

A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences among Single Parents in Kidapawan City

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study used the phenomenological design to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the selected single parents in Kidapawan City. The participants of this study were single parents who were chosen through snowball sampling. Data were gathered using interview guides in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Colaizzi's method of analysis was used to extract the essential themes from the participants' responses. Issues and struggles of single parenthood and inequitable support and opportunities were the themes that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants as single parents in the community. The coping mechanisms of the participants included responsible parenthood and heightened spirituality. Finally, the themes such as demonstrating resilience, having a positive outlook on challenges, and having clear government policies were the insights that the participants wanted to share with the academe and the community.

Keywords: Education, single parents, lived experiences, phenomenology, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The hardest task a person might encounter is being a single parent. Single mothers have numerous difficulties, and their financial situation has an impact on their parenting skills. Because of their financial situation and increased workload compared to parents with children, single mothers experience higher rates of stress. Being a single parent is a challenging labor that involves stress and anxiety. Therefore, based on Cotman (2022), raising children, providing for their current needs, and planning for and preparing for their future is a significant responsibility for single parents. The world is made up of all types of people. Single parents are rearing their children on their own. Being a single parent can be challenging at so many levels.

Based from the report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2019) it was observed that around the world, there are increasing number of kids who have a single parent to care for them like in the country of Latvia, it has the highest percentage of children with a single parent, at 28 percent also in Belgium, Lithuania, the United Kingdom, and the United States, where rates are high, about one in four children live with a single parent.

Further, according to Pew Research Center Survey (2015), two-thirds of Americans said that having more single mothers raising their children alone was harmful for society, and 48 percent believed the same thing about having more unmarried couples raise kids. Eighty percent of the roughly 11 million single parent homes with children under 18 were headed by single moms, numbering four out of these families. Unmarried mothers delivered four out of every ten births. Nearly two-thirds of the population were born to mothers who were under 30. One out of every six children under the age of 18 is currently being raised without a father, a figure of 12.5 million (U.S. Census Bureau & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

Furthermore, it was noted in the Asian Journal of Current Research the article of Ramos and Thus (2020) who mentioned that single parents were working multiple jobs, which left them with less time to spend with their kids. Contrarily, Chavda & Nisarga, (2023) said that single parents are known to have high resilience, greater sense of responsibility, better emotional regulation, better problem-solving skills, and are involved in decision-

making of the family.

The home management practices particularly on child rearing, bonding with children, provision of good education, welfare and protection, and imposing discipline sometimes become less priority of single parents. It is simply because of their desire to attain economic stability for the family. Parenting activities are focused more in reducing economic vulnerability.

Meanwhile, independence necessitates a reliance on personal capabilities and decision-making prowess, demanding that single parents navigate a complex web of responsibilities without the immediate support of a partner. Effective time management becomes crucial for single parents who are simultaneously juggling professional obligations, childcare duties, household chores, and personal well-being, leading to innovative scheduling and prioritization techniques that optimize resource allocation (Rees et al., 2023).

Similarly, single-parent families grew and became the norm across the globe. Today, almost 24 million children in the United States live in single-parent families. This had been on the rise for five decades, and impacted roughly one in three children throughout the United States. It was spurred on by a number of long-term demographic trends, including delayed marriage, falling rates of marriage, escalating divorce rates, and rising numbers of children born out of wedlock (Casey, 2022).

Additionally, single-parent families grew and became widespread across the world. In a study conducted by Casey (2022), there were 101.3 million single parents worldwide. Furthermore, the mean single parent rate was 7%, less than a third of the total rate in the United States.

Meanwhile, a single-parent household was referred to as a household where there was one parent, either mother or father, residing, and was expected to care for their child, and was in charge of upbringing their child. Such types of households usually encountered several problems and challenges compared to a typical household made up of two parents. The issues varied from financial constraints, lack of time for parenting, and a lack of emotional support by children (Kramer, 2019).

In the study conducted in the Philippines particularly in Quezon City, the problem of the lives of children in single-parent families gained much attention in the study of family composition for development. Several studies investigated the psychological, social, and educational results of children brought up in single parent households and highlighted the challenges they faced (Emmen et al., 2021). There were many factors why families led to having single parents by reasons such as divorce, death, separation, infidelity, or individual choice. Such families had distinct situations that would have profound effects on children's lives, ranging from their academic performance, social life, to overall emotional well-being (De Castro, 2023).

Moreover, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 906,106, or 54.3 percent, of all live births that were registered in 2018 were from unmarried parents. According to the mother's normal domicile, Central Luzon (146,366), NCR (142,702), and CALABARZON (146,366) had the most illegitimate offspring (102,766). More than half of all births in 11 regions of the nation were illegitimate children. As per De Castro (2023), the percentage of single parents in the Philippines stood at an estimated 14 to 15 million. The traditional Filipino family structure, which was one made up of a single parent, children, and a father, had drastically changed in recent decades. There were fewer children brought up by single-parent households.

Nevertheless, in the study conducted by Watt (2019) which used a quantitative approach utilizing survey methods, The researcher predicted that students from single parent families to be low academic success. Nevertheless, it was also hypothesized that students from single-parent families, whose parents are actively involved in the child's education, will have the same academic achievement as the students who come from two parent families.

Consequently, my present study differs from those studies cited earlier because it made use of a qualitative phenomenological research that dealt with the in-depth lived experiences of the single parents in Kidapawan City. I seek to know the ways in which government organizations can be of help to them especially during their challenging times. Hopefully the results of my study would guide them in developing projects to accommodate the single parents' needs and cover up the emotional care they need yet the lack of. This study

would demonstrate the coping strategies used by the single parents as they went about raising their kids. Above all, I wish to let the world know how these challenges made them equipped and stronger individuals. This is the essence of this phenomenological study, it would express the kind of story that people need to know from real heroes, the single parents.

Upon arriving at the result of this study, I wish to share the insights to our local government, and to non-government organizations (NGO) so that this can help in creating a platform for single parents to be heard. If given the opportunity, I intend to present this paper in research forums or conferences and even have this published in refereed local, national or international research journals.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of the participants as they raise their children as single parents?
 - 1.1 What were your feelings when you started to live as a single parent?
 - 1.2 What are those situations that make you feel fulfilled? Why?
 - 1.3 What are those situations that make you feel alone being a single parent? Why?
 - 1.4 How difficult was it to raise your children alone?
 - a. financial concerns
 - b. teaching them about love and family
 - c. answering their questions
 - 1.5 Describe the challenges you encountered which affect you being a single parent.
2. How do the participants cope with the challenges they experienced in raising their children as a single parent?
 - 2.1. How do you cope with the challenges as a single parent?
 - d. financial concerns
 - e. teaching them about love and family
 - f. answering their questions
 - 2.2 How did the people around you help you go through the challenges you experienced as a single parent?
 - 2.3 How did you motivate yourself to raise your children alone?
 - 2.4 Has there been any assistance from the community/government in coping with your challenges?
3. What insights can the participants share with the academe and the community?
 - 3.1 Is a single-parent family different from a two-parent family? How do you say so?
 - 3.2 What insight can you share with those who are single parents like you?
 - 3.3 What are your realisations now in life?
 - 3.4 What can you propose to the government in regard to the program or activity that can be given to the single parent?
 - 3.5 As a single parent, what are some of your felt needs that could be addressed by the government?

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study aimed to comprehend the lived experiences of single parents in Kidapawan City through in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD) using interview guide. The FGD helped in getting different lived experiences of the participants. Further, the IDI in the form of a one-on-one interview was useful in getting the personal opinion that individuals may not be comfortable sharing in the presence of others. Additionally, the study focused on the exploration of single parents' experiences as they dealt with the difficulties they had in raising their kids alone. The findings of this study will make women be aware of the

importance of a complete family and for the policymakers to be more aware of the need to take the appropriate steps to support children from single-parent homes in achieving academic success. More so, it would necessitate parental accountability and dedication to their kids' academic development and socialization. Finally, conducting this research will give the researchers the tools they need to conduct additional research in the future.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study can be an important and trustworthy source of information for research projects in the future. This study was seen through the lens of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1958) and the Resiliency Theory (Garmezy, 1973), which can be applied in understanding the lived experiences of single parents. The Attachment Theory provides a structure in understanding how the participants manage the difficulties they have in being a single parent to their children. According to this theory, a child feels more valuable when they have a deep bond with their parents, which facilitates parent-child intimacy and makes parenting easier. Some behaviors, including the need to stay close to the attachment figure when the youngster is upset or threatened, are signs of attachment (Bowlby, 1958).

Hence, in the study, it tried to prove that in single-parent households, the lack of interaction between the children and parents would lead to attachment issues, impaired the efficacy of parenting techniques, and put a lot of stress on the custodial parents as they try to fulfill their parental duties. A strong bond between a child and a single parent helps the child develop social and emotional abilities while also reducing behavioral issues.

This study was also seen through the lens of Garmezy's Resiliency theory (1973) which implies that people can overcome obstacles in their lives by using their innate coping mechanisms. Single-parent families can overcome the difficulties they may run into by using the right tools and, of course, by applying coping mechanisms. According to this theory, people can overcome obstacles in their lives by using innate coping mechanisms. Single parent households are capable of overcoming their difficulties by using the right resources and coping mechanisms.

On the other hand, this notion of resilience enables us to comprehend how the beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts of our single parents influence their experiences. By appreciating their contribution to their capacity for adaptive growth, single parents can begin to develop our own resilience and learn to overcome the difficulties of life.

Research Design

The qualitative method, specifically phenomenology design was employed in this research study. Qualitative research has a different approach compared to quantitative study because it usually involves the natural setting where I got information through talking directly to people about their experiences regarding a certain issue or problem. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), as a specific type of qualitative research, the phenomenological research design involves philosophical and psychological inquiries that can describe the lived experiences of the participants regarding a certain phenomenon.

The cornerstone of qualitative research is typically observational and investigative techniques; it explores the significance of human experiences and develops the potential for change through higher awareness and deliberate action (King, 2013). The focus of qualitative research is on living experiences; it is less concerned with "how many" or "how often" and more with "why" and "how."

Meanwhile, Pathak et al. (2013) defined qualitative research as a method to understand and examine people's experiences. Merriam (2002) asserts that qualitative research aims to comprehend and explain phenomena from the viewpoint of the participants. Qualitative research employs words to communicate what the researcher has discovered about a topic, in contrast to quantitative research, which uses numerical data Merriam (2002). More so, Hennink et al. (2020), and Creswell (2007), defined qualitative research as the study of things in their natural settings and interpreting phenomena from the views of the participants.

Moreover, the study of how people interpret events or phenomena based on what actually occurs in the real

world is called phenomenology. It involves revisiting the study participants' experiences and delving further into their ideas in order to get the essence of what they had to say about those experiences Creswell (2007).

Further, phenomenological studies simply explore the conscious experience of a person based on his/her own point of view so that the subject can describe his actual experience as intended and this inquiry focuses more on what a person has experienced and how a person experienced a thing (Smith, 2018). Furthermore, according to Shosha (2012), phenomenology also directs the understanding of a phenomenon that is experienced by the people firsthand. It is considered as a design that does not develop a theory but provides a meaningful understanding of the reality (Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is also known for its strong philosophical aspect which is rooted from the writings of Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher, and Martin Heidegger et al. who expanded his views (Creswell, 2007). This approach is known as the epoché or bracketing. It imposes that the phenomenological description of a certain act must not be based on the trueness of any existing assumption about a phenomenon (Beyer, 2020).

For this study, the phenomenological research approach is appropriate since I believe that this places a strong emphasis on lived experience and perceptions of experience among single parents. Phenomenology, according to Alase (2017), is a qualitative research methodology that emphasizes the similarities between individuals' lived experiences within a certain group. Hence, through a phenomenological method I was able to identify a phenomenon and then was able to collect data from people such as single parents who have experienced the phenomenon. More so, Slavin (2007) asserts that the goal of phenomenology is to enter people's worlds and then comprehend those worlds from those people's perspectives. This allows me to see whether there are any patterns in other people's experiences.

Research Site and Participants

In this research study, I chose 17 participants for the interview, seven were involved in the FGD and 10 for the IDI. The participants were single parents in Kidapawan City. They were chosen as participants through purposive sampling based on a pre-selected criterion relevant to the research study (Clark & Morse, 2019); in this case, they are single parents from Kidapawan City. These identified 17 single parents, underwent in-depth interviews. In this study, they are referred to as single parents.

Further, Creswell (2007), recommends that for in-depth interviews, researchers could interview 5–25 participants who had experienced the same phenomenon if one wants to achieve the goal of representativeness and generalizability as a criterion from a small number of research participants.

Furthermore, through the non-probability sampling approach known as snowball sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling, I was able to identify my participants. In order to keep both myself and the participants from becoming embarrassed. I chose the people who would be in my study based on referrals from friends or family members who knew where to look for some of the single parents. In order to determine whether my questions are acceptable for each person's distinct personality, I tried to learn some personal information about them. Some of them are also our friends who reside in Kidapawan City and surrounding areas and who we are personally acquainted with.

Data Analysis

In this study, I applied the Colaizzi analysis method, as a researcher. Based on Colaizzi's model (1978), as cited by Sanders (2003) worked with Giorgi to create his descriptive phenomenology method. The phenomenological methodology of Colaizzi can be a reliable tool for analyzing people's experiences logically and systematically. Using the Colaizzi technique for data analysis may lead to finding fresh and valuable insights into the lived experiences of the single parents.

Further, guided by Colaizzi's model (1978), cited by Sanders (2003) in analyzing the data, I developed procedures that were applied in a methodical way. I listened closely to the voice recording of the video call interview. While listening to the responses, I took down notes of the responses. Generally, I transcribed all the data from the interview, without adding or deducting the information shared by the participants. Hence, it is to

ensure all of the responses will be transcribed verbatim. To better transcribe the information from the participants, I made sure that I do not have preconceived ideas about it and feel what the message was trying to convey.

Furthermore, the information that were gathered from the interviews was analyzed by utilizing thematic generation and citation. Thematic generation refers to finding and utilizing recurring themes in the interviews, whereas citation refers to actually referencing specific passages from the interview in the report's main body (MacDonald 2015). The relevant themes that emerged from their responses were noted.

Likewise, I sought help from a professional data analyst in classifying the data according to the pattern of languages, experiences, themes, and issues that were expressed by the participants. After reading through the data, these were presented in an organized and tabular manner. Then, based on the identified essential themes, I descriptively analyzed the phenomenon on the single parents' lived experiences

Trustworthiness

The degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methods employed to ensure a study's quality is referred to as a study's trustworthiness or rigor (Beck, 2014). I adhered to the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish trustworthiness in my study.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the emergent themes based on the analysis of the responses for the three research questions covering the participants' lived experiences, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms and the insights that they wanted to share to academe and to the society in general.

Profile of Participants

Table 1.1 reveals the demographic profile of the 17 single parents in Kidapawan City. The demographic profile includes codes of the participants, sex, and years of experience as a single parent. There were 10 participants who took part in the in-depth interview and were coded as IDI and seven who took part in the focus group discussion and were coded as FGD. Moreover, the majority of the participants are women and have many years of experiences living as single parents. The profile speaks of how they were chosen to share their experiences as single parents.

Table 1.1 Profile of Participants

Participant's Code	Sex	Years of Living as a Single Parents
IDI 1	Female	3
IDI 2	Female	3
IDI 3	Female	6
IDI 4	Female	10
IDI 5	F	5
IDI 6	F	3
IDI 7	F	5
IDI 8	F	2
IDI 9	F	3
IDI 10	F	2
FGD 1	F	4

FGD 2	F	6
FGD 3	F	8
FGD 4	F	5
FGD 5	F	4
FGD 6	F	6
FGD 7	F	3

Lived Experiences of the Participants as single parents

The table 1.2 presents the issues probed, core ideas, codes, and themes formed. Exploring the lived experiences of the single parents in Kidapawan City. Two essential themes were uncovered from the lived experiences of the participants living as a single parent. Essential themes such as Issues and Struggles of Single Parenthood and Inequitable Support and Opportunities.

Table 1.2 Lived Experiences of the Participants as Single Parents

Issues Probed	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Themes
On feelings as single parent	Being sad and weary about the situation Experiencing heartaches, pains, loneliness and betrayal Worrying about the present status and the future of child Feeling scared of raising the child alone Feeling of inadequacy	Emotionally Challenged	Issues and Struggles of Single Parenthood
	Being insulted and mocked Encountering inadequate resources, attention and assistance Having no self-confidence Lacking self-identity	Low self-esteem	
On situations or instances when the parent felt all alone	Giving birth in the hospital with nobody to call on Having a sick child in the hospital with nobody to ask for support Being disowned by the family members Experiencing rejection by the partner	Lack of nurturing environment	Inequitable Support and Opportunities
	Having no one to ask for financial assistance Doing odd jobs to earn money to support a child	Financial instability	

Issues and Struggles of Single Parenthood. This theme emerged from two categories, emotionally challenged and low self-esteem. Living as a single parent caused the participants to live with Issues and Struggles of Single Parenthood. This is seen in their emotional aspect such as being sad and weary about the situation. Single parents were emotionally challenged, experiencing heartaches, pains, loneliness and betrayal. They also worried about their present status and even for the future of their child. With that, the single parents pointed out that living as a single parent can cause depression and a feeling of loneliness, inadequacy and feeling scared of raising the child alone.

I felt nothing. It was fine with me. It hurt a little and I just kept on drinking alcohol to ease the pain and forget about my problems... (IDI 2)

It's hard to say... I cried before because it was really hard. I was lonely. There were lots of problems in my life...I was lonely without a partner, well that's all. (IDI 4)

The feeling when I started living as a solo parent was a sense of loneliness and depression... (FGD 4)

Lisod jud sya kay sympre pag abot sa bata need nimog financial nang magka skait ang bata walay partner na mo tabang sa imuha. Walay laing ma duolan... (IDI 1)

Furthermore, FGD 4 agreed that it is not really easy to live as a single-parent. It can cause having low self-esteem because of being insulted and mocked and because of always encountering inadequate resources, attention and assistance. These experiences made them feel that they do not have self-worth anymore.

It is true to me as well. I felt down...didn't have confidence anymore and thought of something like... will I be able to raise my kid by myself? Can I do this? They're not even guiding me on what to do, however, I handled it smoothly... (FGD 4)

With these experiences they started to create their feeling of being emotionally challenged as a single parent. In experiencing the reality of life they were being challenged to take and carry the responsibilities alone. The single parents' lived experiences caused the feeling of having low self-esteem manifested through their Issues and Struggles of Single Parenthood. Having no self-confidence and lacking self-identity which developed as they faced their everyday life.

Naabot ko sa time nga nawad an nakog pag asa kay stressed na kaayo ko... ako lang tanan walay ga alalay sa akua ako lang jud tanan...(IDI 9)

There was a time that I lost hope because I was so stressed... I was all alone and nobody was helping me out... I did everything.

I was really stressed and I lost hope. I took all the burdens by myself nobody helped me. ... (IDI 1)

Inequitable Support and Opportunities. In the second essential theme, which emerged from the lived experiences of single parents, the issues probed revealed that situations or challenges made the parents feel that they are all alone. Such as lack of a nurturing environment and financial instability.

One of the negative experiences of the single parents was having a sick child in the hospital without somebody to ask for support. As mentioned in IDI 6's answer:

When I broke up with my partner, our child was just weeks or months old that time...our child got sick...was rushed to the hospital. I felt so hopeless. I cried..... (IDI 6)

Adding up, there were situations or instances when the parent felt all alone. FGD 1 and IDI 1 mentioned that the challenges doubled because they had a kid to look after, at the same time they were still studying in college.

That time I encountered difficulty because I was still studying and I had lots of things to do. And when the child

got sick...it was another burden ... (FGD 1)

I felt that it was the most difficult time of my life. In terms of financial aspect... it was the most challenging part because I could not afford to always ask for my family's help... (IDI 1)

There are two core ideas under Lack of nurturing environment: Being disowned by the family members and experiencing rejection by the partner. Given these experiences single parents had experienced difficulty getting a nurturing environment because they can not ask support from the family and even from their partners because they were abandoned. IDI 4 FGD 2 and FGD 6 mentioned these core ideas: Being disowned by the family members and experiencing rejection by the partner made their life miserable.

I heard about that program for solo parents... I went to PESO Kidapawan... I learned that they have livelihood programs like manicure, hair culture and soap making.... (FGD 1)

FGD 2 added that one of the difficult challenges being a single parent is the lack of support coming from the community or government that manifests lack of nurturing environment.

When my baby was just 5 months old...my partner left me, was recovering from the pain, still adjusting financially and emotionally.Didn't know where to get money to buy diapers and milk... (FGD 6)

I was three months pregnant when I realized there was no more hope since we fought a lot. He abandoned us... I got scared of raising my son alone. (IDI 4)

I did not know if I can raise my son alone... was not sure if I can handle it by myself and aside from that... the heartache also.... (FGD 2)

It was really scary, it was not easy to nurture a child alone...difficult if you do not have a partner, especially buying milk. I have a work but it is not a permanent job (IDI 6)

Regarding the lack of nurturing environment, it was evident with IDI 2 and IDI 9, that they experienced difficulty in asking for help from the government.

No I did not receive even one centavo. I was thankful that my child did not get easily sick. Hence I did not have any problem when it comes to hospitalization. ... (IDI 2)

Single parents have been facing a hard time connecting to the government programs or assistance for the single parents and experiencing difficulty in asking help from the government. Single parents also emphasized that they lacked support or livelihood assistance coming from the government. It had been the major concern of FGD 4 that single parents had trouble asking the help from the government if they had some livelihood assistance or program for the solo parents.

As mentioned by FGD 4:

Some presidential candidates promised about the help for solo parents. I did not receive any ...they need to prioritize education like full scholarship and medications... (FGD 4)

There are two core ideas behind being financially unstable: Having no one to ask for financial assistance and doing odd means and jobs to have money for food and for the needs of the child. Because of these experiences, the solo parents were having difficulty to find jobs for their source of living and they struggled in budgeting their finances since they did not receive financial assistance from their family and from the government.

As mentioned by FGD 4:

It is really hard to raise children especially if you do it on your own...especially the financial needs. You have no one to lean on to. You need to persevere and do the budgeting as well...(IDI 8)

Coping Mechanisms of Single Parents

Table 1.3 presents the ways and the strategies of the single parents in coping with the challenges they were experiencing, living as a single parent. Single parenthood is not really easy; it is indispensable as depicted by two general evolving themes in table 2 presented above: Responsible Parenthood with two codes which are Commitment to a family and Care of self. The other theme Heightened Spirituality Expresses Faith in God

Table 1.3 Coping Mechanisms used on the challenges of Neophyte Teachers in Navigating their Transition in Private Secondary Schools

Issues Probed	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Themes
On coping with the situation they are in	Providing for the child' bright future Doing all the necessary means like selling, working from home, doing other odd jobs or borrowing money. Making the child feel the love of parents	Commitment to the welfare of the family	Responsible Parenthood
	Observing family planning or self-control Striving to be well organized mentally, physically, emotionally	Caring for self	
	Praying hard Placing hope in God	Faith in God	Heightened Spirituality

Responsible Parenthood. The first theme under the coping challenges in living as a single parent. There are two codes under this theme: Commitment to a family and Care of self. Issues probed under the first theme on coping with the situation of being a single parent is Commitment to a family and the core ideas is thinking of providing a bright future for the child as IDI 8 shared:

I coped with all the challenges through hard work. I look for jobs that would help me take care of our needs every day. Making sure we can eat 3x a day and to make sure I could provide for their bright future. ... (IDI 8)

FGD 2 also added

I thought of their safety, their welfare and their dreams in life. I wanted them to finish schooling even though I'm a single parent I will make sure my children will finish their studies.... (FGD 2)

Certainly, FDG 4 truly believes in giving a bright future for children. They must do all the necessary means like selling, working from home, doing odd other jobs or borrowing money.

I can always do a sideline job like selling...borrowed money from my siblings...my children's father refused financial support even if I reported to the police and to the barangay.. (FGD 4)

FGD 3 and IDI 6, also added:

All the things that I experienced were hard, but I managed to handle them all...I know I can make my children finish their studies, and I can pay all the bills and all the things that my children deserve... (FGD 3)

One of the reasons why I survived all the challenges in my life is because I tried hard to find a job like doing manicure, doing the laundry of my neighbors and etc. ... (IDI 6)

Single parents emphasized that in order to cope with these challenges they must strengthen their commitment

to their family by having the child feel the love of parents even though they were not complete. IDI 1 expressed that:

I never felt I had a hard time showing how much we loved my child because my aunt, my uncle love her... she calls my father dad...my mother mom, me mommy, calls my brother koy-koy,... (IDI 1)

Heightened Spirituality. In this theme, there is one code based on the core ideas. This is their Faith in God. The core ideas under this code are praying hard and placing hope in God.

My thoughts were always positive, and I always prayed, which really helped me become strong. If my children ask me about it, I will not answer them for now, to make sure they will not get confused... (IDI 3)

I faced all my problems and I managed to conquer them because of my two children and, of course, prayer. To pray always and strive hard in my work. ... (FGD 4)

FGD 5 included that:

I handled it all through prayer. The almighty God was my protector of all my problems in life. I call upon Him when I can no longer bear the pain in my heart.... (FGD 5)

Insights Shared by the Participants to the Academe and to the Community

Table 1.4 reveals the insights shared by the participants to the academe and to the community. There are three themes which emerged: Demonstrating Resiliency refers to the Acceptance of misfortunes in life, Positive Outlook on Challenges refers to favorable approaches and characteristics, and Clear Government Policies refers to Government interventions and aids.

Table 1.4 Insights Shared by the Participants to the Academe and the Community

Issues Probed	Core Ideas	Categories	Essential Themes
On realizations	Facing bravely all the challenges in life Embracing the consequences of one' actions Making the problems as source of motivation	Acceptance of misfortunes in life	Demonstrating Resiliency
	Seeking solutions Striving more in facing hardships in life Having God always within self Developing contentment and happiness with the child Redirecting to productive activities	Favorable approaches and characteristics	Maintaining a Positive Outlook toward Challenges
On government	Implementing and disseminating programs for single parents particularly in the barangay level	Government interventions and assistance	Implementing Clear Government Policies

Demonstrating Resiliency. Under this theme, there is one important code that occurred. This is the acceptance of misfortunes in life. Facing bravely all the challenges in life is necessary in taking into consideration the life of the single parents.

To all those solo parent, just continue and persevere. Don't lose hope and always pray to God. ... (FGD 2)

It was not that easy raising a child alone, financially I needed to be strong in all the challenges in life because I needed to provide for my child's basic needs, education, house bills and other expenses... (IDI 5)

Moreover, FGD 3, IDI5, and IDI 6 emphasized that embracing the consequences of one's actions is important, they mentioned:

Be strong, accept the result of having kids without a partner, never give up and learn how to be financially independent... (IDI 5)

I felt the same way too. At first in my situation, I needed to be strong for my two kids. I accepted my situation and moved on for a better life ... (FGD 3)

My advice to those single parents like me, it is there already, so just keep on fighting and pray to our almighty God. Don't lose hope and work ... (IDI 6)

IDI 5 added that:

Accepting the consequence made us strong. I managed to handle it all. I know I can make my children finish their studies and I can pay all of the bills and all the things that my children deserve... (IDI 5)

Moreover, making the problems a source of motivation is the best way of accepting the reality of life. FGD 4 strongly suggested that single parents should really make their problems a challenge in life and be motivated to carry the responsibility.

Believe in the saying God will provide... all the single parents like me must be strong. Make problems be our motivation to carry our responsibility. (FGD 4)

Positive Outlook on Challenges. The second theme is about having a positive outlook on challenges. There is one code which was drawn out from the core ideas. This is a favorable approach and characteristics. Seeking solutions and striving more in facing hardships in life must be given attention. Single parents must be focusing on how to find a job and how to provide for their children.

Take note that you should graduate first then find a good job. And look for a stable job before you do some nasty stuff. Just take your parents advice... (IDI 1)

IDI 2 also added that:

Never ever leave your child even if you are separated from your partner. Think of their studies and their needs. Look for a better job and raise your child even if you're alone carrying that responsibility ... (IDI 9)

Another important key under favourable approaches and characteristics is having God always within self where IDI 3 strongly agreed that:

Always think positive and always pray to God. That will really help you to become strong ... (IDI 3)

Additionally, developing contentment and happiness with the child were also emphasized.

I felt content when I overcame my postpartum depression. That time when I wanted to end my life because I was really tired. But I managed to overcome it (FGD 2) My partner chose his new girl over us. I let him go even if I was still pregnant. I went home to his house...had my baby without him. (FGD 6)

Clear Government Policies. The third theme is clear government policies. There is one code which was drawn out from the core ideas. The first code is government interventions and assistance. To provide opportunities for the single parents the government should provide wide dissemination strategies of programs aimed at assisting single parents particularly in the barangay level:

No I didn't receive even one centavo, that is the truth mam. even OWWA scholarship my child was denied...also the housing program I never availed of that...(IDI 3)

Actually, am a member of solo parents organization here in Midsayap... I only got one thousand. There was an article that there will be help amounting to one thousand monthly... (FGD 1)

Finally, FGD 4 and 7, voiced that there is a felt need that the government should give priority for the educational needs of single parents' children.

I heard from a presidential candidate about the help extended to solo parents. They need to prioritize education like giving scholarships and medications...(FGD 4)

Livelihood capital then in terms of education at least 20-30% scholarship. In terms of communicating to the solo parents we should be updated if there are programs so we can also benefit...(FGD 4)

DISCUSSION

The lived experiences of the single parents revolve around their feelings as single parents and on situations or challenges if the parent is all alone, impacting their lives and the future of their children. During IDI and FGD, it emerged from the codes and extracted two essential themes: Issues and struggles of Single Parenthood and Inequitable Support Opportunities.

Issues and Struggles of Single Parenthood. This essential theme highlighted the feelings as single parents. Being sad and weary about the situation, sensing heartaches, pains, loneliness and betrayal. They are being emotionally challenged by these situations. They make themselves worried about their present status and even the future of the child, feeling scared of raising the child alone, feeling of inadequacy. These findings showed that life is not friendly, there are several challenges for single parents. Single parenthood has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Single parents frequently experience more difficulties than traditional families, which is primarily due to their higher levels of stress and fatigue.

These findings confirm the study of Meier et al. (2016) who discovered that compared to coupled moms, lone mothers frequently report higher levels of depression, stress, and exhaustion. These emotions seem to be heightened among unemployed single mothers.

Inequitable Support and Opportunities. This essential theme highlighted the participants' shared experiences, such as lack of nurturing environment. When confronted with their lived experiences as a single parent, participants shared their experiences on situations or challenges where they felt as if they were all alone. Similarly, the result about individual coping corroborates with what Abd Hamid & Salleh (20013 noted, that single parents need to involve the construction of personal qualities or internal processes employed by the person to create person-environment relations and to react to certain demands. Single parents need the support of the community, family and the government to cope up with the challenges they are facing.

Correspondingly, participants shared that they were having difficulty having no one to ask for financial assistance and doing all odd means and jobs to have money to buy food and needs for the child. They shared how difficult it was to carry the big responsibility alone without having anyone to ask for financial assistance. It is not easy to look for a job since no one will take care of their children if they work.

Coping Mechanisms of Single Parents. Single parents have experienced struggles and difficulties, but despite these challenges, they find ways to survive the phenomenon. The succeeding presentation shows the emergent themes of how the participants cope with online teaching challenges. The participants' first theme under coping mechanisms of single parents is responsible parenthood. There are two codes under this theme: Commitment to a Family and Care of Self.

Responsible Parenthood. This theme discusses how the participants dealt with the challenges as single parents by igniting their commitment to a family. Single parents solve the problems by providing a bright future for the

child, doing all the necessary means like selling, doing odd jobs, working from home or borrowing money.

First and foremost, the findings were in line with those of Matlin (2000) and numerous other experts who hold the view that communities and children raised by single moms are unstable. According to Ceballo (2002), single mothers are frequently more psychosocially challenged than their married counterparts due to the traditional expectations that mothers must uphold. Compared to married women, single mothers have a more severe socioeconomic disadvantage. They are more likely to live in poverty, earn lower salaries, rent instead of own a home, be unemployed, be in vulnerable situations, and have low self-esteem notwithstanding the fact that single parents already are committed to their family. Commitment - members of strong families invest time and energy into family activities and do not permit their jobs or other responsibilities to rob them of too much family time. Commitment includes the qualities of acceptance, respect, and prioritizing one's family.

Insights Shared by the Participants to the Academe and to the Community . From the transcribed insights of the participants during the IDI and FGD, I coded their responses and labeled three essential themes that have emerged. First, Demonstrating Resilience with one necessary code: Acceptance of misfortunes in life. Second, Positive Outlook on Challenges with the code: Favourable approaches and characteristics Customize Teaching Based on Students' Learning Needs. Third, Clear Government Policies with the code: Government interventions and aids.

Implications for Educational Practice

The themes emerged from the experiences of single parents. According to the participants, their lived experiences enabled them to discover a meaningful life's journey and appreciate their learning and developing process. Opening up to share their thoughts, emotions, and the positive and negative experiences motivated them to strive more for their children's future. Responsible adulthood needs to be ingrained in the lives of single parents. Being accountable for our actions entails keeping our word and abiding by our obligations. It involves accepting the repercussions of our words and deeds. It also involves realizing our full potential. People who are accountable do not justify their behavior or lay the blame elsewhere when something goes wrong.

Their lived experiences were colourful and diverse, filled with ups and downs, with viewpoints from both young single parents and older ones. It was notable though that some of the participants were honest enough to divulge that they have low self-esteem and not confident in living and carrying the responsibility of a single parent, which caused stress and anxiety in their life. Their respective families have greatly influenced the journey of the participants. Participants also pointed out a low priority in their livelihood programs, no free education for their children or scholarship, Affording of the policies in assisting single parents particularly in the barangay level and failure to avail of government interventions and aids were all met head-on, with resiliency and buoyancy, flexibility and resourcefulness, hanging on with hope to those who kept them afloat and motivated.

Positive outlook on challenges and demonstrating resilience were seen as a great advantage as these enabled single parents to provide the needs for their children. Making the problems a source of motivation, facing bravely all the challenges in life and embracing the consequences taking place, these things developed their contentment and happiness with the child.

Single parents coping mechanisms were no different from complete families, but one thing kept them distinct – their Responsible Parenthood. The participants anchored these from commitment to family and care to self. They are thinking of providing a bright future for the child, doing all the necessary moves like selling, working from home or borrowing money, and other odd jobs, and having the child feel the love of parents. They are also observing family planning or self-control, striving to be well organized mentally, physically, emotionally, and placing hope in God by praying hard that manifests their being responsible as a parent despite being single.

The participants shared their insights to the academe and to the community regarding the lived experiences of the single parents. They embodied reflecting on demonstrating resilience, having a positive outlook on challenges, and clear government policies. Further, single parents expressed in one voice their message for the

government officials to have interventions and aids to their situation, affording of the policies in assisting single parents particularly in the barangay level. Furthermore, clear government policies and proper assistance like livelihood programs and free education give single parents self-confidence in facing life alone.

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