an internal resource, enhancing both mood and academic focus. The dual benefit highlights that, despite challenges, the work environment can play a supportive role in overall well-being.

Theme 3: Encouragement and Sense of Stability

Family support emerges as a critical factor in maintaining stability among breadwinner students.

Emotional Resilience Through Family Encouragement: Participant 1 noted, “Sobra, sobrang laki nang naitutulong nila kapag may family support, nandyan sila para sumalo sa mga bagay na hindi mo kayang saluhin.” The quote emphasizes that familial backing provides not only practical help but also emotional strength during challenging times.

Consistent Encouragement: Participant 5 observed, “Mas motivated akong gawin ang best ko dahil nandyan sila para daw yung mga best ko na mga gawain sa school.” The consistency of family support creates a stable emotional foundation. This stability is essential in helping students withstand the pressures of balancing work and study, while also reinforcing their commitment to academic success.

Theme 4: Skill Development and Financial Independence

Working students reported that their employment experiences contribute to personal growth and greater financial autonomy.

- **Gaining Financial Independence:** Participant 1 stated, “Natutuwa ako kasi nasusuportahan ko na ang sarili ko nang hindi ako humihingi sa pamilya ko.” This sentiment reflects the pride and satisfaction that comes with financial self-reliance.
- **Practical Skills Application:** Participant 5 remarked, “Nakakatulong yung work, nagbibigay kasi siya sa kinang praktikal na kaalaman at experience na magagamit ko sa school projects.” The dual benefit of work is evident: beyond immediate financial relief, it facilitates the acquisition of practical skills that can enhance academic performance. Financial independence, in turn, reduces economic pressures, allowing for a more focused academic pursuit.

Theme 5: Collaborative Support System

Peer support is another recurring theme that mitigates the sense of isolation among breadwinner students.

- **Academic Collaboration and Assistance:** Participant 4 explained, “May mga times na hindi maiiwasan na

aabsent ako, at ini-update nila ako kung ano ang mga ginagawa.” This demonstrates how peers help bridge gaps in academic participation.

- **Emotional Support from Friends:** Participant 5 noted, “Nagbibigay sila ng emotional support and encouragement, nakakatulong din yung presensya nila pati yung mga advice.” The collaborative support from peers not only fills academic gaps but also provides a vital network for emotional sustenance. Such support reinforces a sense of belonging and helps students manage the stress associated with their dual roles.
- **Theme 6: Self-Care and Resilience Strategies**
- In coping with chronic stress, many students rely on self-care practices and inner resilience.
- **Faith and Inner Strength:** Participant 1 confessed, “Sa mga ganitong sitwasyon, ang unang nalalapitan ko ay si God. Nagdadasal ako, umiiyak, at inilalabas ang nararamdaman.” This expression underscores the role of spiritual coping mechanisms in managing emotional distress.
- **Time for Self-Care:** Participant 4 shared, “Minsan, nagfile ako ng leave para lang makapag unwind, makapagpahinga.” These self-care practices reveal that, despite relentless demands, breadwinner students actively seek ways to recharge emotionally and mentally. The reliance on faith and deliberate rest reflects a recognition of personal limits and the need to preserve mental health.

Theme 7: Strategic Prioritization

Lastly, strategic prioritization is a critical skill that allows these students to balance competing demands.

Use of Planning Tools: Participant 1 mentioned, “Yung laptop ko ang nagno-notify sa akin tungkol sa mga deadlines at kailangan kong gawin.” This highlights the use of technology to manage time effectively.

Flexibility in Scheduling: Participant 5 commented, “Flexible din naman ako sa schedule at pwede rin mag-adjust depende sa pangangailangan ng work at school. The proactive use of planning tools and the flexibility in scheduling indicate a high level of self-regulation among breadwinner students. Such strategies are essential in ensuring that neither academic nor financial obligations are neglected, thereby maintaining a balance between competing roles. This theme encapsulates the unspoken feelings of bitterness and internal conflict experienced by participants.

Hermeneutical Findings

Table 3: Hidden Resentment

Key Findings	
Hidden Resentment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hidden Resentment to Family • Conflict of Expectations and Pressure from Family • Financial Responsibility and the Emotional Toll • Resentment to Peers • Pressure and Expectations from Peers

Hermeneutical Theme 1: Hidden Resentment

Hidden Resentment to Family Responsibilities

Participant 2 expressed, “May sama ng loob kasi palagi ko iniisip na anong feeling ng sana pag-aaral na lang iniintindi ko instead na iintindihin ko sana ko kukuha ng mga expenses sa school, at para din sa pagpaprove sa kanila.” Participant 2 expresses deep frustration over the loss of a traditional student life, burdened by the dual responsibility of education and financial provision. The phrase “sama ng loob” (hidden

resentment) encapsulates unspoken frustrations and emotional pain, as these feelings are often suppressed in Filipino culture to maintain familial harmony. Hermeneutically, this highlights the tension between their cultural role as a breadwinner and their individual aspiration to prioritize education. This internal conflict reflects a broader cultural expectation in the Philippines, where familial obligations often outweigh personal goals. The

participant’s resentment suggests a growing awareness of the inequality in this dynamic, where their future is subordinated to present familial needs. Their statement challenges the traditional norm, exposing the emotional toll of navigating unacknowledged sacrifices.

Conflict of Expectations and Pressure from Family

Participant 3 remarked, “Parang minsan, wala na silang ibang perspective, kasi, like, gusto ko rin naman ng ibang bagay, pero parang, ah, lagi na lang yung ‘study lang.’ Medyo nakakaramdam ako ng pressure, kaya, minsan, feeling ko, hindi na supportive, parang, uhh, gusto lang nilang masunod yung expectations nila.”

Hermeneutically, this reflects a tension between the generational value of education as a family investment and the participant’s need for autonomy. In Filipino families, education is often viewed as a path to collective upliftment, making individual desires secondary to familial goals. This expectation creates a pressure cooker of unspoken demands, where support feels conditional on meeting these standards. Participant 3’s growing resentment highlights a desire for acknowledgment—not just of their academic success, but of their personal struggles and individuality. This tension between external expectations and internal needs exemplifies the emotional strain of breadwinning.

Financial Responsibility and the Emotional Toll

Another instance from Participant 2 highlighted, “God knows kung gano ko gusto makapagprovide sa kanila full time, pero yung sahod ko nakafix... (the rest of the statement indicating the overwhelming burden and lack of sufficient income).” Participant 2 reveals the weight of familial expectations and the emotional toll of financial responsibilities. The phrase “baka nakakalimutan nila na nagaaral pa ako” (maybe they’re forgetting I’m still a student) underscores the conflict between their role as a provider and their identity as a student. This reflects the cultural expectation of breadwinners to bear financial burdens, even when these responsibilities conflict

with their educational goals. The participant’s frustration highlights the psychological strain of balancing these dual roles, where their personal aspirations are often overshadowed by the immediate needs of their family. This dynamic creates a sense of hidden resentment, as their efforts to support their family come at the cost of their own academic and personal development.

Resentment from Peers

Participant 3 shares their feelings of isolation, “Minsan, feeling ko parang out of place, tapos, uhm, parang nakakalungkot din kasi hindi ko ma-enjoy yung mga moments na sila yung masaya. Ang hirap din kasi, parang feeling ko, uhh, sila nagkakasama, tapos ako, nagtatrabaho lang o nag-aaral maghapon.” Participant 3 reflects on their emotional disconnection from peers, a consequence of their breadwinning responsibilities. The phrase “feeling ko parang out of place” (I feel out of place) captures the loneliness and exclusion they experience, as they are unable to participate in typical student activities. Hermeneutically, this reflects a widening rift between their lived reality and the idealized experiences of their peers, exacerbating feelings of inadequacy and emotional isolation.

Pressure and Expectations from Peers

Participant 4 discusses their interactions with peers: “Kapag po nag aaya sila ng gala kaso ako lagi yung wala tapos sasabihin po nila sa akin na ano ba naman yan panay ka trabaho di ka na sumasama tapos parang ako po yung nakokonsensya kasi tama naman po sila...” Participant 4 reveals how social pressures compound their sense of guilt and inadequacy. The phrase “nakokonsensya” (I feel guilty) illustrates their internal conflict between meeting breadwinning responsibilities and maintaining social relationships. Hermeneutically, this highlights the cultural tension between pakikisama (social harmony) and individual responsibility.

Table 4: Erosion of Self

Key Findings	
Erosion of Self	Forced Role and Familial Expectations Guilt and Emotional Exhaustion Premature Responsibility and Emotional Pressure Disconnection from Aspirations and Self-Fulfillment

Hermeneutical Theme 2: Erosion of Self

The participants’ reflections illustrate a gradual disconnection from their sense of self, as familial and societal responsibilities take precedence over their individual growth and personal aspirations. This theme captures the psychological burden of breadwinning, where the participants’ identities are shaped and constrained by external demands.

Forced Role and Familial Expectations

Participant 4 remarked, “Napapatong po ako na bakit ako pa po eh ako po yung bunso... ako lang po kasi yung babae sa aming magkakapatid... yung pakiramdam ko po na kaya naman po nila baka po pwedeng sila naman magtrabaho...” Participant 4’s statement reflects a profound sense of displacement, where their identity as the “bunso” (youngest child) and the “only girl” becomes a focal point for questioning their assigned role. Hermeneutically, their rhetorical “bakit ako pa?” (why me?) signifies an existential struggle with their forced transition from a dependent role to a breadwinner. The pain of

“napilitan ako magtrabaho at mag-aral” (I was forced to work and study) highlights how their personal development has been subordinated to family responsibilities, resulting in a loss of autonomy and a disconnect from their individual identity.

Guilt and Emotional Exhaustion: Participant 3 expresses the emotional toll of juggling responsibilities: “Minsan, feeling ko hindi ko na na-aabot yung mga bagay na dapat para sa sarili ko—like, ‘yung simpleng pahinga lang, wala na. Laging may guilt na nararamdaman, kasi kahit gusto ko magpahinga, kailangan ko pa magtrabaho, mag-aral, at mag-asikaso sa bahay. Sobrang draining, tapos parang feeling ko na walang time para sa sarili ko, or worse, parang hindi ko na alam kung ano pa yung mga bagay na gusto ko matutunan o ma-achieve.” Participant 3’s statement captures the profound exhaustion and guilt that come with balancing multiple roles. The phrase “laging may guilt” (there’s always guilt) underscores the internalized pressure to prioritize work and family over personal needs, even when rest is desperately needed. Hermeneutically, this reflects the Filipino cultural

value of pagtitiis (endurance), where self-sacrifice is idealized, often at the expense of individual well-being.

Premature Responsibility and Emotional Pressure:

Participant 2 reflects on the overwhelming nature of taking on adult responsibilities too early: “Always pressured talaga sa mga responsibility na feeling ko di ko pa naman dapat ginagawa. May oras nga na hindi ko na nagagampanan ng maayos yung responsibilidad ko sa bahay pati na rin sa school sa sobrang pressure na nararamdaman ko.” Participant 2’s statement reveals the internal conflict of being thrust into roles they perceive as premature. The phrase “di ko pa naman dapat ginagawa” (I shouldn’t be doing this yet) captures the emotional strain of taking on responsibilities that clash with their developmental stage. Hermeneutically, this reflects the concept of pagsasakripisyo (sacrifice), a cornerstone of Filipino family dynamics, where younger members often assume adult roles to support the household.

Disconnection from Aspirations and Self-Fulfillment:

Participant 1 shares: “Minsan naiisip ko kung ganito na lang ba talaga ang buhay ko—gising, trabaho, aral, tulog, tapos ulit lang. Parang wala nang saysay, tapos iniisip ko na lang na kailangan ko lang tiisin para sa pamilya ko.” Participant 1’s statement reflects a deep existential frustration, as their daily routine feels devoid of meaning beyond fulfilling obligations. The phrase “wala nang saysay” (it feels meaningless) captures the erosion of their sense of purpose, as the repetitive nature of their responsibilities leaves little room for personal growth or fulfillment. Hermeneutically, this reveals a tension between their cultural role as a breadwinner and their desire for a more meaningful existence.

The participant’s reliance on “kailangan ko lang tiisin” (I need to endure) exemplifies pagtitiis, a cultural expectation to bear suffering silently for the greater good. While this mindset sustains their resolve, it also perpetuates a cycle of self-neglect, where their identity becomes subsumed by their duties. Hermeneutically, this suggests that the breadwinner role, while noble, can erode individuality by reducing life to a series of obligations devoid of personal agency.

4. Discussion

The findings also demonstrate that, while personal resilience is crucial, the support systems in place are equally critical in helping breadwinner students manage the competing demands of their roles. Family encouragement, peer support, and practical help from friends and family members enable these students to cope with the emotional strain of balancing multiple responsibilities. This collective support system contributes significantly to their ability to maintain motivation, emotional wellbeing, and perseverance. Breadwinner students’ experiences show that success is rarely a solitary pursuit; it is deeply rooted in both personal resolve and external support, confirming the importance of these networks in navigating academic and personal challenges.

Moreover, the study reveals that breadwinner students frequently experience moments of hidden resentment and erosion of self, which are deeply intertwined with the emotional toll of fulfilling dual roles as both students and primary financial providers. These students often feel conflicted as their familial responsibilities take precedence over their academic goals and personal aspirations, leading to a sense of frustration and emotional burden. Hidden resentment manifests as feelings of being unappreciated or overwhelmed, particularly when the demands of providing for the family clash with the desire to focus on their studies

or personal growth. Participants expressed a deep sense of internal conflict as they were expected to meet the financial and emotional needs of their families, often at the expense of their own academic success or well-being. This resentment, however, is rarely voiced, as many students suppress these emotions to fulfill the societal and cultural expectations placed upon them, particularly in a familial context that values sacrifice and endurance.

Simultaneously, the erosion of self is a recurring theme, where the constant balancing act between work, family, and studies leads to a gradual loss of individual identity. Breadwinner students often find themselves so consumed by their responsibilities that their personal goals, desires, and sense of self become secondary. This erosion manifests in students’ growing disconnection from their own aspirations as their focus shifts entirely to fulfilling the needs of others. Many participants spoke of how they felt increasingly distant from their own dreams and ambitions, as their role as breadwinners and the pressure to support their families took precedence over their academic pursuits. Over time, this unrelenting focus on external obligations leaves little room for self-care or personal development, further exacerbating the emotional strain.

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