

The Invisible Victims: A Narrative Inquiry on the Experiences of Children with Incarcerated Mothers

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Abstract: This qualitative narrative study explores the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers in Koronadal City, South Cotabato, Philippines. The study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the perceived impact, the emotional, social, and academic challenges faced by these children, and to identify the strengths and resources they can draw upon for resilience. This study uses an ecological systems theory framework to understand the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers. The study involves 5-7 participants who are 15-22 years old and a child of incarcerated mothers. The participants' experiences are explored through semi-structured interviews and narrative analysis. The findings of this study highlight the complex and multifaceted experiences of children with incarcerated mothers. The participants' stories reveal the emotional distress, stigma, and feelings of abandonment they experience as a result of their mother's incarceration. The study also identifies the coping strategies and support systems that children use to navigate these challenges. The study concludes that children with incarcerated mothers face unique challenges that require targeted support and interventions. The findings have implications for policymakers, educators, social workers, and researchers who work with children affected by maternal incarceration. The study highlights the need for policies and programs that support the well-being and resilience of these children, and provides a framework for understanding their experiences and developing effective interventions.

Keywords: Experience, Children, Incarcerated Mothers, Support, Philippines.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Children of incarcerated mothers are often forgotten victims of the criminal justice system. These children are deeply affected by the incarceration of their mothers, regardless of the reasons for their incarceration. According to Poehlmann, (2024), children of incarcerated mothers in the Philippines are at a greater risk of experiencing adverse mental health outcomes such as depression and anxiety. The study also found that these children often experience financial difficulties and lack access to education and healthcare services. Children of incarcerated mothers are often forgotten victims of the criminal justice system and face numerous challenges in their lives. The negative impact of maternal incarceration on the mental health of children in the Philippines.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of people being incarcerated, particularly among those from minority ethnic backgrounds and low-income families. This has resulted in parental incarceration becoming a frequent occurrence for children who are already

marginalized sections of society. This situation can cause physical and emotional trauma, societal stigma, financial difficulties, and relationship strains for family members, often resulting in negative outcomes for children in areas such as education, behavior, health, and overall hardships (Turney and Goodshell, 2018).

This qualitative study seeks to capture the nuances of these children's experiences, rather than merely quantifying the impact of maternal incarceration on their lives. Current literature lacks an adequate understanding of the nuanced experiences of children with incarcerated mothers, particularly in Koronadal City, South Cotabato. The insights gained from this study will help the researcher to identify and address the challenges and experiences that these children face and develop more effective intervention strategies to support them. By using this knowledge, the researcher can provide the necessary support and resources to help these children thrive and lead productive lives.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This qualitative study on the experience of children with detained mothers generally aimed to narrate the live experience of children with incarcerated mothers.

A. Specially, the Researcher sought to Explore and Answer the following questions:

- How do children perceive the impact of their mother's incarceration?
- What are the challenges faced by the children of incarcerated mothers?
- How do children cope with the absence of their mothers?
- How do they maintain their connections with their mothers?
- What are the support systems available to children of incarcerated mothers

III. THEORETICAL LENS

In this qualitative study, using a theory provides a rich and nuanced framework for understanding the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers. This narrative study on the experience of children with incarcerated mothers was underpinned by the Ecological Systems Theory (1979). This theory understands that individuals are not isolated entities, but are instead deeply embedded within various social, cultural, and environmental contexts that shape their experiences and development.

In understanding children's development within their ecological framework, Bronfenbrenner's theory defines a child's experiences as a complex "layers" of environment, each having an impact on their development. This framework allows us to appreciate the multifaceted experiences of children with incarcerated mothers and the many ways in which they are shaped by their environment.

In applying this theory to the study of children with incarcerated mothers, the readers can see how their experiences are impacted by multiple systems within the ecological framework. The microsystem, which includes their immediate relationships, plays a pivotal role in their well-being. The absence of maternal care can have serious negative effects on their emotional and psychological health. Additionally, the mesosystem, which includes relationships and interactions between different microsystem components, is also crucial. Here, the social support network that the child is exposed to can make a big difference in their ability to cope and thrive.

The macro system, which is the broader cultural context that shapes values and beliefs, also contributes significantly to the experiences of these children. The stigma that often surrounds incarceration can have a profound influence on the child's social relationships and overall well-being.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This narrative inquiry on the experience of children with incarcerated mothers was foreseen to directly benefit various individuals, groups, and other researchers namely: It can help mothers become more involved in their children's development and encourage them to actively seek out support that can improve the emotional, mental and physical well-being of their children. This study can help improve the care, custody, and treatment of these children, and help mitigate negative consequences of maternal incarceration related to mental health, education, and family dynamics. Educators can use the information from the study to design interventions that promote academic achievement while also addressing the emotional and psychological needs of these children.

Social Workers. Social workers can use the information from the study to understand the challenges faced by children with incarcerated mothers and shape their interventions accordingly.

V. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

This Qualitative Narrative study will focus solely on the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers. The study will not include the experiences of children with incarcerated fathers or both parents, nor will it include the experiences of children whose family members or close friends are incarcerated. This study involved 5-7 participants who were 15-22 years old and a child of Incarcerated Mothers from Koronadal City, South Cotabato.

Possible discomfort or emotional distress that participants may experience while discussing their experiences with the researcher. Caring for participants' emotional well-being will be a priority throughout the study, and the researcher will provide appropriate support and resources as necessary (Smith, 2011).

VI. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Perceptions of Children on the Impact of their mothers' Incarceration.

According to Murray and Farrington (2019), children of incarcerated mothers often experience high levels of emotional distress and perceive negative effects on their well-being, including disrupted familial relationships, stigma, school performance, behavioral issues, and mental health problems. Children also express feelings of abandonment, guilt, and shame due to their mothers' incarceration. In addition, children's perceptions of their mothers' incarceration are linked to their understanding of the reasons for their mother's arrest, their connection with their incarcerated mothers, and the amount of social support they receive (Poehlmann et al., 2005). Children with a better understanding of the circumstances leading to their mothers' incarceration and those who regularly visit their mothers are more likely to maintain positive relationships with their mothers and report fewer negative impacts (Cho et al., 2017).

Apart from this, the impact of maternal incarceration on children's well-being can be mediated by the presence of caring adults in their lives, such as grandparents, other relatives, and mentors. Studies have shown that children who feel supported and loved by caregivers exhibit better emotional adjustment and school performance than those who lack these relationships. Mentoring programs have also been shown to provide a sense of stability and positive role models, leading to improved academic achievement and reduced behavioral problems (Rollin et al., 2018).

Additionally, children's experiences with parental incarceration are vast. Some children have witnessed their parent's crimes or observed their arrest. Children also experience custodial separation, instability in living arrangements, and stressful visitations with their parents who are in jail or prison. These experiences impact the mental health, behavior, and academic performance of children. (Besemer, 2019)

Furthermore, according to Amato (2001), children of incarcerated mothers identified emotional support and financial support as key needs, and also expressed that maintaining contact with their mother was important for their well-being. Those children of incarcerated parents have a strong desire to discuss their experiences with peers, to help them cope with stigma and social isolation.

In addition, according to the article entitled How do children handle the incarceration of a mother "n.d." from Grand Valley State University, Children, particularly, perceive their mother as all-powerful and significant. If their mothers are placed in a powerless or violated state, such as being apprehended and imprisoned, the children become highly vulnerable. They may face higher chances of attack or criticism or perceived danger. Moreover, it is not uncommon for children to live in deprived conditions while their mother is away. This could add to their personal stress levels.

In the study of Dallaire et. al, (2019), found that students with incarcerated mothers were more likely considered at-risk and faced stigmas in the school setting. Moreover, teachers maintained low expectations of students with incarcerated mothers; knowing that a parent was incarcerated was a factor in determining expectations and the perceived competence level of a student.

Lastly, a study of Heinecke (2019), feelings of confusion, disappointment, and hardship when a mother is incarcerated because they don't know the reason why their mother went to jail. Also, many children only hear the story from one perspective: their mother, that they are lost and confused about what happened because they still have good memories of their father and relatives

B. Challenges faced by Children of Incarcerated mothers.

Social stigma is a common challenge faced by children of incarcerated mothers, who may experience discrimination and prejudice from peers, relatives, and the wider community (Ogrizek et.al, 2023). Such stigmatization can lead to feelings of shame and embarrassment, contributing to the social

isolation and low self-esteem experienced by many of these children.

In addition, economic hardship is another significant challenge. The loss of a parent's income can push these households into poverty, which can limit access to resources such as food, healthcare, and educational opportunities (Cabezas, 2019). The added cost of visiting incarcerated mothers, as well as the burden of arranging care for younger siblings or other family members, can further exacerbate financial difficulties.

Moreover, psychological distress is also common among children of incarcerated mothers in the Philippines. Research suggests that many of these children experience depression, anxiety, behavioral problems, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The trauma of separation, uncertainty about their mother's condition, and lack of parental support can all contribute to these mental health issues. (American Psychological Association, 2023)

Apart from this, access to education and support services can also be a challenge for children of incarcerated mothers in the Philippines. These children may be forced to drop out of school due to financial constraints, lack of appropriate care, and social stigma (Poehlmann et. al, 2013).

Furthermore, the incarceration of a parent typically leads to a greater reliance on non-parental care for the child, especially as mothers tend to be the primary caregiver. Although many mothers may find a relative or friend to provide childcare, a notable proportion of children may end up in state care due to circumstances surrounding their parent's incarceration. This can create various challenges for mothers, such as conflicting roles, overwhelming responsibilities, and limited resources, which require adequate support and intervention for their children (Handerson and Berla, 2019)).

Lastly, children with parents in prison may encounter a variety of difficult situations, including traumatic experiences related to their parent's arrest or the events that preceded it. Moreover, these children may also be at a higher risk of experiencing other negative events during their childhood, such as exposure to substance misuse, domestic abuse, or violence within their neighborhoods (Youth.Gov n, d.)

C. Coping Strategies of Children with the Absence of their mother.

According to a study by Litonio and Alberto (2018), social support from family, friends, and school can help children cope. In some cases, children can live with extended family members who provide a stable environment and emotional support. Furthermore, children may also turn to peer groups for support and solidarity.

Jose and Regalado (2016), found that children who engaged in sports and other recreational activities showed improved emotional well-being, such as being less anxious or feeling more confident. Participating in extracurricular activities can provide children with a sense of belonging and

connection to their peers, which can counteract the feelings of isolation and stigmatization that they may experience due to their mother's incarceration.

Research conducted by Shlafer et al. (2009), found that counseling helped children who have incarcerated mothers communicate their feelings and develop coping and resilience skills. Therapy and counseling can help children cope with the emotional toll of having an incarcerated mother, which can include feelings of shame, guilt, fear, abandonment, and mistrust. Through therapy, children can learn how to express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment, communicate their needs and concerns, and develop healthy coping strategies for dealing with stressors related to their mother's incarceration.

According to Bal et.al, (2003), one of the most common coping mechanisms is social support. Children who have a strong support network of family members or friends are better equipped to deal with the absence of their mother. This support may help alleviate emotional distress and provide children with a sense of security and comfort. Maintaining a connection with the incarcerated mother. Children who are able to maintain regular contact with their mother through letters, phone calls, or visits are better able to cope with her absence. Maintaining this connection may help alleviate feelings of abandonment and foster a sense of closeness and attachment

Children who are able to regulate their emotions and express their feelings in a healthy manner are better equipped to deal with the absence of their mother. This coping strategy may involve seeking support from trusted adults or engaging in activities, such as art or sports, that help express emotions (Luthar et. al, 2019).

Some children may use distraction as a coping mechanism. Engaging in activities, such as school, hobbies, or spending time with friends, may help children distract themselves from the emotional pain of their mother's absence. However, this coping strategy can also result in emotional suppression and may lead to more long-term psychological distress (Kim and Lee, 2017).

Lastly, according to Goodwin et. al, (2014), children adopted consistent strategies, including having supportive people as well as talking openly about the situation with staff in their schools. Distracting activities and support from NGO's programs were also important for coping. A consistent finding throughout the included studies was the stigmatization of children who had a parent in prison

D. Maintaining Connections with mothers During Incarceration.

According to a study conducted by Bitonio and Alberto (2018), children of incarcerated mothers in the Philippines are allowed to visit their mothers weekly or bi-weekly as long as they are accompanied by a responsible adult. These visits provide children with an opportunity to physically see and communicate with their mothers, strengthening their emotional connection.

Furthermore, staying in regular contact, be it through letters, phone calls, or visits, can preserve a bond between incarcerated mothers and their children, thereby imparting a sense of comfort and steadiness to these children, making it easier for them to handle their mother's absence. Community groups, schools, or counselling services can facilitate and back up communication between these mothers and their children by offering resources and support to arrange visits, assisting with letter writing, and helping with phone calls. By staying connected with their mother, children can feel a sense of belonging and reduce the likelihood of feeling isolated and ostracized (Beresford et al., 2020).

The ramifications of parental incarceration on children are expansive and go beyond the incarcerated parent-child relationship. It affects various facets of a child's existence, including their residence, academic performance, familial bonds, and social standing in the community. These shifts can be especially challenging to navigate when they occur after the loss of a parent to imprisonment (Ceballo and Absin, 2022).

Lastly, Bitonio and Alberto (2018) found that visits with their incarcerated mothers and regular communication through phone calls or letters are important ways for children to feel connected to their mothers and reduce feelings of abandonment. The ability to maintain a connection with an incarcerated parent can help children build a sense of stability and security, which can help them cope with the trauma of having a parent in jail or prison

E. Support Systems for Children of Incarcerated mothers.

According to the Philippine Prison System Guidelines Manual (2018), children of incarcerated mothers are given priority for visitation rights, as well as given special attention and support from correctional personnel. The Bureau of Corrections also collaborates with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide necessary services, such as education, counseling, and social support for these children.

In a study conducted by Reyes and Moran (2019), they found that the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) in Mandaluyong City provides educational and psychological services for the children of incarcerated mothers. CIW offers a daycare center for children below seven years old, where they receive free education and are provided with meals, hygiene kits, and other basic necessities. Children aged seven to 12 years old attend classes in nearby public schools and receive financial assistance for their school requirements. Psychological services are also available for children who need it, and they are encouraged to participate in group activities and recreational programs.

Another study conducted by Villanueva and Quijote (2018), highlights the importance of community-based programs that address the needs of children of incarcerated mothers. They found that the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City established a program specifically aimed at supporting these children. The program provides education, health care,

and counseling services, as well as recreational and cultural activities to promote their social and emotional well-being.

Children who have an incarcerated parent may experience financial hardship that results from the loss of that parent's income. Further, some incarcerated parents face termination of parental rights because their children have been in the foster care system beyond the time allowed by law or have questions about child support. These children require support from local, state, and federal systems to serve their needs (Brown, 2017).

Family-based interventions that focus on strengthening the relationships between the incarcerated mother and her children have also been effective in improving outcomes. For instance, the Family Connections program supports mother-child relationships and provides psycho-education for both mothers and children to understand and cope with the effects of parental incarceration (Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2015). Support of grandparents, aunts, and uncles, can minimize the effect of separation and incarceration on children (Farabee et al., 2021).

According to research by Turney and Wildeman (2017), having an incarcerated mother has significant negative effects on a child's well-being. However, several support systems have been identified to promote positive outcomes for these children. For example, mentorship programs such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters program have shown promising results in improving academic achievement and reducing risky behaviors. Additionally, prison visitation programs that allow children to maintain regular contact with their incarcerated mothers have been found to improve attachment and reduce internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Cho et al., 2017).

VII. METHODS

A. Research Design

A Qualitative Narrative study on the experience of the children with incarcerated mothers is a study that sought data and information from the children who have a mother in a correctional facility. According to Denzin (2011), Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that aims to understand the meaning and richness of human experiences, behaviors, and interactions. This approach emphasizes the importance of context, subjective interpretation, and in-depth exploration to generate insights that are often nuanced and complex. This study relied on real-life experiences as a source of data in order to better understand their conditions and how they deal with it.

According to Riessman (2008), the qualitative narrative approach emphasizes the significance of personal narratives as a means to understand human experiences, highlighting the subjective nature of reality and individual contexts. By employing in-depth interviews, researchers collect detailed stories that capture the nuances of lived experiences, focusing on how narratives are structured and the meanings they convey. This method encourages an analysis of themes and patterns within stories while considering the social, cultural, and historical contexts that influence them. Reflexivity is

essential in this approach, as researchers must remain aware of their biases to accurately represent participants' perspectives.

B. Role of the Researcher

This study allowed the researcher who was a social work student to enhance his skills and suffice his knowledge. The role of the researcher in this was to document the study for the readers (documenter), and also enable them to understand what are the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers (enabler). such as what are the challenges they face and how do they cope with the absence of their mothers who are in a correctional facility. Furthermore, the researcher's participation in seeking the participant's information about the experience of children with incarcerated mothers was to talk about the topics that are personal to them. The researcher played a crucial role in ensuring that accurate and reliable data was gathered. This involved conducting interviews, collecting data and analyzing the information to draw valid conclusions. Additionally, the researcher had to maintain objectivity throughout the study to ensure that the study was unbiased and free from any form of influence. Moreover, the researcher had to establish a level of trust and rapport with the participants to ensure that they were comfortable sharing their experiences. The researcher had to create a safe and non-judgmental environment to encourage the participants to open up and discuss their emotions and thoughts.

C. Research Participants

As narrative approaches explore the experience of individuals, participants of study were 5-7 children of detained mothers who would typically comprise children who have mothers in correctional facilities. The inclusion criteria for participants may involve; Children of incarcerated mothers, with an age range between 15-22 years old, Children with or without behavioral or emotional problems related to their mother's incarceration, Children who have lived in poverty or have experienced economic hardship. Lastly, their mothers are currently serving their sentence in a correctional facility. Additionally, participants may be selected based on their willingness to participate in the study and the availability of their time.

D. Research Locale

This qualitative study was conducted in the City of Koronadal, it is a component city located in the center of South Cotabato province in the Philippines. It is bounded by the municipalities of Tampakan to the west, Banga to the north, Tupi to the east, and Polomolok to the south. Koronadal City is divided into 27 barangays, each with its own unique culture and traditions. The study aimed to explore the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers in the city. The research was conducted in several barangays within Koronadal City, South Cotabato. These areas were chosen based on the significant number of mothers who are currently incarcerated. The study involved a series of in-depth interviews with children aged 15 to 22 years' old who have experienced having a mother in prison. The interviews were conducted in various settings, including the homes of the participants, schools, and community centers.

E. Research Instrument

The study will involve semi-structured interviews with the participants to collect qualitative, open-ended data. The researcher and participants engage in a formal interview. The researcher develops and utilizes an interview guide, a list of open-ended questions, and topics that the researcher will cover in the interview. Where they would be given the opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts, and support systems related to their mothers' incarceration. In adapting the semi-structured interview utilized by Mishler, E. G. in his book, "Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative" (1991). Mishler emphasizes the importance of conducting interviews that allow the researcher to gather rich and detailed data, while also ensuring that the research is structured and focused. He argues that semi-structured interviews allow for a balance between structure and flexibility, as they provide a framework for the interview while also allowing for more in-depth exploration of certain topics.

By using semi structured interviews in this study, the researcher will start with general questions about the participant's personal background, experiences during their mothers' incarceration and then gradually move towards more specific questions related to the mother's incarceration. These questions may include, their perception on the impact of their mothers' incarceration, challenges they faced, how do they cope with the absence of their mothers, maintaining

connections during their mothers' incarceration, and the support system they have.

F. Data Collection

The data collection for a qualitative study on the experiences of children with incarcerated mothers was collected through semi-structured interviews. An interview which consisted of 5 questions mainly formulated to ask how do children perceive the impact of their mothers' incarceration, what are their challenges, how do they cope in the absence of their mothers, how do they maintain a connection to their mothers, and lastly what are the support systems they have.

The researcher prepared a letter such as Permission Letter for the Instructor, Informed consent for the participants, Participants Agreement Form which comprised the participants and researchers agreement for the conduct of the interview and transcription of the data collected then, the researcher send Caregiver Consent Form to the Guardian and the to the children , which contains the agreement between the researcher and the caregivers indicating that they are allowing the children to participate in the study. After that, the researcher started to conduct an interview with his participants and the researcher will take a picture, and recorded interview that serve as his guide. Lastly, the researcher will analyze the data that has been gathered.

VIII. RESULTS*A. Perception of the impact of their mother's incarceration.*

Table 1 Presents how Children Perceived the Impact of their Mother's Incarceration.

Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
1.1 Shouldering Responsibility	Acting as both mother and father to youngest sibling Assuming the maternal role and leading the siblings Feels the burden of taking on the responsibilities that were previously handled by their mother Prioritizing their family responsibilities over their academic pursuits
1.2 Bullying and Stigmatization	Being bullied and gossiped about by their classmates. Negatively impacted by judging based on mother's actions. Afraid of being the subject of gossip and rumors in their neighborhood due to their mother's imprisonment
1.3 A Different Reality	Expresses a desire for a different reality where their mother was never incarcerated. Dreams of shared experiences and milestones
1.4 Disrupted Family	The family structure has been disrupted due to the mother's imprisonment, leading to a broken family Increased responsibilities placed on siblings or other family members to fill the caregiving gap, sometimes leading to role reversals and stress.

*"Ako tung gatindog bilang nanay kag tatay sa kamanghudan ko kailangan ko gid mag doble kayod sir kay estudyante pa lang ko"(Brook P1 |51-53) (As I grew up as a mother and father to my younger siblings, I had to work double time, sir, even though I was still a student.)

*"Ay kung sa epekto lang sir sang nakulong si mama ko kung kis-a sa balay bala aw makaapekto gid sya kaw daw ako

na bala ang nagtungtong ah.. ako na ang nag lead as nanay sa mga manghod ko".(Stussy P2 |100-102|)

(The effect of my mother's incarceration, sir, sometimes at home, it really affects me because it's like I'm the one who's standing up. I'm the one leading as a mother to my siblings.)

*“Tung nakulong ang mother ko sir aw naisip ko nga paano na kami sini tapos ang gina ano ko pa gid sato, ang manghod ko kay syempre wala na bala ang mother ko nakulong man sya ako na bala ang mag tindog bala as mother nya so na stress bala ko like ang mga responsibilities nga dapat sa mother ko sa akon na sya nagkadto”. (Esmeralda P4|27-31)

(My mother is in jail, sir. I thought about how we would manage here, and what I would do with my siblings. My older brother, of course, is also without a mother. She is in jail, and I am the one who has to take care of her. So, I am stressed because I have to handle the responsibilities that should be my mother's, but she is not here.)

*“Tung nagstart nga nakulong ang mother ko nang hindi na ko naka focus bala sa studies ko hindi ko na ma manage ang time ko kay syempre ginaisip ko gani bala ang mga responsibility ko bala sa manghod ko sir aw”.(Esmeralda P4|57-60|)

(When my mother started getting arrested, I couldn't focus on my studies anymore. I couldn't manage my time because I was always thinking about my responsibilities towards my older brother, sir.)

*“Mabatian ko sa mga classmates ko daw gasunlog-sunlog bala sila aw kay si mama ko nakulong na tapos daw permi gina bully nalang nila ko kay tungod kay wala na ko sang mam.” (Stussy P2|26-29|)

(I could hear from my classmates that they were whispering to each other because my mother was already in jail. Then they would always just bully me because my mother was no longer there)

*“Ang du perception abi sang tao sa palibot nang kung ano daw ang puno amo man daw ang bunga nang daw gina stigmatized bala kami sir aw basi kami man daw mailog kami sa mother namon nga makahimo kami sang malain.” (Esmeralda P4 |100-103|)

(The perception of people around us is that we are the fruit of our mother's mistake, and we are stigmatized because of it, sir. Maybe we are also being influenced by our mother to become different.)

*“Nahadlok ko nga e chissmiss bala ko sang mga kapitbahay bala aw, kay syempre nakulong ang akon nga maam tapos kung mag gwa gid man ko sa balay may mabatian bala ko nga mga istorya , tapos kis-a mga ano pa gid na mga kalain bala nga istorya about sa akon mama kay nakulong sya.” (NamiP3 |17-21|)

(I'm afraid that if I go out, my neighbors will gossip about me. Of course, my teacher is in jail, and if I go out of the house, I might hear some stories, and sometimes even bad stories about my mother because she is in jail.)

*“May impact sya sakon sa pag skwela ko tapos ng gina bully nila ko gina descriminate nila ko ti sa part ko nga aramaman husto na nga pag-iisip nga daw ang gina-isip siguro sang mga classmates ko sakon daw higko naman bala ko daw gina-isip nila nga nang same gyapon ko sa mama ko nga amu sina.” (StussyP2 |66-70|)

(My mother's incarceration has an impact on my studies, and they bully me, discriminate against me, and think that I'm like my mother, who is in jail. They probably think that I'm also like my mother, who is in jail, and that's what they're thinking about me.)

*“What if indi nakulong ang mother ko nang tani siguro honor gyapon ko asta subong like ang isa pa gid nga what if ko , what if indi nakulong mother ko siguro kumpleto tani gyapon kami subong may ara bala mag care sa amon bala sir aw.” (Esmeralda P4 |57-60|)

(What if my mother wasn't imprisoned? Maybe I would still have honor now. Like, what if my mother wasn't imprisoned? Maybe we would be complete now, and there would be someone to take care of us, sir, right?)

*“Kung wala nakulong si mama tani sya ang upod ko magsaka sa stage kada recognition day sa school bah, sa iya ko tani isabit ang mga medal ko.”(Nami P3|120-121|)

(If mom hadn't been incarcerated, she would have been the one with me going up on stage every recognition day at school, and I would have hung my medals on her.)

*“Nag broken family kami kay na priso si mamang then satu nakapingita si papa sang asawa nga bag-o then kami nga mag utod gusto nya tani kami ipa adapt tapos gikuha nalang kami ni lola.” Sanji P5 (|22-24|)”

(We became a broken family because our mother was imprisoned. Then, our father looked for a new wife. He wanted to have us, his children, adopted, but our grandmother just took us in instead.)

*“Sang nakulong si mama daw gisalo ko tanan ng responsibilidad ang iya tani nga responsibilidad sa mga manghod ko gi angkon ko nalang kay way ko choice.” Brook P1(|7-9|)”

(When mom was incarcerated, I took on all the responsibilities that were supposed to be hers for my younger siblings. I just accepted it because I had no choice.)

B. What are the Challenges faced by the Children of Incarcerated mothers?

Table 2 presents the challenges of children of with incarcerated mothers.

Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
2.1 Emotional Turmoil	Often crying when they consider the challenges their younger siblings face growing up without a mother present, Struggle to come to terms with the fact that their mother is incarcerated, finding it difficult to fully accept this reality Frequent tears as they constantly think about their mother's incarceration.
2.2 Educational Sacrifice	Considers abandoning their education due to the difficulties Dropping school over family responsibility
2.4 Challenges of Prison Visitation	Strictness of the detention center Faces a challenge when visiting their parents inside the prison,
2.5 Economic Distress	Faces financial hardship and food insecurity due to the father's addiction or vice. The struggle to fulfill their basic needs on a daily basis Programs provided through the father, leading to difficulties in accessing the intended support Faces financial challenges at school, where contributions are required for projects and passing grades.
2.6 Gravely Demotivated	Loss of motivation to attend school due to being bullied about their mother's incarceration. Inability to accept their mother's imprisonment has led to a loss of motivation and a struggle to maintain their academic focus and performance.
2.7 Dysfunctional Family	Dealing with the emotional turmoil caused by their father's behavior in the absence of their mother. Emotions rooted in the sense of incompleteness and longing for a whole family unit
2.8 Stigmatization and Stereotyping	Experience of being stigmatized by people in their community due to their mother's actions. Friends are distancing and excluding them

*“Sakit sir kis-a gahibi nalang ko kay gina isip ko mga manghod ko gadaragko nga wala sang nanay ang nanay namon ara sa prisohan.” (Brook P1 |33-35|) (“It hurts, sir, because I’m thinking about my younger siblings who are left without a mother, and our mother is in prison.”)

*“Kay may times nga gani satu nga pila gid ka nga mga gab-e nga gahibi lang ko kay amu gani na sir di ko gid dawit nga nakulong si mama.” (Stussy P2 |33-35|) (Because there are times when I feel like I’m just a few hours away from being left behind, and I don’t want it to)

*“Always ko nga nagahibi ei kay syempre gina isip ko si mama bala aw nga nakulong tapos naga longing bala ko sang pagpalangga kag care nya kay namiss ko na gid sya.” (Nami P3 |144-146|) (I always feel like I’m missing her because I always think about my mother, who is in prison, and I long for her love and care because I miss her very much.)

*“Umpisa sang nakulong ang nanay ko sir daw iuntat ko nalang gani akon nga pag eskwelan kay nabudlayan ko sir kay akon nga mga manghod wala gid may gabantay.” (Brook P1 |75-77|) (When my mother was imprisoned, sir, I was the one who took care of my studies because I was struggling, sir, because my younger siblings didn’t have anyone to take care of them.)

*“Nag untat ko skwela para mangita ubra kag paunahon ko lang makagraduate and mga manghod ko” (Sanji P5 |32-33|). (I stopped studying to find work and prioritize my younger siblings’ education so that they can graduate first.)

*“Hmm magdalaw ka abi kis-a sir ano nang perti gid ka laba ang pila tapos init pa gid damo pa sang ano kay gina check up na kamo didto sir grabe gid na ka ano.” Brook P1 |153-155|) (Hmm, you’re going to visit, It’s really far, and it’s hot, and there are a lot of things to check up on there, sir. It’s really difficult.)

*“Bago ka gali makasulod sa kulungan or bag-o ka magdalaw didto sa imo nga parents sa sulod sang kulungan, e paubahon ka tapos I-check bala tanan-tanan.” Nami P3 |222-224|) (Before you enter the prison or visit your parents inside the prison, you will be searched thoroughly and everything will be checked.)

*“Kis-a sa balay wala na kami may ma kaon kay tungod sa bisyo bala ni papa daw nag develop iya nga bisyo sa inom nya kay daw gidibidib nya man siguro ang pagkakulong ni mama.” (Stussy P2 |54-57|) (It’s hard at home because we don’t have food because of my father’s addiction. He developed his addiction to drinking, and I think he’s really scared of my mother’s imprisonment.)

*“Pinakadako ko nga challenges sang nakulong si mama ko kay tung sa mga adlaw-adlaw bala namon nga kinahanglan like basic needs namon nang may times nga indi bala kami kakaon kay tungod amo gani tu si papa ko indi nya madawat nga nakulong si mama.” Stussy P2 |135-139|) (The biggest challenge for me is my mother’s imprisonment because we need basic necessities every day. There are times when we don’t have food because of my father’s inability to accept that my mother is in prison.)

*“Ay tung dati nadulaan na gid ko gana mag eskwela kay tungod amuna kay gina bully nila ko si mama ko nakulong daw kuno amu na tapos nang indi ko gid gusto nga mag eskwela kay nahadlok ko sa ila nga sunlog-sunlog amu na gina chismis pa ko.” Stussy P2 (|160-163|) (Ah, in the past, I really didn't want to go to school because of my classmates who would bully me, saying that my mother was in prison. Then, I didn't want to go to school anymore because I was afraid of their whispers and gossip.)

*“Daw nadulaan ko gana sa pag eskwela kay ah since nabudlayan ko kay naanad na ko kay mama na side kay permi sya gasuporta sa akon the nadulaan ko gaana sa pag eskwela kay diko tanggap nga na priso si mamang.” (Sanji P5 |26-28|) (I was really struggling in school because I was already used to my mother's support, and now she's in prison. I was really struggling in school because I couldn't accept that my mother was imprisoned.)

*“Dako-dako gid sya nga epekto sa amon nga pamilya kay si papa always nalang sya nga gapahubog taga gab-e gamaoy kay syempre nawala si mama sa amon kay nakulong na sya tapos always nya ko nga gina akigan, ginawayyawan, tapos bisan gmay lang nga mali bala nga mahimo ko sa balay nang permi nya lang ko gina buyayaw.” Nami P3(|36-40|) (It has a very big effect on our family because my father is always drunk and violent in the evening. Of course, my

mother is no longer with us because she is in prison. He always scolds, beats, and belittles me, and even if I make a small mistake at home, he just buys me off to shut me up.)

*“challenges nga naagyan ko tung na priso si mamang ko is syempre may kainggit sa iban nga family kay kumpleto sila tas ako indi.” (Sanji P5 |32-33|) (The challenges I faced when my mother was imprisoned are that, of course, there are other families that are complete and I am not.)

*“Ang du perception abi sang tao sa palibot nang kung ano daw ang puno amo man daw ang bunga nang daw gina stigmatized bala kami sir aw basi kami man daw mailog kami sa mother namon nga makahimo kami sang malain.” (Esmeralda P4 |100-103|) (The perception of people around us is that we are the fruit of our mother's mistake, and we are stigmatized because of it, sir. Maybe we are also being influenced by our mother to become different.)

*“Wala may gusto makipaghamapng sa amon sang mga manghod ko kay criminal daw mama namon, amu nang kami nalang gahampang sang manghod ko.” (Stussy P2 (|56-57|) (No one wants to play with us because our mother is a criminal, so it's just us siblings who play together.)

C. How Children cope with the Absence of their mother

Table 3 Presents the Underlying Coping Mechanisms of the Participants on the Absence of their mothers.

Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
3.1 Resilience and Sibling Motivation	Find motivation and strength in caring for their younger siblings, who are left without parental guidance. The acknowledgment of a difficult situation
3.2 Coping Through Entertainment	Finds entertainment and distraction through playing mobile games and watching videos on social media. Find entertainment and temporary escape.
3.3 Avoidance and Rest	Feel the need to take a break and avoid confronting the stories or gossip of others. The struggle of acceptance and the need for emotional rest
3.4 In the Solace of Others	Found solace and became involved in church activities. Finds solace and learns valuable life skills, such as cooking, with the help of her grandmother. Spending time together with cousins. Bonding with friends.
3.5 Sibling Bonding and Support	Enhancing relationships and creating meaningful interactions in daily lives. Engaging in play and exploration, the siblings create moments of togetherness
3.6 Reminiscing the Past	Looking at family pictures and reminisce about the memories when their mother was still part of their lives The joyful experiences shared with family

*“Ahh ginalingaw ko nalang akon kis-a sarili gatulok ko sa manghod ko kailangan ko gid maningkamot para sa ila kay amo ni wala sila nanay kag ang tatay wala man sa ila tupad kailanagn ko gid mag ano sir, sila ang gina himo ko nga motivation sir para makaya ko gid ang ano ginaayan namon sa subong sir,” Brook P1(|85-89|)

(Ah, I feel like I'm just trying to find my own strength, sir. I need to work hard for my younger siblings because they don't have a mother and their father is not around. I don't know what to do, sir. They are my motivation to be able to overcome what we are going through now, sir.)

*“Nang gina isip ko ang sitwasyon namon sir, kung magpadala-dala man ko sa natabo kay mama kami man gyapon mabudlayan. gina isip ko nalang nga bisan wala si mama mag tinguha gyapon ko para pag gawas ni mama may ubra na ko kag makabulig ko sa iya para mag bagong buhay.” (Nami P3 |54-57|)

(When I think about our situation, sir, I realize that if I let myself be carried away by what happened to Mama, we will still struggle. I just keep in mind that even though Mama is not here, I will still strive so that when she returns, I will have a job and be able to help her start a new life.)

*“Nang ano sir gahimo nalang ko lingaw sir ga ML (Mobile Legend) nalang ko sir lantaw-lantaw video sa facebook ah amu na sir kag gina upod ko man mga manghod ko sir kay kis-a kay kung may extra man ko ginapakaon ko man sila sa gwa sir ginabaklan ko man halampangan para malingaw man sila sir daw amu man na akon kalingawan sir.” Brook P1 (|92-96|)

(What I do for entertainment, sir, is I just play Mobile Legends, sir, and watch videos on Facebook. That's it, sir. I also include my younger siblings, sir, because sometimes, if I have extra money, I buy them snacks outside, sir. I buy them toys so they can also have fun, sir. That seems to be my entertainment, sir.)

*“Galantaw ko sang mga kdrama nga gusto ko para malingaw ko akon nga sarili para pansamantala ko bala nga indi maisip nga ara si mama sa kulungan.” Nami P3(|138-140|) (I watch the K-dramas I like to entertain myself and momentarily forget that my mother is in prison.)

*“Nag adjust pud ko sa environment sa school kag nakaisip pud ko nga nang gusto ko nalang gid magpahuway kay indi ko gusto nga magtubang sa mga istorya nila.” Stussy P2 (|88-90|) (I adjusted to the school environment and thought that I just wanted to rest because I didn't want to face their stories.)

*“Dati di ko mabaton ang natabo kay mama, pero pagkadugay nasanay na ko. galain ang buot ko kay mama di ko matanggap ang tanan, ginahambalan ko ni lola nga mag bisita kay mama pero di ko kaya. diko pa kaya magpakita sa iya.” (Esmeralda P4 |171-172|) (I couldn't accept what happened to Mama before, but over time, I've gotten used to it. I feel uncomfortable because of Mama; I can't accept everything. Grandma keeps telling me to visit Mama, but I can't do it. I'm not ready to see her yet.)

*“Tung mga times nga sad bala ko kay nang tung time abi nga nakulong si mama ko daw naging active bala ko sa simbahan, naintindihan bala nila akon nga situation indi bala patas sa iban nga mga tao nga ginajudge ka dayun.” Stussy P2 (|180-184|) (Sometimes I feel sad because during that time when my mother was imprisoned, I became active in the church. They understood my situation, which wasn't fair to other people who judged me immediately.)

*“Ginalingaw ko nalang gid akon nga sarili tapos si lola nagabulig man ko sa iya mag luto amu na nga dira ko

nakatuon paano magluto kay ara si lola ginatudluan nya ko magluto.” Nami P3 (|155-160|) (I just try to find my own strength, and then my grandmother helps me with cooking. I already know how to cook because my grandmother taught me how to cook.)

*“Naga quality time kami sang manghod ko nagalantaw kami sang favorite ko nga dramas or kis-a sir gina consider ko nga quality time nang biigan ko sya sa iya nga mga assignment sa skwelahan nya bala sir aw, so amo lang tu sir.” Esmeralda P4 (|167-170|) (My younger siblings and I spend quality time together by watching my favorite dramas or something. Sir, I consider that quality time with my younger siblings, especially when they help me with their school assignments, sir. That's all, sir.)

*“Sabay kami gahampang sang manghod ko sa labas sir, sabay man kami maghimos sa balay kag bisan sa pag study ginabuligan ko sya. kay wala man sang iban nga maka bulig sa iya kundi ako nga ate nya, di man pwede si papa kay pagpuli nya halin sa pagpamasada makita ko an nga kapoy sya.”(Stussy P2 |173-177|) (My younger sibling and I play together outside, and we also clean the house together. Even when studying, I help them out. There's no one else who can help them but me, their older sister. Dad can't help because when he comes home from driving, I can see that he's tired.)

*“Kis-a ako ginahimo ko gid sir mahidlaw man ko syempre sa mother sir eh , ang ginahimo ko gid sin sir ginalantaw ko kis-a ang mga picture namon tapos nang ginadumdom ko gid bala sir aw tung mga memories nga ara pa sya, tung kumpleto pa kami.” (EsmeraldaP4 (|204-207|) (That's what I do, sir, I miss my mother, of course, sir. What I do is look at our pictures, and then I remember the memories we had when she was still with us, when we were complete as a family.)

*“Ginadumdom ko gid permi ang mga advice ni mama sir kag permi ko gina isip kag ginabalik-balikan tung mga bonding namon nila mama upod ang mga manghod ko kag mga tita. diko malimtan ang kalipay kag kasadya nga upod namon si mama.” (Brook P1 (|71-73|) (I always remember the advice of my mother, and I often think about and cherish the moments we shared together with my siblings and my aunts. I can never forget the joy and happiness we had with Mama.)

D. Maintainin their connection to their mothers

Table 4 Presents the ways how Children Maintain the Connection with their mother.

Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
4.1 Sustaining Communication	Occasionally have the opportunity to contact their incarcerated mother. Using greetings and messages to maintain a connection with the incarcerated mother Emphasizing the importance of quality time and meaningful interactions in relationships
4.2 Unconditional Love	Recognize that mother's actions, even if perceived as wrong by society, stem from a place of love and a willingness to make sacrifices for her children. Accepting the mother for who she is to maintain their relationship

4.3 Service in Separation	Sending messages of love, longing, and hope through the father Using food as a means of expressing affection and appreciation
4.4 Catching Up in Life	Providing updates and insights to keep the mother informed Regularly updating a mother about daily activities
4.5 Preserving Memories	Documenting moments with pictures of family members Taking pictures during family outings

*“Kis-a maka contact man kami sa iya kay may mga ano man na didto may mga cellphone man na didto ang iban amu na nga maka contact kami na didto sa iya.” (Brook P1 |120-122)(We can contact her because there are cellphones there, and we can contact her there.)

*“Dati mahambal ko sin kay papa ko kis-a nga nang hmabala lang si mama pang nga pakamusta lang kami didto daw amu lang gyapon na nag daw may na maintain lang gyapon sya although may mga challenges gyapon kami nga naagyan so through words nalang bala aw nga ginapadala namon kay mama daw may connection gyapon sa kay mama namon.” (Stussy P2 |284-288)(I used to tell my father that when my mother would just ask how we were doing there, it seemed like she was just maintaining it, although we still faced challenges. So through words that we sent to my mother, it seemed like we still had a connection with her.)

*“Syempre kis-a nalang kami magkit-anay nang kung may-ara kami sang oras ginahatag gid namon kag nang wala kami may ginasyang nga oras nang mag istorya.” (Esmeralda P4 |277-280)(Of course, we just talk about what we have when we have time, and when we don't have time, we just talk about stories.)

*“Gi tanggap ko sya para sa dra ma maintain na namon ang amon nga connection nga mag nanay kay basi sa sunod nga maka gwa sya di sya mahuya mag diretso sa amon ni lola kag anag plano ko sa iya sir is dalaw-dalawon nakon permi kay bisan sa dra ma feel nya nga may bata pa sya kag may pamilya nga gabalikid sa iya.” (Sanji P5 |67-71)(I accepted it so that we can maintain our connection as a family, especially since she might not be able to visit us directly. My plan is to visit her often, so even if she feels like she still has a child and a family that misses her.)

*“May pagpalangga man gyapon kamisa amon nga mama kay indi ya man tu paghimuon nga sala kung wala sya pagpalangga sa amon kag pag sakripisyo sa amon.” (Stussy P2 |103-105)(We still have love for our mother because she didn't do anything wrong if she didn't show love and sacrifice for us.)

*“Everytime nga magdalaw ko kay mama nang ginalutuan ko sya sang paborito nya nga pakbet bala aw kag ang iya nga mga paborito nga mga sud-an kay taga dalaw ko

gid sina gina lutuan ko gid na sya kay bal-an ko nga amu na ang pag show ko sa iya bala sang pagapalangga.” (Nami P3 |187-191)(Every time I visit my mother, I cook her favorite dish, pakbet, and her favorite snacks. When I visit her, I make sure to cook for her because I want to show her my love.)

*“Everytime nga magdalaw ko sina sa iya tapos ga istoryahanay man kami sina kis-a ni mama sa mga experiences ko sa eskwelahan, mga natabo sa mga palibot namon sa balay.” (Nami P3 |192-194)(Every time I visit them, we talk about my experiences in school and what happened around our house.)

*“Ginahambal ko kay mama permi ang mga ginahimo sang manghod ko kung sige pasaway kag kung ano ang ginahimo namon sa adlaw-adlaw. Kag kung may mga awards kami ginahambal gid na namon sa iya.” (Brook P1|124-128)(I always tell my mom about what my siblings do when they're being naughty and what we do every day. And if we have any awards, we always share that with her too.)

*“Magdalaw kami didto sa mother ko nang before kami na maglakat sir kay indi man gid kami always nagadalaw kay may mga visiting day or hours lang na nga pwede maglakat didto sir mo te ang ginahimo ko sina nang gahimo ko sina scrapbook tapos ang unod sang scrapbook didto picture ko, picture sang manghod ko picture namon tatlo sang nila papa ko nang family kami nga tatlo bala sir aw.” (Esmeralda P4 |234-239)(We visit my mother before we leave, sir, because we don't always visit her. There are visiting days or hours when we can visit, sir. I made a scrapbook and in the scrapbook, there are pictures of me, my younger siblings, and our family of three, sir.)

*“Kung maglagaw kami sang mga manghod ko ginakuhaan gid na namon picture patas satung pagligo namon sa dagat pag reunion ginapakita ko kay mama kung ano kami ka sadya sa higad sang baybay upod amon nga mga paryente.” (Nami P3 |87-90)(When my siblings and I go out, we always take pictures, especially during our bath in the sea during reunions. I show them to my mom to show her how much fun we have by the beach with our relatives.)

E. What are the support systems available to children of incarcerated mothers?

Table 5 Shows the Different Support System that are Available to Children of Incarcerated mothers.

Emergent Themes	Clustered Themes
5.1 Self-support	Works at the market in the evening. The role of a working student. Participating in the kabugwason program.
5.2 Social-support System	Receives financial support from their mother's siblings and cousins.

	<p>Finds solace and support in becoming actively involved in the church community. Receives financial and emotional support from their aunts on their mother's side. Paternal relatives provide support based on their means whenever the family has a need.</p>
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The aunt provides support from abroad.

*“gaubra ko sa palengke kung gab-e ga skwela kung udto kay pang udto man akon nga klase sir ang ano gid budlay-budlay gid sya sir kay pila lang man ang ano ko sa palengke sir.” (Brook P1 |53-54|) (I work at the market at night and go to school during the day because my classes are in the afternoon. It's really tiring, sir, because I only have a little time at the market, sir.)

*“Sa akon sir is umpisa satung college ko daw nabudlayan pa eswela si lola sa akon since pigado gani kami then sa dira nag working student ko ah nag working ko sa jollibee ah pang gab-e akon nga klase then sa morning ga duty ko.” (Sanji P5 |74-77|) (Sir, my college education started late because my grandmother was still in school when I was young. Since we were poor, I had to work as a working student. I worked at Jollibee, and after my night shift, I would attend my classes in the morning, and then I would have my duty in the morning.)

*“Kay nakasulod ko sa kabugwason bisan sa dra ma sustentuhan ko ang akon nga pambayad sa tuition sa pang allowance ko adlaw-adlaw.” (Sanji P5|77-79|) (Because I have a scholarship, I can sustain myself by paying my tuition fees and daily allowance every day.)

*“Mga kauturan ni mama kag akon man nga mga ka pinsanan gahatag man sa amon kwarta kag bugas gahatag man sila , nahatagan man nila kami allowance indi gid man permente sir ah, kis-a lang , pag may ara sila extra ga hatag ,an sila.” (Brook P1 |182-185|) (My mother's siblings and my cousins give us money and rice. They also give us allowance, but not always, sir. Only sometimes, when they have extra, they give it to us.)

*“Kis-a ga support man sila financially sa amon si ang mga ante ko sa side ni mama ko through financial gyapon indi lang puro financial pati man emotional support gyapon nila sa amon so may times nga gahatag sila sa amon nga nakabulig mismo sa amon nga adlaw-adlaw nga kinabuhi.” (Stussy P2 |305-311|) (They also give us financial support from my grandparents on my mother's side, not just financial but also emotional support. There are times when they give us things that help us in our daily lives.)

*“Sa side ni papa ko kung may ara kami kinahanglan kung ano tung mahatag nila, ginahatag nila indi man nga halimbawa maghamabal ko nang kailangan ko sang kwarta nga 500 indi man mahambal nga maghatag gid sila sang exact nga kwarta nga 500 pero mahatag na sila 300 or 250 mga amu a tapos may ara na snag times nga kunyare halimbawa mag birthday ko o mag birthday ang manghod ko maghatag na sila sang regalo tapos indi gid na madula nga maghatag sila kwarta kay bal-an nila nga kinahanglan gid namon para sa pag eskwela.” (Esmeralda P4 |333-341|) (On my father's side, if we need something, they give what they can. For example, if I

say I need 500 pesos, they won't give the exact 500 pesos, but they will give 300 or 250 pesos. There are also times, like when it's my birthday or my sibling's birthday, they give us gifts. They don't always give money because they know we need it for school.)

*“Gapasamat gyapon ko kayu tita ko nga abroad kay sa dra ga bulig-bulig sya sakon subong gina supportahan nya ko sa akon nga pag eskwela sa nakon nga allowance kag sa mga baraydan ko.” (Sanji P5 |80-82|) (I am also grateful to my aunt who is abroad because she helps me a lot. She supports me in my studies by providing my allowance and other needs.)

*“Tung nagtungtong na ko sa simbahan kag naging active na ko simbahan daw patas gihambal ko nga daw na cope ko gyapon tu nga mga challenges bisan wala si mama ko kay tungod may ka istorya na bala ko aw, daw may nag stand nga nanay ko, may mga nanay-nanayan na ko nga ginturing gyapon ko nga bata indi lang ako pati ang mga manghod ko , amu nga daw okay, daw nag amat-amat na okay kay tungod may naga fill in sang pagiging sang pagpalangga sang nanay nga makuha namon sa mga nanay-nanayan namon sa simbahan.” (Stussy P2 |184-192|) (When I started going to church and became active in the church, I can say that I was able to cope with the challenges even without my mother because I have stories to share, it's like I have a mother figure, I have mother figures who treat me and my siblings like their own children. So it's okay, it's gradually becoming okay because we get the motherly love from our mother figures in the church.)

IX. DISCUSSION

The impact of a mother's incarceration extends to the emotional and psychological well-being of children. Participants expressed feelings of abandonment, guilt, and loyalty conflicts, as well as a desire for a different reality where their mother was never incarcerated. The sudden absence of a mother can lead to feelings of loss and grief, while the disruption to family dynamics can result in feelings of confusion and anger. As one participant put it, they would often wonder "what if" their mother had never been incarcerated, and if their family would have been able to maintain a sense of unity and support.

Children of incarcerated mothers often face challenges related to family dynamics, stigma, and social isolation. They may experience feelings of envy and resentment towards other families who are perceived to be "complete" and may struggle to cope with the stigma associated with their mother's incarceration. The stress and anxiety associated with prison visitation procedures can also be particularly challenging for these children.

Further more, children may also find ways to honor and remember their mother through nostalgic activities, such as looking at old photos or remembering past memories. This can provide a sense of comfort and security, helping children feel more connected to their mother even in her absence. Children may also develop new skills and habits as a result of their mother's incarceration, such as learning to cook or manage household chores. These adaptations can be seen as a form of resilience, as children learn to navigate the challenges of their situation and develop new ways of coping with their emotions.

Moreover, children also maintain their connection to their mothers through creative means, such as making scrapbooks or sharing memories of special moments they spent together. These activities allow children to hold onto cherished memories and feelings of connection with their loved one, even when physical visits are not possible. Additionally, children may continue to hold onto hope and persevere in their efforts to maintain a connection with their parent, which can promote resilience and coping skills

The availability of social support systems can have a significant impact on the well-being and outcomes of children of incarcerated mothers. Studies have shown that children who receive adequate social support are more likely to experience positive outcomes, such as improved mental health, reduced behavioral problems, and enhanced academic performance. Furthermore, social support systems can help to promote positive relationships between children and their caregivers, which is critical for their emotional and psychological development.

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