

The Solo Parenting Journey: A Phenomenological Exploration of Personal Experiences

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Abstract

The journey of solo parenting, where one parent shoulders the primary responsibility of raising a child without a partner, is unique and challenging. This phenomenological study delves into the personal experiences of individuals who have embraced solo parenting, shedding light on their joys, struggles, and insights. Whether due to divorce, separation, the death of a partner, or personal choice, embarking on this path requires courage, resilience, and unwavering faith.

The study focuses on registered solo parents in Sta. Magdalena, examining their lived experiences, significant milestones, challenges, and the impact of solo parenting on their identity and self-esteem. By exploring these facets, we gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of solo parenting and its effects on both parents and children.

The research process involved meticulous data collection, literature review, and conceptualization. Participants were identified through purposive sampling, and their responses were analyzed to present comprehensive findings. Solo parents face unique challenges, from managing finances and emotional isolation to societal stigma. Accepting their role, securing stable employment, and prioritizing self-care mark significant milestones. Their identity evolves as they navigate parenthood alone, seeking support and building resilience.

This study contributes to understanding the complexities of solo parenting and offers practical insights for solo parents to thrive on their parenting journey.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

The experience of solo parenting, where one parent assumes the primary responsibility of raising a child without the support of a partner is a unique, and often challenging journey. This phenomenological exploration aims to delve into the personal experiences of individuals who have embraced solo parenting, shedding light on the joys, struggles, and insights the present researcher gained through a solo parent journey. To be a solo parent is a result of various circumstances such as divorce, separation, the death of a partner, or by choice. Whatever the reason may be embarking on this journey requires courage, resilience, and strong faith in God to overcome all the hardship of being a solo parent. By examining the personal perspectives of solo parents, I can better understand the multifaceted nature of solo parenting and its impact on myself and my children.

The decision to become a solo parent can arise due to various circumstances such as divorce, separation due to some reasons, the death of a partner, or by choice. Whatever the reason may be, embarking on this journey requires both courage and resilience. By examining the personal perspectives of solo parents, I can better understand the multifaceted nature of solo parenting and its impact on individuals and their children.

Based on Moynihan's report (2015), on the issue of family structure half a century ago, his concern was the increase in black-headed women. Since then the share of children raised in single-parent families in the United States has grown across racial and ethnic groups and with it evidence regarding the impact of family structure outcomes for children. Recent studies have documented a sizable achievement gap between children who live with a single-parent and their peers growing up with two parents. These patterns are cause for concern, as educational achievement is a key driver of economic prosperity for both individuals and society as a whole.

At the same time, it should be noted that the descriptive patterns documented here do not necessarily capture a causal effect of living in a single-parent family. Decisions to get divorced, end cohabitation, or bear a child outside a partnership are likely related to other factors important for child development, making it difficult to separate the influence of family structure. For example, severe stress that leads to a family breakup might well have continued without the breakup and have led to worse outcomes for a child had the family remained intact. If single-parent families differ from two-parent families in unmeasured ways, then those differences may be the underlying cause of any disparities in children's outcomes. It is even conceivable that problems a child has in school may contribute to family breakup, rather than being a consequence of it.

In addition to the above report, in the United States, in 2012, 21 percent of 15-year-old students lived in single-parents families, with the United States at the top among the countries. On average across all 28 countries, the share of single-parent families is 14 percent. New Zealand also has a share higher than 20 percent, while the Czech Republic has 18 percent, and Poland, the United Kingdom, Finland, Mexico, Denmark; and France have shared between 15 and 17 percent, aside from countries where solo parents are involved in which women are common as in solo parents and most of the children lived with their mother. Solo Parent Welfare Act of 2000 (**RA 8972**), being a solo parent is governed by Republic Act 8972, which promotes the family as the foundation of the nation, strengthens its solidarity, and ensures its total development. The law calls for the development of a comprehensive package of services for solo parents to address their needs. Solo parents in our country are increasing due to different reasons, but these solo parents under this Republic Act are provided with benefits for them to have a normal life, even though it is very difficult to be both parents especially if we have three children to take care of. Most of the solo-parent Filipino family is composed exclusively of a father, mother, and their children, each with an assigned role to perform. Even in the previous centuries, there were already solo parents and urbanization only increased their number. The challenges of modernization and the impact of crime and violence have contributed to the rising phenomenon of solo parenting. Solo parents go through a multitude of stresses, which is a combination of psychological, physical, and emotional anxieties. The loss of or separation from a partner is an intensely painful experience and the grieving process cannot be ascertained. The experience is compounded by financial difficulties and the difficult demand of rearing children alone. What makes it even more difficult is that there is not much outside of the family milieu in terms of support and guidance that will enable them to effectively perform their function.

Based on National Statistics Office statistics in CY 2000, there are 2.9 M single parents nationwide classified as widowed and separated. The enactment of RA 8972 or Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000 is a response to the needs of solo parents, it promotes the family as the foundation of the nation by ensuring its total development through the provision of a comprehensive program that will address the needs of the solo parents. RA 8972 mandates the development and implementation of comprehensive programs and services for solo parents by the Department. (*AO 86, s.2003*)

In Expanded Solo Welfare Act (*RA 118611*), clearly explains an act granting additional benefits to solo parents, amending Republic Act no. 8972 entitled “an act providing for benefits and privileges to solo parents and their children, appropriate funds therefor and for purposes”. The additional benefits mentioned in this republic act is that children or dependents refer to those living with and dependent upon the solo parent for support who are unmarried, unemployed, and twenty-two(22) years old or below, or those over twenty-two(22) years old but who are unable to fully take care or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition: Provided that this physical or mental incapacity of the spouse as certified by a public or private medical practitioner. It says in this report that solo parenting is a worldwide issue in which only one parent sacrifices for rearing their children and provides all the needs of those children and this is commonly suffered by a woman. Not only single parents suffer from emotional problems but also their children, so the Department of Social Welfare and Development provides counseling to those deprived families who left with their partner to overcome their depression.

As to the local issues/practices given by the DSWD to the solo parent in Sta. Magdalena is provided with the benefits stated in the Republic Act 8972 and 118611. Solo parent in this town has an organization that plans programs and projects that can help their household to additional income for them to support the needs of their children. As to treatment the solo parents in this town, we are treated equally and as normal even in social gatherings.

As a solo parent, individuals may face a range of local issues and unique challenges that vary depending on their location. There are some common local issues and practices that solo parents may encounter: a) Access to affordable children: Finding affordable and reliable children options is a significant concern for many solo parents. They may face difficulties in accessing quality day care centers or after-school programs within their community; b) financial support: Solo parents often experience financial strain due to the sole responsibility of raising a child. They may face challenges in accessing government assistance programs, such as child support, welfare benefits, or affordable housing; c) balancing work and parenting: juggling work and parenting responsibilities can be particularly challenging for solo parents. Many face difficulties in finding flexible work arrangements or adequate parental leave, which can impact their ability to maintain employment and provide for their family; d) social support network: Being a solo parent can sometimes lead to a lack of social support networks. Community organizations, support groups, and counseling services can play a crucial role in providing emotional support and guidance for solo parents in navigating challenges; e) Stigma and discrimination: solo parents may face societal judgments, stereotypes, and discrimination based on their marital status. This can impact their self-esteem, mental well-being, and their children’s perception of their family structure; f) legal considerations: solo parents may need to navigate legal processes such as custody arrangements and visitation rights. Local legal practices can vary, and understanding the rights and responsibilities of a solo parent can be crucial; and g) Access to healthcare: healthcare access can be a concern for solo parents, especially in areas with limited

healthcare facilities or high medical costs. Affordable and accessible healthcare services play a vital role in ensuring the well-being of both the parent and the child.

To address these local issues and practices, communities can focus on initiatives such as providing financial assistance, increasing access to affordable childcare options, promoting inclusive workplace policies, organizing support groups, and raising awareness to reduce the stigma surrounding solo parenting. Local organizations, government agencies, and community members can all play a role in supporting solo parents and advocating for their needs.

The phenomenon of solo parenting, or raising a child without a partner or co-parent, represents a significant departure from the conventional model of parenting. As the researcher, I conducted this research based on my personal experiences of the solo parenting journey because I for one believe that it is essential to explore and understand the personal experiences of individuals who go through this particular parenting situation. Because this research is based on my personal experiences as a solo parent for more than 10 years, I can easily relate to my participants by undertaking a phenomenological exploration of my personal experiences. I wanted to learn more about the difficulties, feelings, and coping techniques faced by single parents. Professionals in a variety of professions, such as psychology, social work, and parenting assistance, can benefit from the knowledge this research can offer.

The choice to concentrate on individual experiences in this study was motivated by the belief that building effective support and intervention plans requires a thorough understanding of the lived experiences of solitary parents. We can pinpoint their unique needs and challenges as well as potential strengths and resiliency characteristics by studying the unique perspective of those managing solo parenting. Additionally, this study could contribute to dispelling stereotypes and false beliefs about single parenting. Society frequently has preconceived notions about single parents, claiming that they are incapable of doing particular things or that their problems are solely related to their relationship status. This research, however, intends to dispel such myths and provide light on the wide spectrum of emotional and experiences that single parents go through by a thorough examination of personal experiences.

In the end, this study aims to give exclusive parents a forum where they may tell their own stories, voice their demands, and contribute to a deeper knowledge of the solo parenting experience. We can develop supportive communities, foster empathy, and improve the wellbeing of single parents and their kids by elevating their voices and lived experiences.

The setting of the Study

Two hours ride in a jeepney or any inland vehicle from Sorsogon City lies a little coastal town off the tip of Luzon is a paradise in itself, boasting long stretches of white sand beaches.

The original name of Santa Magdalena was “Busaingan”. The term means “water breakers” or the place where the water breaks. The place was mentioned in several early Spanish documents. In the list of encomiendas by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, he assigned on May 23, 1572, to Pedro de Arnedo, one village in Ibalon Bay, and 7 villages on the coast opposite the entrance to Ibalon, called Busaygan or Busaingan. The place was also called Buza Y Gan, or Bucaygan by Loarca, referring to a cape located in the extreme southeaster tip of Luzon.

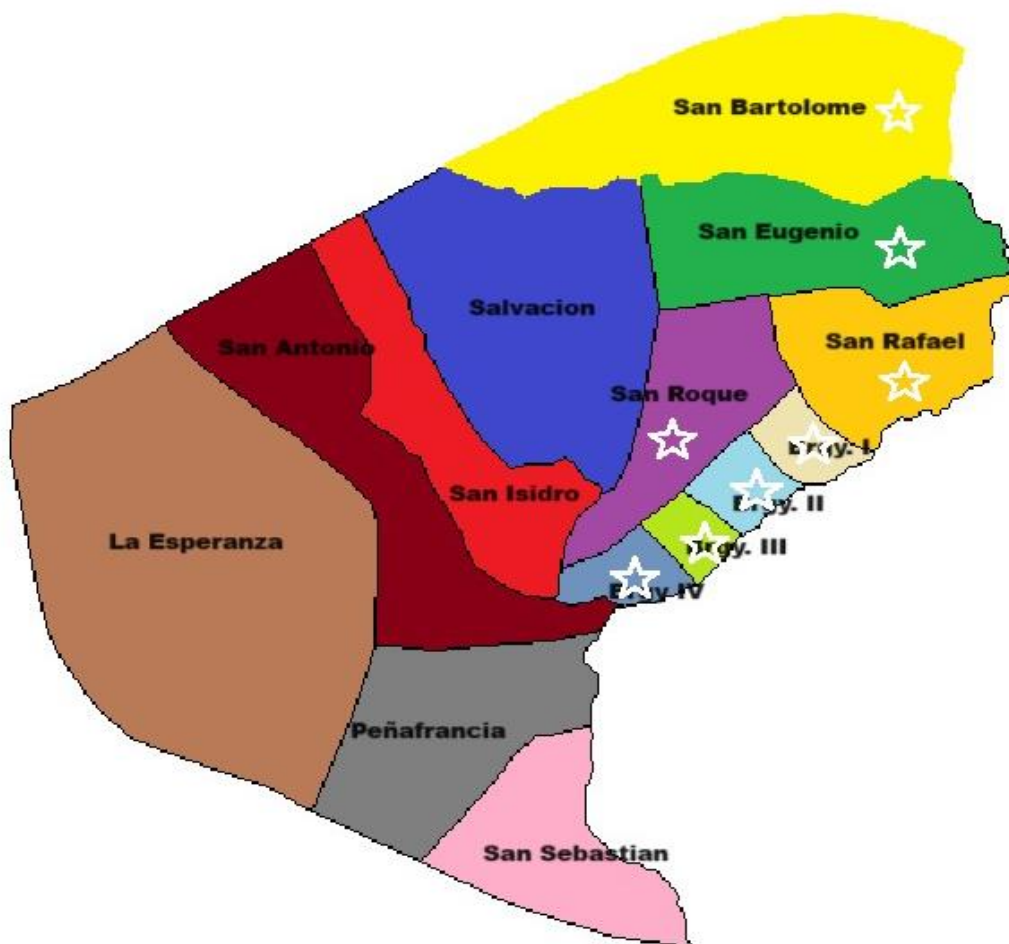
It is presumed that the earliest settlers must have been members of Datu Dumaguil’s tribe. The history of its adjacent municipality of Matnog mentions that a few families led by Sirangan, the chief, and his wife Hara-Hara, who supposedly came from this place, then known as Busaingan, had settled in Matnog. Some local sources, on the other hand, claimed the earliest settlers originated from Bulusan. It may be inferred,

therefore, that Bulusan must have been settled by civilized Malays earlier than Sta. Magdalena or Matnog. These early settlers inhabited the slope of what is now known as Binongtohan, a local term that means “former town site”.

Due to its location, Sta. Magdalena is considered as an agricultural, handicraft maker, and fishing town. Almost fifty percent of the people engage in agriculture, twenty percent in fishing, ten percent in handicraft, and twenty percent are businessmen or professionals. Copra and palay are the main agricultural products while fishing and handicraft are the secondary source of income in Sta. Magdalena, aside from people who engage in business and being a professional.

Sta. Magdalena is not only known for its agricultural products and handicrafts but also for its beautiful beaches which serve as a tourist spot.

Sta, Magdalena, a fifth class is composed of fourteen (14) barangays, dispersed geographically in the lowlands of Poblacion (4 barangays) and upland (10 barangays), which have registered as solo parents for different reasons, this study focuses on solo parent in Sta. Magdalena with different experiences in solo parenting and also different challenges.



LEGEND: Respondent Barangays showing the location of the participants

Figure 1: MAP OF STA. MAGDALENA

Statement of the Problem

1. What are your lived experiences of being a solo parent in terms of:
 - a. Child rearing
 - b. Social acceptance
 - c. Economic stability
 - d. Financial stability
 - e. Emotional stability
2. What are your significant milestones as a solo parent regarding:
 - a. Child rearing
 - b. Social acceptance
 - c. Economic stability
 - d. Financial stability
 - e. Emotional stability
3. What are the challenges and issues of a solo parent along with:
 - a. Child rearing
 - b. Social acceptance
 - c. Economic stability
 - d. Financial stability
 - e. Emotional stability
4. How does solo parent affect your identity and self-esteem in terms of:
 - a. Child rearing
 - b. Social acceptance
 - c. Economic stability
 - d. Financial stability
 - e. Emotional stability
5. What system framework for solo parents could be designed to assist and support them toward a successful parenting journey?

Assumption of the Study

The present study has the following assumptions:

1. The lived experience of being a solo parent is unique.
2. There are significant milestones as a solo parent.
3. There are challenges and issues for a solo parent.
4. The impact of a solo parent on their identity and self-esteem is noticeable in their behavior.
5. The proposed system framework may be adopted by solo parents.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is focused on the solo parenting journey: a phenomenological exploration of personal experiences. This study covers registered solo parents of Sta. Magdalena from different barangays. This looked into the lived experience of being a solo parent, a significant milestone as a solo parent, the challenges and issues of a solo parent, the solo parent's effect on their identity and self-esteem, and the system frameworks that may be adopted by a solo parent.

This study did not include solo parents who are not registered in the Department of Social Work and Development. This is delimited to the registered solo parent of Sta. Magdalena.

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to the following end users:

Mayor. The results of this study will provide them with possible baseline data if there is a proposed program for solo parents alone.

Sangguniang Bayan. This might help them in planning programs and training for solo parents on how they can survive their economic and financial constraints.

Legislator. This study might help them in formulating policies and programs to help solo parents in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic stability, financial stability, and emotional stability.

Councillors. This study provides the councillors data to make a policy on how they can support, and give resources, with their expertise in ultimate contribution to have a more comprehensive understanding of the solo parenting experience.

DSWD Chief. The findings of this study will serve as the basis for them to design a program that will help solo parents overcome the challenges that they are facing.

Solo Parent. Since they are considered the most important participants in the entire situation, this study gives them enough insight into how to overcome challenges and issues, especially in child rearing, economic stability, social acceptance, financial stability, and emotional stability.

Children. Incorporating children's experiences in this study of solo parenting not only enriches the research but also ensures that the voices of all family members are heard, leading to a holistic understanding of the solo parenting journey.

Community. The finding of this study can help the community to be aware of treating solo parent and their children. Communities can provide social support to solo parents, which can help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Future Researcher. By documenting and studying the parenting journey of the solo parent, the study helps to know the personal experiences of a solo parent which can be used in preparing a framework. Researchers play a crucial role in ensuring that this knowledge is documented, validated, and shared for future generations.

Definition of Terms

As used in this study the following terms are defined conceptually and operationally.

Act: Solo Parent Welfare Act of 2000

Republic Act 118611. An act granting additional benefits to solo parents, amending for the purpose republic act no. 8972, entitled "An Act Providing for Benefits and Privileges to Solo Parents and their Children, appropriating funds therefor and for other purposes". (*RA 118611*)

Solo parent. (*RA 8972*) Any individual who falls under any of the following categories; (1) A woman who gives birth as a result of rape or crimes against chastity, even without a final conviction of the offender; Provided, that the mother keeps and raises the child; (2) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to death of spouse; (3) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood while the spouse is detained, or is serving sentence for a criminal conviction for at least one (1) year; The law applies to the spouses of prisoners, whether or not a final judgment has been rendered, provided they are in detention and parenthood due to physical and/or mental incapacity of spouse as

certified by a public medical practitioner; (5) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to legal separation or de facto separation from spouse for at least one (1) year: Provided, that he or she is entrusted with the custody of the children; (6) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to declaration of nullity or annulment of marriage as decreed by a court or by a church: Provided, that he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children; (7) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to abandonment of spouse for at least one (1) year; (8) Unmarried mother/father who has preferred to keep and rear his/her child/children instead of having others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution; (9) Any other person who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children provided he/she is duly licensed as a foster parent by the DSWD or duly appointed legal guardian by the court; (10) Any family member who assumes the responsibility of head of family as a result of the death, abandonment, disappearance or prolonged absence of the parents or solo parent: Provided, that such abandonment, disappearance, or absence lasts for at least one (1) year.

Family: Refer to the Solo Parent and his/her child/children.

Social Worker: (RA 8972) A person who is a graduate of Social Work and duly registered according to Republic Act 4373 and employed with the Social Welfare and Development Office of the local government unit where the solo parent resides.

Children. (RA 8972) Refer to those living with and dependent upon the solo parent for support who are unmarried, unemployed, and below eighteen (18) years of age, or even eighteen (18) years and above but are incapable of self-support and/or mentally and/or physically challenged.

Parental Responsibility. (RA 8972) Refers to the rights and duties of the parents as defined in Article 220 of Executive Order No. 209, as amended, otherwise known as the “Family Code of the Philippines.

Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000. Also known as Republic Act 8972, this act declares that it is the policy of the State to promote the family as the foundation of the nation, strengthen its solidarity, and ensure its total development.

Child Rearing. Refers to the processes, strategies, and approaches used to raise a child from birth through adulthood. It is the work of taking care of children until they are old enough to take care of themselves. The methods parents use in child-rearing vary significantly across the United States and around the world. Child rearing is greatly attributed to the parent style used. How parents communicate and deal with their kids plays a significant role in the results achieved.

Social Acceptance. Is the process of being included and respected by other people. The desire for social acceptance is a strong motivation that helps to explain a broad range of human behavior. Social acceptance includes any positive social interaction and inclusion in communities, cultures, organizations, teams, work, events, and conversation.

Economic Stability. Is a term used to describe a situation where the economy of a nation has constant growth and low inflation and does not experience excessive fluctuations in output, prices, or unemployment. Economic stability is usually seen as a desirable state for a developed country, as it helps achieve macroeconomic objectives and improves the living standards of its citizens.

Emotional Stability. Is a personality trait that relates to how an individual regulates their emotions and responds to challenges and threats. It involves maintaining emotional balance, self-regulation, and psychological stability. Emotional stability is crucial for your emotional well-being and mental resilience. It is not about suppressing or denying emotions but rather about managing constructively and adaptively.

Phenomenological Experiences. To the individualized perception and interpretation of the outside environment, as well as the subjective character of human consciousness. Philosophical in nature,

phenomenology aims to comprehend and investigate these first-hand viewpoints and experiences without presuming anything about the outside world. The aim is to reveal the fundamental frameworks of these encounters and their significance to each person.

Journey. Is a term used to explore the personal experiences of solo parenting through a phenomenological approach, individual can gain a deeper appreciation of their journey, insights into their inner work, and a greater appreciation for the complexities and nuances of solo parenting.

Personal Experiences. It refers to the actual, personal experiences and feelings that an individual encounters while raising a child alone. This encompasses the challenges, joys, struggles, and triumphs that come with solo parenting.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Foreign and local literature and studies which have a bearing on the present study are reviewed and properly cited. These materials added more ideas to the present investigation.

Lived Experiences of being a Solo Parent in terms of Child-rearing, Social Stability, Economic Stability, Financial Stability, and Emotional Stability

Due to lack of time, the mothers cannot spend time with their children and encounter problems in disciplining them. It is no trivial ordeal to deal singlehandedly with the responsibility of taking care of various aspects of the family, such as meeting the family members' basic needs, and looking after the education and socialization of children, all in an environment of inadequate resources and social constraints. The tragedy of being a single parent adds more pain to the situation. Peters and Haldeman, socialization of the children, the absence of a father figure, and the consequent multiple role responsibilities thrust on mothers significantly impact the children's growth (Rani NI, 2006). The feminist interest in working towards a career rather than marriage might be considered 'against nature.' home might be termed 'a dismembered family,' children labeled as hyper-prone to be criminals, sexual deviants, or drug addicts.

In addition to the above review, J.Wajim says that single parenthood has a large extent affects child development and socialization. The study concluded that the majority of single parents are faced with economic, emotional, and social problems thereby, finding it difficult to meet the basic needs of their children such as food, clothing, school fees, and other personal expenses. Failure to provide financial support accounts for the child's greater risk of indulging in dangerous behaviors such as prostitution or commercial sex business, drugs, alcohol, and criminal activities.

L.G. Dagupan and Z.C. Garin (2022), stated in their case study entitled Lived Experience of Solo Parents: A case study that they were experiencing mental and emotional distress as a result of feeling betrayed and having more duties. Not knowing about the Solo Parents Association, which could help them with their problems, is another problem. The majority of responders have struggled financially as a result of not having a steady source of income to meet their necessities. While the respondents employ a variety of coping techniques, most of them focus on social, spiritual, and physical coping while dealing with the challenges of single parenting. The majority of them engaged in hobbies or family time to keep themselves occupied. Some vented their frustrations to friends, while others found solace in scrolling through social media. Their faith and hope in God sustained them.

Particularly, when it comes to cases of single parenthood performed by choice, such as through adoption and/or fostering, governments should abstain from trying to reverse the rising trend of single parenthood,

treating it as something that needs to be fixed but instead, they should provide financial incentives to promote both choices of partnership and parenting practice, such as lone parenting, about unconventional ways of becoming a parent, in this case, adoption and/or fostering. Namely, these incentives can take the form of child benefits, better tax breaks, and support programs for individuals who choose to adopt to familiarize the community with the choice of adoption and fostering to slowly replace institutional with parental care. (R. Kyriakopoulou).

According to Hetherington and Weissbourd, some single mothers lack the time and energy to invest in their kids, set a reasonable age limit, or provide the necessary affection. Every mother has gloomy periods, sometimes for too long periods. In addition, every mother will experience instances of intense joy. Being a single mother is never easy. Juggling act of juggling finances, time, and energy with their child's feelings – and their own – natural good days and bad days. (Morrisette M, 2018)

L. G. Dagupon, et al, say that other issues include the child's lack of touch with or strained connection with the other parent, unemployment or unstable job, aloneness, and loneliness. Parents have also mentioned that it can be challenging to coordinate their work schedules with childcare options and to explain to their children the location of the other parent and the reasons why he or she doesn't live with them. Mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to acknowledge having financial issues. Fathers and moms endure the same other difficulties that come with being a single parent. The most common recommendations made by single parents themselves to solve the biggest challenges they experience are connected to bettering their financial situation, living conditions, and work possibilities, as well as more effective legislation for deciding and protecting children.

In addition to L. G. Dagupon, et al, the majority of the single parents were women who were in their adult years, (lived-in) single, had experienced betrayal and abandonment from their relationships, had few children, and had completed their high school education. They consequently earned an average salary as workers and domestic assistants and have been raising their children alone for a while; physically, single parents were undernourished and did not exercise frequently. They were hurt, which caused mental and emotional discomfort, which led to isolation and a lack of social activity. The majority of respondents claimed to believe in God but did not regularly attend church services. They also reported experiencing poverty and financial hardship since they did not have a steady source of income to meet their requirements. The majority of the single parents used coping mechanisms from the realms of the physical, spiritual, and social.

Another review of the study by D.Johnson,(12-2022), that solo parent don't have time to manage their time, balance their obligations, find inexpensive childcare, overcome financial difficulties, arrange classes, lose their social lives, and find time for themselves to be a daily struggle. Numerous of these difficulties were found to be obstacles to single-parent students' academic progress in earlier research, which they suffer in balancing their responsibilities in child care with their other tasks as solo parents.

The experience of solo parenting, usually referred to as single parenting, has been studied by academics and authors from a variety of disciplines. Numerous research and books have examined the difficulties, experiences, and resources available to people starting on a solo parenting path.

According to the research of E. S. Ramos, et al, (2020), mothers are considered to be the sole caretakers of home the home, we could say that our social system is designed to control their children's upbringing. However, in single mothers who are juggling two lives as a provider and the home maker, experiences as mothers and raising their children are entirely different from what we imagined it would be. To perform and achieve to earn for the children's needs.

In this review, the researcher, S. Garcia, et.al, stated that the participants added themselves to other government perks based on the outcome. The data also show that some single parents are not receiving benefits, even though they are aware of it. Generally speaking, it is the responsibility and accountability of the government to help its citizens follow their obligations. Everyone has the right to fair treatment. Everyone is guaranteed equality, regardless of color, gender, religion, age, or status. According to the current study, single parents frequently experience this among their relatives and neighbors. In their research, they found out that very limited support comes from the Philippines government even though it is stated in the Republic Act 8972, and that will promote awareness of the condition of single parents in the Philippines.

In addition to the review mentioned above M. M. Baluyot, et. al,(2023), say that contractual single women still struggle to combine their career and personal lives, making it difficult for them to care for their kids and meet their necessities. Sincere maternal love is unending even in the face of hopelessness, thus the sacrifices made by every single mother that have an impact on their health are not incomparable. Additionally, contractual single mothers still rely on their relatives during times of crisis when no one else would; contractual single parents continue to struggle with a serious lack of funds. We found that the majority of single mothers are preoccupied with either having no money at all or having some money but struggling to put money aside for their children's future.

In addition to M.M. Baluyot, et. al(2023) statement, concern and anxiety over the contract's completion and termination adds to the difficulty because these single mothers will need to start over by hunting for work; one of the worries of single mothers is that they won't be able to finish or complete their responsibilities because they are single parents who are responsible for their children alone and don't have access to any outside assistance; last but not least, contractual single mothers deal with a variety of issues. We have learned that the only things that help contractual single women cope are their children, being around real people, and their faith. They consider that their children's health is their only source of strength. Furthermore, while raising a child as a single parent might be stressful, time management is by far the most difficult aspect. The hardest thing they must go through is learning to adapt and assuming the roles of both parents. Managing time between job and home is a significant challenge because they are both the sole provider and homemaker at the same time. They were able to endure their trials by developing effective coping mechanisms. This is one of the study's other key results. Their ability to cope was aided by strong faith and family support. It is encouraging to see how single-parent families are being accepted and supported more and more. Some of the constructive activities they engage in include spending quality time with their kids and keeping themselves occupied at work. (Olive Joy G. Abing),(2018).

Besides, it has offered a crucial component to the expanding disaster recovery research problem by concentrating on single-parent recipients, a group that is underrepresented in academic debate. In reality, the results have significant consequences for the creation of policies and administrative procedures, calling for the integration of specialized rehabilitation services into frameworks for disaster response. This study supports the idea that rehabilitation should be viewed as a fundamental pillar of recovery techniques, acting as a spur to complete recovery and improved social integration. As we look past the limitations of this study, other avenues for inquiry open up. Looking into studying the transferability of successful rehabilitation practices, the long-term consequences of examining approaches to various cultural situations, and the technical resources that can support the distribution of support services. (E. Jumail, Jr., et.al) (2023)

In addition to the review about financial stability, (Glenn Paul R. Lopez, et.al), (2019), stated that this study chose 15 livelihood initiatives in the Philippines, and data were analyzed using content analysis. The study held an expert workshop to help validate the findings, and the participants were able to add new information to the findings based on their own experiences implementing livelihood programs. Three distinct analyses of livelihood projects and programs in fishing communities in the Philippines were found in the results, namely: (1) livelihood project components; (2) general lessons about the design and implementation of livelihood programs and projects; and (3) particular factors to increase the success and sustainability rate of livelihood intervention.

Lastly, a variety of rewards and challenges are part of what it's like to be a single parent in the real world. Solo parents can raise their children in a stable and caring environment while also building a satisfying life for themselves, despite the challenges that childrearing, economic stability, financial stability, and emotional stability may provide.

Milestones as a Solo Parent regarding Child-rearing, Social Stability, Economic Stability, Financial Stability, and Emotional Stability

Mother has the greatest involvement in child-schooling for them to guide their educational achievement. As a single parent, it's not easy to do tasks at once. It happens when I transfer my child to a school near my workplace. For the first time that they went to the school, I accompanied them because they did not know the area of their new school and they were shy as the first time in that school.

According to the research of Samantha Gort (2018), parental involvement in schools has been a prevalent topic. The importance of involving educational achievement cannot be overstated, as parents are the most pervasive social influence on academic competence and school functioning. It is crucial to discover the day-to-day events of a single parent raising a child in elementary school. As a solo parent, they should balance their time between work and child-rearing.

In addition to S. Gort's review, she just vaguely comprehended a little more of what a single parent works all day for. The participants talked about what they experienced with parental participation, and it demonstrated how conditions are shifting within the day. The main method parents are involved in the classroom is no longer through homework. Parents were visible to participate in their children's extracurricular activities and to be more interested in their interests and shared activities. It doesn't mean they didn't support their child's academic endeavors, instead appeared to be imparting knowledge and techniques to enhance their capacity for learning and developing responsibility through routines. According to the single parents in this study, they faced more obstacles than parents who are married, and they receive less help in a home as sole parents of their children.

Besides G.M.Vysclocil (2018), stated that the combination of being a solo parent while raising children, and earning a degree is vital to creating independent means of support and giving single-parent student mothers the chance to set an example for their dependents by pursuing education and earning a degree. Although college degrees can give sole-parent families a way to achieve financial stability and enormous social and professional benefits, they can also have a significant negative impact on the level of parenting that single parents can provide for their dependent children as well as on their health, economic security, and interpersonal relationships due to the multiple roles they must play.

Also, G. M. Vysclocil, added to her review that both educational and institutional approaches to raising single mothers can promote educational discourse discussions in public spaces on the significance and benefits of encouraging parents to degree attained. Findings from the study highlight how important

teachers are. Identifying meaningfully the needs of parents of children and utilizing the educational process to effectively transform the accomplishment spaces of the lives of students with one parent.

Furthermore, most solo parents are extremely detrimental to their financial and mental health at home, especially if that solo parent does not have permanent work, they often say that Jesus is the ultimate and final answer to their problem because, a simple prayer to God, a single parent can overcome the difficulty in terms of finances. Christians must influence the society in which they reside and fight against darkness. Sadly, the pattern of many American Christians is to let culture influence them, which has the same effects. Issues that affect the rest of society. The issue is worsened by an outbreak in modern American culture, and it is having an impact on every facet of life. Even families who adhere to the conventional family unit are impacted. This issue's fundamental cause is a heart problem that can be resolved by following Christ's example and living out His teachings. (Douglas, 2015)

Aside from the other review, single mother's first concern is the finances for their respective family's needs, like food, shelter, clothing, education, and medicine. Some single mothers who never work for their entire lives would be forced to look for a job just to cope with the financial needs of their children, even on a full-time or part-time basis. Some single mothers who have already worked are looking for another job or extra income to provide for all the needs of their children. As mentioned in Rani's study, According to reports, single women struggle to balance their dual responsibilities of supporting their families and working to support themselves. It was also noted how difficult it was for these mothers to raise their children on their own. The stress brought on by financial issues and the strain of being overburdened frequently resulted in child maltreatment and melancholy. Being the family's major and lone provider suggests that single women need to work more than one job to make ends meet. To sustain their financial needs, a single parent looks for multiple jobs without losing their position just to cover all the expenses. And this is the most challenging experience for a single parent.

According to A. L. Aloro, et.al.,(2024), due to their experiences of elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and social isolation, they feel alone, which makes their emotional well-being a top priority. They yet find happiness and fulfillment in being a single parent despite these difficulties. Time management is an essential ability for single parents because they frequently find it difficult to balance their many obligations and find time for themselves. Single parents face problems in providing their children with quality care and educational opportunities, including finding reliable and affordable daycare and being aware of the complexities of the educational system. Social support is essential for easing the challenges of single parenting and fostering a sense of belonging and help. Examples of this include having peer networks and community resources at one's disposal. There are several challenges associated with being a single parent that call for extensive support and commitment to their achievement.

In addition to the above issues, from the Council of Europe (Health Policy), the argument for government intervention is supported by the shortage of options for overcoming economic disadvantage. The broad policy implication is that, in addition to short-term corrective measures, it may be more cost-effective in the long run to strengthen economic vulnerability prevention measures, particularly those that reduce disadvantages in the labor market faced by the general population and women in particular. The loss of productive resources is another cost that everyone in society bears and leaves as a legacy for future generations. These two costs—disadvantage on the job market and eventual dependence on the government—are not the only ones. Even though the government has support in terms of counseling, solo parents are experiencing problems with social stability. To overcome their problem with social acquaintances, these single parents must be with their families.

A single parent must have support from other agencies, even the government, non-government organizations, the community, and even the school because a single parent can suffer detrimental consequences that they can overcome over a long period. Even they say that responsibilities to children come from both mother and father, but sometimes in terms of financial, rearing, and other support, it usually comes from their mother. S.K. Ali, et.al, (2019), mentioned in their studies that, the government should balance its parenting-related measures. If they ever choose to approach one side but their spouses, children should be held accountable for their roles, even if separate. Finally, quality of time, care, and appropriate attention. The primary responsibility of parents is to their children. Nevertheless, lone parenting appears to be a highly widespread and prevalent social issue these days all across the world.

It is the maternal process that mediates a child's well-being, such as the parent-child relationship, that controls hostility. In this study, a growing number of single parents who are divorced or separated from their husbands may experience socio-psychological consequences for their children, which occasionally lead to a negative attitude toward the children and low performance in school. The author also noted that while children may first experience unpleasant feelings like sadness, perplexity, fear, anger, and grief, these feelings may not immediately harm their behavior because other influences that influence children's attitudes exist outside of the home. In this situation, communication between mother and child is important to guide children in the right way of their lives, or even discipline can be imposed, and the children can realize their situation as their mother performs both their obligations as mother and father to them. As a researcher, dealing with the same situation that the author discusses on solo parenting is extremely difficult. It took almost five years to accept the real situation, which affected the emotional consequences for my children until my older daughter rebelled against the situation. (A. L. N. Babasa, 2014)

In addition to the study of Babasa, solo parents face so many challenges while they are in the workplace. While simultaneously exploring their struggles beyond their career or profession and taking care of children who are in elementary school, it is very difficult for them to do one task at a time. But due to the implementation of Republic Act No. 8972, also known as the "Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000, Section 6 (flexible work schedule) and Section 8 (Parental Leave), a solo parent can adjust to their work in their workplace and have ample time to attend to the needs of their children because of the parental leave and their salary did not suffer in the leave of absence. It was stressed that both businesses and the government have a role to play in resolving the difficulties faced by employees who are also single parents. According to the offices involved in the aforementioned industry, enacting legislation for solo parents-will be advantageous for the business since it will increase the productivity of their solo-parent employees by allowing them to devote more attention to their work. Additionally, it stands out that the majority of solitary parent participants are noticeably ignorant of the other legal provisions. (J. R. C. Tuazon, et al, 2022)

On the other hand, not only a woman is considered a solo parent, just like this study by F.S. Huadar et al. (2016) from a public school in Sarangani Province, which reveals the journey challenges and prospects. This study resulted from an interview with male solo parents in the said province, and the experience of what a female solo parent experiences difficulties with the male solo parent handling the situation, especially since we know that they do not have the same characteristics as a female solo parent, but due to the consequences, their children need their attention, so they are forced to do what a female solo parent does. Then, through this study, male solo parents experienced success and progress, family solidarity, and other forms of happiness.

Based on the research of L. A. Diez (2018), both mother and children are affected in all aspects if they

have a lone mother who absorbs all the obligations. Not only for the emotional aspect but sometimes for their educational involvement, especially if that mother doesn't have permanent work. In this situation, solo parents have so many challenges to face. This study focused on the performance of students coming from a single-parent family. She said that children from this family do well in school, and sometimes get an award because they belong to the deserving students, and they also understand the situation of their mother even though they sacrifice emotionally. Yes, it is very difficult to balance in terms of time and financial management having a net pay of Php12, 000.00 and two children in college. So, in this study, there is no significant relationship between the level of parental involvement in the aspects of school work support, financial support, and moral support and the academic performance of the students from the solo parents' mothers. Also, they become open to each other in terms of their feelings.

In addition to all the reviews above, from foreign to local, which are governed by the laws, in the Philippines, solo parents are increasing in number, with different reasons why they become solo parents. In the survey, the challenges of modernization and the impact of crime and violence contributed to the phenomenon that solo parents go through a multitude of stressors, which are a combination of psychological, physical, and emotional anxieties. The loss of or separation from a partner is an intensely painful experience on the part of children, and the grieving process cannot be ascertained. Through Republic Act 8972, also known as the "Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000," solo parents in the Philippines are under this act, which they enjoy the benefit of and which they can use to attend to the needs of their children. (R.A. 8972)

Last but not least, the researcher would like to analyze the key milestones reached by single parents in a variety of areas of their lives, such as child raising, financial stability, and emotional well-being. Solo parents must often juggle numerous duties to meet their children's requirements, which presents special challenges and responsibilities. Understanding their accomplishments might help highlight the incredible perseverance and accomplishment shown by these people. Through perseverance and tenacity, this single mom overcomes tremendous obstacles in many situations. We may encourage and assist single parents on their path by recognizing and celebrating these milestones, showcasing their extraordinary successes despite the particular difficulties they encounter. To help solitary parents reach these milestones and promote their general well-being, more programs and societal support are required.

Challenges and Issues of a Solo Parent along with Child-Rearing, Social Stability, Economic Stability, Financial Stability, and Emotional Stability

According to L. Woessmann (2015), single-parent is very common in all countries, particularly in the United States. He says "In almost every country, students from single-parent homes do much worse in math than students from two-parent families. This accomplishment disparity, however, largely reflects socioeconomic background disparities rather than just family structure, as indicated by the quantity of books in the home and parental education". In the United States, the educational system is largely affected by a sole parent who is taking care of their child, which may cause conflict for reasons like financial constraints, a lack of time for the children due to work, and sometimes influence from their peers, which may result in poor education for the children.

On the other hand, A. Meier, et. al,(2016) that single parents who are employed have the advantage of revealing differences in the dimension of well-being considered and important features in parents' lives and parenting experiences. They can meet the needs of their children because of their regular income, which is the primary need of the family to live. Aside from being able to provide for the needs of their

children, they also feel less stressed and happier, even though they are overly focused on parenting than those partnered mothers. For me, a single parent can indeed decide what is best for their children without asking anyone. They can easily overcome the emotional feeling because of the people around them in the workplace.

Based on the research of Natujwa Josiah Mrinde,(2014), In affluent nations, single-parented children encounter numerous obstacles to their growth in terms of their schooling. Economic difficulty, a lack of guidance and counseling, a lack of parental attention, poor academic performance, poverty, early marriage, a high percentage of dropouts and absentees, indiscipline in schools, and low levels of education are obstacles and their impacts. Let's now take a look at developing nations.

In addition to N.J. Mrinde's research, single-parent students are facing many gaps and challenges along their journey as parents and, at the same time, students. This challenge can cause single-parent students poor academic performance, a lack of attention to their child, and most especially financial constraints, and sometimes they become depressed for the reason that they do not have the income to support their needs. Sometimes these single-parent students are dependent on their parents, just like here in our country. Single-parent students are facing so many gaps and issues, like absenteeism, and a lack of support from the community, or even in the school itself. And in this situation, as single-parent students, it happened when both parents were working and they didn't have time to look into the needs of their children. There was a lack of monitoring, guidance, and counseling, which is a very important thing that the children needed, so their female children tended to have early pregnancies when they were looking for someone's attention.

Moreover, being a single parent is not a choice; this may be due to a multitude of reasons, like divorce, early pregnancy, family problems, and God's will. But due to this reason, single parents suffer financially and mentally at home, especially if they don't have permanent work with one or two children left to them. In Sidey, D. (2015) study, if God plans to be a single parent, then there is a way to survive because this research says that "Jesus is the ultimate and final answer, it can be seen that single parent belief in Christ is not enough. Instead, Christians must impact the culture in which they live and push back the sadness. Sadly enough, the trend amongst American Christians is to allow the culture to impact them, and this results in the same problems that the rest of society is having". So a single parent must always have faith in God that all their sacrifices have a reward.

Besides the study in Brunei of Affandy, A. H., (2023), there are so many effects of financial stress that have caused people to make several compromises, such as selling off luxuries and compromising meals to make sure their kids have enough to eat when money is tight. Financial limitations also have an impact on children, which leads to inadequate provision for their requirements. To lessen the impact of financial stress, participants' coping mechanisms emphasized the significance of family, followed by friends and public help. In addition, supplemental income is used to support oneself through endeavors like starting a business and taking on part-time jobs. Despite being the primary cause of financial troubles, children also play special roles in relieving them. It can be challenging to provide for your family while also earning a living, therefore it's important to make sure single mothers in Brunei live in a progressive and equal society.

In a journal written by Gupta, A., et al. (2020), parenting is a crucial task for both parents, especially in molding the whole aspects of their children, and the author says that it is more difficult for a single parent to raise a family without a partner, and it is very common these days due to different reasons or by choice, numerous obstacles confront solitary parents. The children are also affected, in addition to the parents.

Teenagers who experience family upheaval suffer from both immediate and long-term impacts. Teenagers are more likely to experience a range of short- and long-term physical and emotional issues, such as intense anger, fear of the future, loyalty conflicts, health issues, academic difficulties, withdrawal, depression, drug abuse, a lack of social skills, and early sexual indulgence, while in the long-term, they are more likely to marry young and have less stable marriages due to lack of trust and happiness. Reviews of the studies found so many impacts on the lives of single parents and, at the same time, on bodily self-concept development, interpersonal relationships, behavior, academic success, effects of social integration and romantic relationships, leisure activities, and career development on single-parent teenagers. As a result, being a single parent takes a lot of guts, tenacity, and emotional fortitude to overcome. Single parents also need to carefully select parenting practices and take on the responsibilities with confidence to nurture their children. In this situation, children need the warmth and keen affection of a single parent so that they feel important, increase their self-esteem and coping abilities, and decrease their feelings of anxiety. So based on this study, both dual parents and single parents need support from the government or other non-government organizations to have programs so that they can have strong relationships with their children. In addition to the above review, single parents in India and also in other parts of the world suffer from unclear understanding of gender roles, gender equality, and acceptance of various genders and preferences. Also, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, single parents are prepared to face the impacts on their children. It is widely known that this happens to be a single parent, as mentioned also in the above review, that this happened due to various reasons like divorce, separation, parental abandonment, and abuse harming their children. Children of single parents tend to be emotionally disturbed, have behavioral issues, struggle to make friends, have delayed physical, social, and cognitive development, as well as poor academic performance and low self-esteem. Few studies have focused on the benefits of single-parent households, which include more resilient children, having a stronger sense of responsibility, regulating their emotions, having better problem-solving abilities, and being involved in family decisions. Additionally, it has been found that only a small percentage of individuals in a single-parent household have negative effects. We must thus seek to prevent these negative effects by identifying the risk factors and encouraging elements that foster resilience. To assure these families' mental and emotional well-being and to assist them in creating appropriate parenting strategies, we as mental health experts need to get in touch with these families. (Chavda, Kersi, et.al, 2023)

In a further review by Johnson, Debbie (2022), some single parents are attending their studies, just like in this study, where a single parent is attending community colleges in the United States and at the same time doing the same task as a single parent to their children. According to this study, single-parent students are more crucial than those parents who are working. The experiences of these single-parent students are lenses of motivation, challenges, needs, and support. They are to be recognized to overcome their struggle emotionally and feeling disconnected; acknowledge single-parent strengths, such as time management, organization, and hard work; and the need for single-parent student aid, such as financial, childcare, and academic assistance. They also suffer the conflicting responsibilities that single parents must juggle, the significance of communication, mentorship, and support, as well as the critical role of internal motivation and drive. The results of my research can be applied to institutional practice and offer knowledge on counseling and support for single-parent students.

Johnson, Debbie also says that single parents experience the challenges of overcoming financial trouble, childcare, difficulty with family responsibilities, and academic and emotional struggles. In this situation, single parents need motivational factors, support services, and helpful resources. With this support, single

parents can easily overcome and survive what they are facing as single parents.

In addition to other studies, children from single parents suffer from negative societal attitudes compared to those who come from complete families (mother and father). This attitude of children is shown when their children get schooling, even in public and private. This study also said that, in this study, it was also said that children of single parents are more depressed and can't easily adjust to their peer group due to emotional problems, so the school must know the family background of that child to understand why his or her attitude is like that. Schools and the government must work hand in hand to have such a program for children who undergo depression so that the children of single parents can overcome the situation. But from my experience, yes, it happens that my eldest daughter suffers from societal and emotional problems due to family situations until she attempts to rebel against me. (Serrano, L. D., et.al) (2023)

According to the study of Legarda, L.M. (2023), about the Impact of the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act on Single Parents by analyzing the effects of the legislation on various dimensions of single-parent households' well-being. The study assessed the implementation of the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act, its effectiveness in providing support to single parents, and its influence on different aspects such as economic stability, access to education, healthcare, and social support networks. The findings reveal that the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act has made significant contributions to improving the socio-economic conditions of single-parent households. It has facilitated access to financial assistance, educational opportunities, and social services. Moreover, the Act has enhanced the well-being and resilience of single parents, empowering them to overcome challenges and cope with their responsibilities effectively. However, certain areas require attention to maximize the Act's potential impact. These include the need for improved coordination among government agencies, enhanced awareness of available support programs, and the development of targeted interventions to address specific challenges faced by single parents. The study underscores the importance of ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and responsive policy adjustments to ensure continuous support and meaningful outcomes for single-parent households in Zamboanga City and beyond. Concerning this study the researcher experiencing this Expanded Solo Parent Welfare Act.

In addition to the above review, this act is also an effective policy addressing the economic, social, and psychological well-being of single parents. This also helps the single parent to access in terms of economic stability, improved access to healthcare and education, as well as the need for further support in addressing psychological challenges. In the end, the policymakers' insights enhance the policy's implementation and maximize its impact on single-parent households. (RA 118611)

Additionally, Sopico, L.M.S., et al.'s (2019) study found that all family configurations have very high levels of personal growth initiative. The exact areas in which teenagers from various Filipino household arrangements differ hardly at all. Similar mean scores were shared by all family configurations for the personal growth initiative attributes. Additionally, it has been determined that there are no appreciable differences among teenagers from various Filipino family configurations in terms of their commitment to personal growth.

The study examines the considerable gaps and problems that solo parents encounter in a variety of areas of child upbringing and their stability. Social stability, economic stability, financial stability, and emotional stability are the main gaps and problems. In terms of maintaining their social stability, single parents frequently struggle to create their networks of friends and manage their social lives. They struggle to connect with people and carve out enough time for themselves, which results in feelings of loneliness and seclusion. This may influence their general health and capacity to raise their kids well. For single

parents, financial security is another area of concern. Due to lower salaries and a lack of access to reasonably priced childcare, parents who are solely responsible for raising their children may experience financial hardship. This may limit their capacity to provide their kids with essential requirements for things like school, healthcare, and extracurricular activities. Financial stability includes the capacity to pay for daily needs, put money aside for the future, and maintain a respectable level of living. It is strongly related to economic stability. Due to decreased income, increased stress, and anxiety, solo parents frequently experience more financial hardship, which has an impact on both the parents' mental health and their capacity to adequately care for their children.

And finally, being emotionally stable is important for single parenting. The pressures of juggling work, housework, and childcare can be taxing on a single parent's mental stability. They frequently experience feelings of exhaustion, stress, and overload, and without the right assistance and coping mechanisms, this can impair their capacity to give their kids a secure and nurturing environment.

Effect on Solo Parent Identity and Self-Esteem in terms of Child-Rearing, Social Stability Economic Stability, Financial Stability, and Emotional Stability

According to the journal of Rebecca, J. et al. (2017), single-parent families are at high risk of financial hardship, which has an impact on psychological well-being. In this research, the author described that single parents suffer from low self-esteem, which sometimes results in isolation, anxiety, depression, paranoia, and sometimes suicidal behavior, and they must undergo psychological services from the government and other non-government organizations just to overcome this situation. They also need support to consider the economic drivers of distress.

In addition to the above study, a new strategy is being considered for the single family this prioritizes "marital roles" over the standard emphasis on "parental roles," which is typically encountered. By reading the literature and getting hands-on experience with the single-parent family phenomena, it has been feasible to take into account the significantly distinct issues single parents face as well as potential solutions. (Burgees, J. K., 1970)

According to primary school teachers in the city of Ilorin, single parenting harms children's emotional development because it causes them to experience various feelings of abandonment, inferiority toward their peers, low self-esteem, and social isolation, which cause them to withdraw from the group or their peers and occasionally have suicidal thoughts. Furthermore, primary school teachers in the Ilorin metropolis could not find any appreciable differences in the impact of single parenting on the emotional development of their students based on their gender or educational background. (Adegboyega L.O., 2019)

As to the review of Sooner, S.M. (2019), parenting is the foundation of the family, a wonderful institution. However, throughout time, it has been clear that single parenting is widely used and that just one parent is responsible for the upbringing of the children. Both couples are unable to carry out the same duties together for a variety of reasons. It appears to be incredibly powerful yet ultimately hurts kids. In keeping with various parenting philosophies, this essay seeks to highlight the typical contextual causes and effects of single parenting. Being a single parent can't be easy to overcome for a year, especially if that single parent doesn't have a permanent job because she is looking for a person to comfort them.

In addition to Sooner's review "stigmatizing the single parents and their children we all as a community should help them in fulfilling their requirements or needs to make their life valuable and provide them a platform worth living. Firstly, before getting separated, parents should try to maintain stability in their relationship for the better future of their children. If they fail to maintain stability, then both parents should

contribute or share equal responsibilities for a better upbringing and to enhance the intellectual and emotional development of their children. Secondly, all the higher authorities such as Non-governmental organizations, counselors, and psychologists. Parent-teacher associations and social workers should plan sessions to train and educate single parents about how to deal with multiple challenges that come their way. Workshops, media, and seminars can help create insight in parents regarding their responsibilities. Lastly, it is suggested that government and non-governmental organizations should support financially, and in all aspects, to secure the future of children.”

Furthermore, Berlin, G. (2024), states in his study that a family must be intact with two parents, the mother, and father, so that their children grow up in a complete family, but due to so many reasons, some children grow up with a single parent, which sometimes results in negative outcomes for their children in terms of social acceptance or even their self-esteem. These children are prone to dropout rates in school, teenage pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency, and this may fail in their adulthood. However, some single parents who undergo marital education, family counseling, and related services can survive these negative outcomes which may result in their success in life because their negative experiences become their inspiration to pursue what they want in life and their single parent to have a happy life someday. Lastly, in the Berlin study, the national focus should be on the design, implementation, and rigorous evaluation of these initiatives to determine whether and what kinds of policies and programs might successfully strengthen single parents as an institution among low-income populations as well as among a wide variety of ethnically and culturally diverse populations.

According to Tarar, A. H., et. al,(2021), study says that psychological health and adjustment in single parents from various socioeconomic classes in a society that places a strong emphasis on the family. This implies that socioeconomic position, as well as economic independence and reliance, have a significant influence on the adjustment and general well-being of single parents. The impact of a social identity as a divorced single parent within a highly family-oriented culture, which has a detrimental impact on their well-being and social adjustment, is one of the study's unique results aside from its economic implications. As to the researcher's experiences, it is highly evident from her personal experiences and even from those of my children that they have difficulty accepting the situation that they are staying with me as a single mother. In this situation, I take into consideration their emotional and financial needs, and most especially their need for affection as a single mother.

Gasse, D. V., (2020), reviews the study about the single-parent by choice but People transition to single parenthood through divorce, separation, or bereavement and must deal with this position. These transitions to single parenthood cause unexpected challenges concerning the organization of the family. Some lone parents view their experience as a success. These people chose to be single parents. Because people can now choose to become single parents through sperm donation or adoption, it is no longer required to have a spouse to start a family. Although single parents by choice might have chosen to stay that way due to circumstances, they nevertheless had a strong desire to start a family. Since they deliberately decide to become parents on their own, single parents by choice provide a unique perspective on single motherhood. To integrate their professional obligations and their parental commitments, however, single parents by choice confront the same challenges as other single parents. In this essay, we examine the process by which voluntarily single parents became parents and how it changed the rest of their parenting preparations. This single parent, by choice, cannot give all the needed attention to the child, like the attention of a second parent.

Based on the study of Chandler, K. L. (2010), the experience of a single mother in higher education is a

struggling one for the reason that she has to multitask like taking care of a child, focusing on her studies, and looking for a job to support their financial needs, so this situation affects the self-esteem and identity of a single mother who is in higher education. She must focus on studying and, at the same time, on her work and child, so she is isolated among others because of her schedule. Sometimes, in this situation, she suffers emotionally if she lacks financial support. This situation must be given attention by the government to give support to this kind of single mother. The requirement for better supportive policies and programs in the areas of higher education and social services. This may involve better training for administrators and college counseling staff as they take into account the institutional benefits of enlisting a diverse student body.

According to the study by Mundo, J.C, et.al, (2019), about a solo parent in Manila, says that The traditional concept of a "family" in Filipino culture is a married heterosexual couple and their offspring. Both moms and fathers are expected to share the burden of parenting their child or children in such a cultural context. This scenario, meanwhile, is unlikely to occur in households where one woman is the only caretaker and source of income. Also seen in this scenario is that a single mother covers all the obligations of a father while at the same time being a mother to her children, so she has a conflicting task, especially if her children are in the elementary grades, that needs thorough attention. In this case, she doesn't have time for herself and is always away from the group because of her busy schedule. So, solo mothers use both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping mechanisms, but the approach they take depends on the difficulty at hand. To be able to care for their children in the future, single mothers make sure to take care of themselves. Given the difficulties of solo parenting, the government must offer support programs and policies to solo women to reinforce their commitment to raising their children well.

Moreover, in the study of Bain M. C. (2020), a solo parent in the Philippines is empowered to do the diaconal task even though they are separated from their partners. Even though marriage is sacred in the Catholic Church, due to issues about separation, the church is aware of the global issues of gender inequality that affect the single parent globally so the evangelical church of the Philippines gives a chance to this single parent to extend their services in the church and to societal involvement to live equally with other mothers who have partners. In this study, the single parents reveal that they live under challenging conditions. The cultural norms and practices have been seen to be continually discriminating and underscoring inequalities in the daily life journey of the single parent in the Philippines. So, emphasizing single parents might fulfill and meet the societal needs of single parents and can lessen their sense of self-esteem.

Furthermore, the study by Bartolome, M. T., et. al,(2017) states that parental involvement is the degree to which a parent participates in the education of his or her children. Some schools encourage good parental involvement, however, occasionally parents are unsure about getting involved in their children's education. It has received support from Western nations. The significance of social and cultural influences, as well as the consequences of parents' involvement in and expectations for their children's growth and learning, are examined in a body of literature, though. Because parents come from a variety of backgrounds and have varying opinions on when, why, and how to be active in their children's education, schools must be aware of these cultural disparities. Because family is valued in Philippine culture, parenting is crucial, especially to those who are single parents with children who are in school. They don't have time for themselves, and it's hard to overcome the feelings of self-esteem and identity, so it affects their whole personality.

In addition to Bartolome study, the education of children as well as the contribution it makes to society

depend greatly on parental engagement. A national policy and framework are not in place in the Philippines to encourage early childhood education, even though there exist programs and contemporary practices encouraging parental involvement. Statistics demonstrate how poorly youngsters read, and studies demonstrate the understanding gap. This is because single parents have limited time to look into the studies of their children, so most children coming from single parents have poor academic performance. Even a single parent is trying to get involved in the schooling of her children, but due to so many reasons, she can't pay attention to it. As a single parent in the Philippines, I face so many challenges, even though there is a law regarding this situation. So to help this single parent and their children, the government must have initiatives to help meet the needs of this family or even programs that give the single parent an additional income to cover their financial needs.

Republic Act No. 118611 which is known as the Expanded Solo Welfare Act, states all the benefits that solo parent and their children can avail, and the R.A. 118611 "Sec 2- Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the state to promote and dynamic social order that ensures the prosperity and independence of the nation and frees the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life. The State shall also promote social justice in all phases of national development, value the dignity of every human person, and guarantee full respect for human rights. Towards these ends, the government shall: (a) Support the natural primary rights and duty of solo parents in rearing their children by providing for their basic needs, and extending to them assistance in social services and welfare benefits, with the end because of uplifting their status and circumstances; and (b) Adhere to international agreements and national laws on families." So for this policy, a single parent must be provided all the assistance coming from the government, but in a real situation, it's hard to say that the benefits of a single parent can't be availed of for the reason that some officials are selecting people who can avail of the said benefits. (R.A. 118611)

As to the researcher review, numerous studies have looked at how being a single parent affects a person's identity and self-esteem, particularly regarding raising children and maintaining social, economic, financial, and emotional stability. To sum up this study, there are key findings from existing studies about this area: (a) Child rearing: Studies repeatedly show that single parents frequently encounter particular difficulties when it comes to raising children. In comparison to two-parent households, they are more likely to face higher levels of stress, overwhelming sentiments, and less parental support. These difficulties may harm their perception of competence as parents and their self-esteem; (b) Due to their increased expectations and duties, single parents may find it challenging to maintain social stability. Research has shown that they frequently lack the time and resources necessary for socializing, pursuing hobbies, or taking part in group activities. This may have a detrimental effect on their identity and self-esteem by increasing isolation, reducing social support, and decreasing their sense of belonging; (c) Due to their increased expectations and duties, single parents may find it challenging to maintain social stability.

Research has shown that they frequently lack the time and resources necessary for socializing, pursuing hobbies, or taking part in group activities. This may have a detrimental effect on their identity and self-esteem by increasing isolation, reducing social support, and decreasing their sense of belonging; (d) financial stability: The financial strain on single parents can have a significant impact on their sense of identity and self-worth. Some research suggests that economic difficulties might cause people to place too much attention on money worries, which can lead to feelings of failure and incompetence. Studies have shown, however, that some single parents can become resilient and feel a sense of accomplishment as they effectively deal with financial hardships; (e) Emotional stability: Being a single parent can have a

significant emotional influence on people. According to research, single parents frequently experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than do parents who share a home with a partner. These emotional difficulties may also have an impact on self-esteem, which could lead to a diminished sense of self-worth and confidence.

Regarding the outcome, it is significant to remember that the identity and self-esteem of solo parents might differ based on some variables, including the person's resilience, the availability of support networks, and the cultural setting. Even though research frequently focuses on the potential drawbacks of single parenting, it is important to recognize that some people experience strength, resilience, and personal development as a result of their journey as single parents.

Gap Bridged by the Study

This reviewed literature and studies present the phenomenological exploration of the personal experiences of solo parents to overcome the different challenges that they encounter on their journey in rearing children: social acceptance, and economic, emotional, and financial stability. Almost all the authors mentioned in their studies the challenges faced by this single parent in all aspects that affect the well-being of this person. No one says that a single parent has a happy life during their journey. This is the gap bridged by the study.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was based on the theory that states that the single-parent parenting journey has an impact on the exploration of the researcher's personal experiences.

In line with phenomenological theory is an approach to personality theory that places questions of individuals' current experiences of themselves and their world at the center of analyses of personal functioning and change. (Kelly, George A.) This theory argues that personality is not merely passively molded by internal motivation or external situation forces that 'shape' what the person becomes.

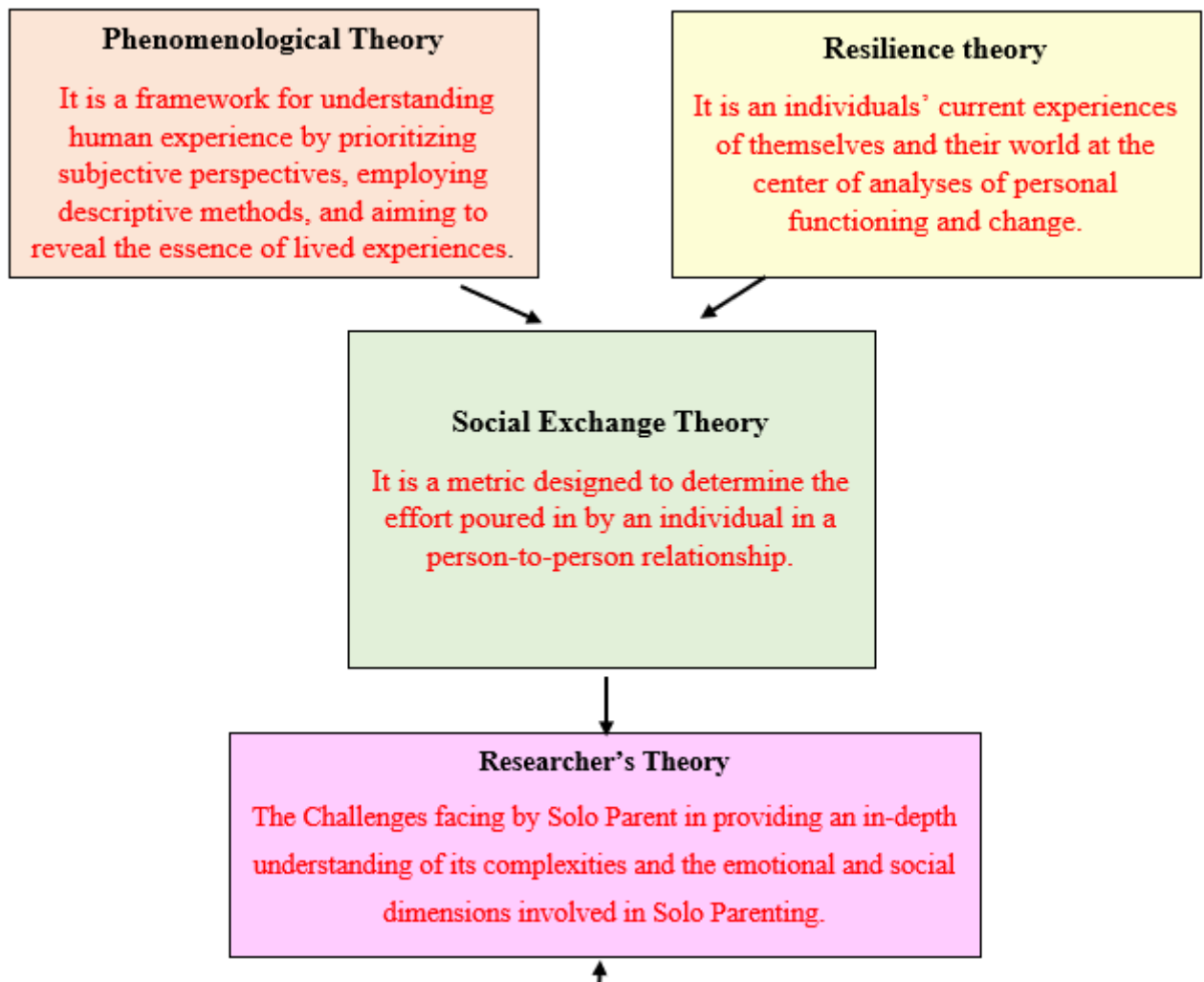
Similar to phenomenological theory is the resilience theory, it can be useful to investigate the internal resources and outside supports that support a person's resilience in coping with the difficulties of single parenting in the setting of solo parenting. It may also shed light on the methods and networks of help that single parents rely on to get through challenges and complete their journeys effectively.

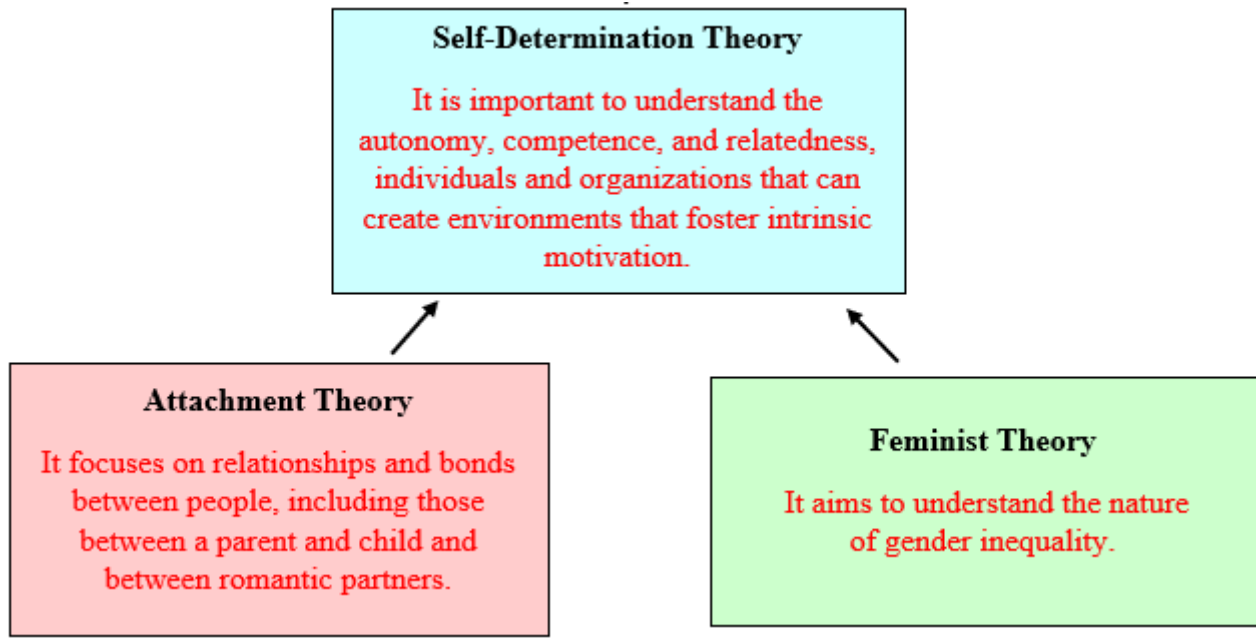
Social exchange theory states that a concept is based on the notion that a relationship between two people is created through a process of cost-benefit analysis. In other words, it's a metric designed to determine the effort poured in by an individual in a person-to-person relationship. The measurement of the pluses and minuses of a relationship may produce data that can determine if someone is putting too much effort into a relationship. It can be utilized in solo parenting to comprehend the advantages and difficulties a person might encounter when making the journey alone. The idea for instance can be used to investigate how people balance the benefits of feeling independent and fulfilled against the financial and emotional costs of raising a child alone.

Feminist theory defines it as the expansion of feminism into philosophical, literary, or theoretical debate. Understanding the nature of gender disparity is its goal. It looks at how men and women navigate social roles, experiences, hobbies, household duties, and feminist politics in a range of disciplines, including political theory, home economics, media studies, anthropology and sociology, communication, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. It can be used to look at the social environments and gendered expectations that single parents have to contend with when raising their children alone. It can aid in raising

awareness of problems such as the double burden that single mothers carry, social stigmas, and the necessity of equitable support systems.

A comprehensive framework for the study of human motivation and personality is provided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT). A formal theory that describes intrinsic and various extrinsic sources of motivation, a meta-theory for organizing motivational investigations, and an explanation of the roles played by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in individual differences and cognitive and social development are all articulated by SDT. Perhaps more significantly, SDT ideas address not only people's well-being and performance quality but also how social and cultural elements support or impede people's feeling of choice and initiative. It can be applied to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors that influence a parent's decision to take on the responsibility of raising a kid by themselves in the context of solo parenting. Additionally, it can In Kendra Cherry's theory, attachment theory focuses on relationships and bonds, particularly long-term, between parent and child and between romantic partners. It is a psychological explanation between those people regarding emotional bonds and their relationships. This theory suggests that people are born with a need to forge bonds with caregivers as children. These early bonds may continue to influence attachments throughout life. It can be applied to solo parenting to examine the dynamics of the attachment between the parent and child. For instance, it can describe how close a single parent and their child can be to promoting resilience and coping while also exposing potential difficulties in juggling the demands of the child with one's emotional well-being.





Conceptual Framework

The conceptual paradigm of this study is illustrated in Figure 3. This shows the relationship between the input, process, and output.

The input includes the lived experiences of being a solo parent in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability, the significant milestone of the solo parent regarding child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability, the gaps and issues faced by the solo parent along with child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability, then the effect of identity and self-esteem facing by a solo parent in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability, and the system framework adapted by the solo parents to overcome all the challenges that are facing.

The process involved the use of focus group discussion, interview, and questionnaire of the participants the themes, data gathering, documentary analysis, and interpretation of the gathered data through focus group discussion, interview, and questionnaire which combined into themes based on their experiences.

The desired output is on how the solo parent overcomes all gaps, issues, and challenges along their journey as a solo parent in child-rearing, social acceptance, and economic, financial, and emotional stability.

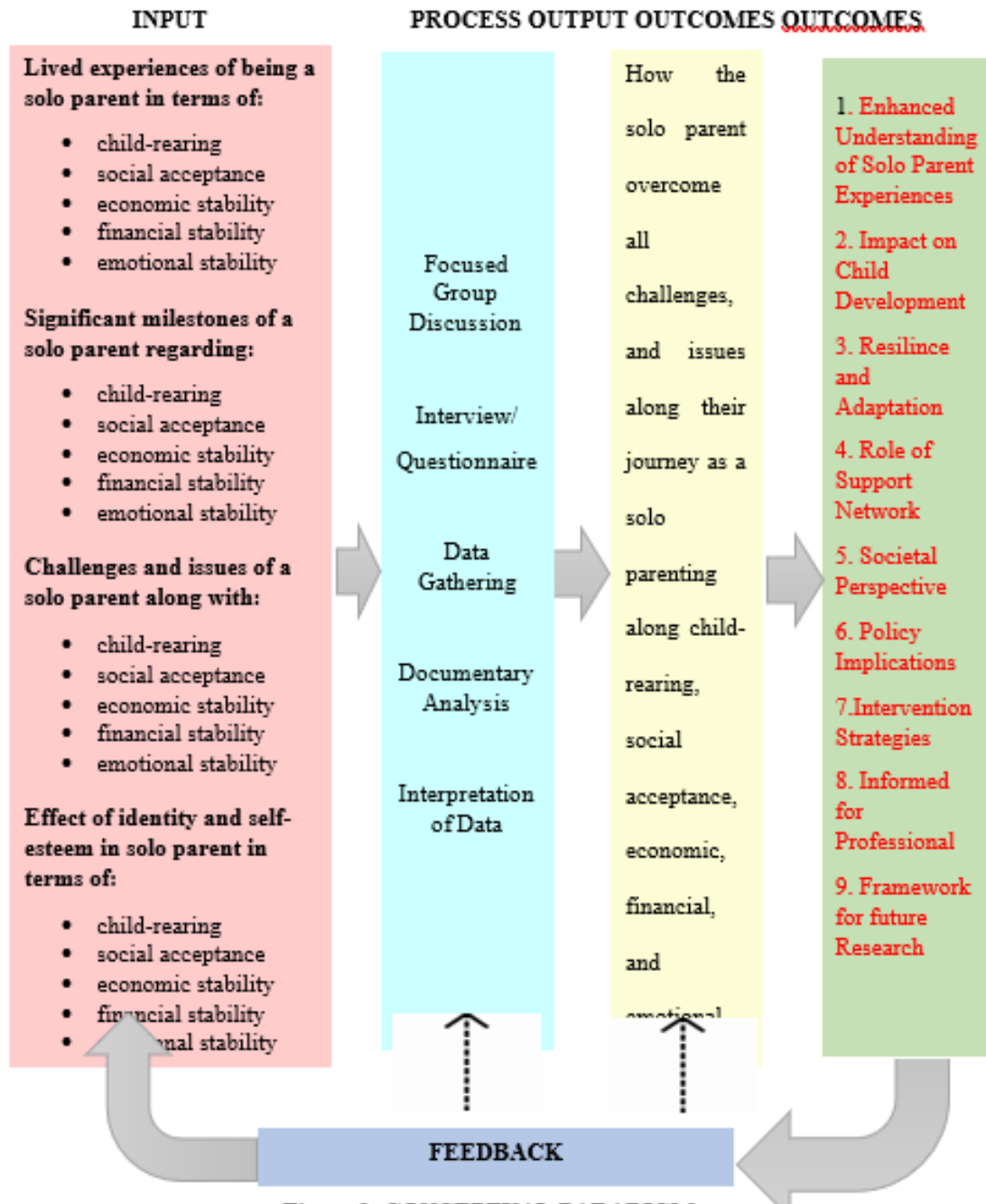


Figure 3- CONCEPTUAL PARADIGM

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Included in this chapter are the discussion on the methods of research, the respondent, the research, and the interpretation of data.

Appropriateness of Design

This method involved the suitability and effectiveness of the research methodology chosen to address the research question. The design needs to be aligned with the nature of the research and provide valid and reliable results. It is also crucial for producing reliable and valid research findings based on the solo parents' journey in their exploration of personal experiences.

Research Questions

This qualitative method of research is adopted in this study. A phenomenological design is used by the researcher to determine the lived experiences of a solo parent in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability; significant milestones of a solo parent regarding child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability; and challenges and issues of a solo parent along with child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability. Also, the researcher was able to know the effect of identity and self-esteem on a solo parent in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic, financial, and emotional stability, and the framework adopted by the solo parent in their journey of exploring their personal experiences.

Population and Samples

The participants were chosen using approaches for deliberate sampling. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research will be used to gather data, sampling strategies are frequently employed to assist find and choose participants with detailed knowledge about the subject being examined and a wealth of information. The participants are registered solo parents and be given a chance to share their journey in solo parenting.

Instrumentality

In this part of the dissertation methods were the degree to which the research design, methods, and findings contribute to the overall goals of the study. It is important to assess the instrumentality of a dissertation to determine whether the research design and findings are relevant, useful, and applicable to the broader field of study or practical setting. This instrumental dissertation assesses the extent to which the research design, methods, and findings have practical relevance and contribute to the field of study. A dissertation with high instrumentality was more likely to have a significant impact and be valuable for both academic and practical purposes.

Informed Consent

In this part of the dissertation method the fundamental ethical principle that was followed in any research involving human participants, including dissertations. It was a process where individuals were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the research before deciding, whether to participate. Also, it included voluntary participation, information disclosure, language used, opportunity for questions, and consent forms.

Pilot Study

This pilot study of qualitative research involved the registered solo parents of Sta. Magdalena can share their personal experiences through different challenges along their journey as a solo parent. This pilot study was used by the concerned agency to propose some programs and projects to uplift the lives of solo parents in different aspects.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

This method was used after the interview, survey, and focus group discussion were done. Through this data, the researcher can group their responses by theme to make an analysis. The researcher identified the tool to be used in data analysis and gave justification for the responses of the participants.

Validity and Reliability

This method established the validity and reliability of the study being discussed. This may involve discussing the steps taken to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collected.

Ethical Considerations

This section described how ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. It may involve discussing the steps taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of the participants and any ethical approval obtained from relevant research ethics committees.

Confidentiality of the Study

This method is a critical aspect of research ethics, particularly in dissertations that involve collecting and analyzing sensitive or personal information from the participants. It refers to the protection of the participant's identity and data, ensuring that their individual information is kept secure and private. There were some points to consider in preparing the confidentiality of the study data protection measures, pseudonyms and coding, confidentiality agreements, data sharing and access, ethical review board obligation, and data retention and disposal. Researchers should uphold the trust and privacy of participants, which is essential for maintaining the integrity of the research process. Following the ethical practices related to confidentiality helps protect participants' rights and fosters confidence in the research community.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data gathered from the participants was presented in this chapter. These data were analyzed and interpreted by considering the best possible means and systematic process of answering the sets of questions given to the participants.

In this chapter, the researcher is keen on identifying the various themes that evolve in the participants' responses. These themes enable the researcher to discover relevant and meaningful insights regarding solo parents' journey in child rearing specifically on the aspects of social acceptance, economic financial, and emotional stability. The pages herein are subdivided accordingly based on four categories; the lived experience of solo parents, their significant milestones, the challenges and issues they encountered, and the impact of solo parents' status in their identity and self-esteem on the features of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic stability, financial stability, emotional stability, Likewise this chapter assisted the researcher in the formulation of findings and conclusion which were considered significant fragments of this study.

The Lived Experiences of Being a Solo Parent in Terms of Child-Rearing, Social Acceptance, Economic Stability, Financial Stability, and Emotional Stability

Solo parenting as a social trend in the Philippines and around the world poses various and differing perspectives from among individuals and groups. These differences could impact solo parents either positively or negatively depending on their impression of the subjects. Meanwhile, the lived experiences of solo parents in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, economic stability, financial stability, and emotional stability are indeed necessary to explore to pave the way for understanding and acceptance.

The Concealed Struggles: An Indication into the Lived Experience of Solo Parents

The image of a parent raising a child alone is often romanticized, painted as a testament to resilience and

strength. However, the lived experience of solo parenting is far more nuanced, revealing complex situations with challenges, sacrifices, and immense love. This research study explores the diverse challenges faced by solo parents, drawing insights from personal accounts, and shedding light on the realities of child-rearing, social acceptance, and financial stability in this unique journey.

The lived experiences of the participants in this study were indeed divergent as evident in their responses when asked about their experiences as a solo parent in terms of child-rearing and the challenges they have faced in raising their child/children. The utterance of Participant 4 showed the reality of the quite challenging role of solo parents. She uttered that:

“Bilang solo parent masasabi kong hindi madali ang pagpapalaki sa isang bata. Nariyan ang katotohanang kailangan mong gampanan and dalawang responsibilidad ng isang magulang; ang maging financial provider at tagagabay sa iyong anak. Sa aking karanasan masasabi kong akoy nahirapan na pagsabayin ang dalawa sapagkat kailangan kong mawalay sa aking anak upang kumita ng pera habang siyay lumalaki. Gustuhin ko mang masabaybayan siya sa kanyang paglaki, ay hindi ko buong maibigay sa kanya sapagkat kailangan kong kumita para kami ay mabuhay.” (“As a solo parent, I can say that rearing a child is not easy. The truth is you need to serve both a provider and a guide to your child. In my experience, I found it difficult to take those roles simultaneously since I need to work away from my child just to earn and provide his needs. As much as I want to take good care of him, I cannot since I need to work away far from him.”)

In connection with the above statement, Participant 11 also mentioned that:

“Mahirap po ang pagpapalaki ng tama or raise upright of the children for a solo male parent. Although malalaki na sila ang bunso kong babae at ang isa kong apo ay nandito sa aking pangangalaga. Kaso sa panahon ngayon ng innovative technology kagaya ng mga gadgets computer cellphones nag iiba na ang ugali o asal ng mga bata. Ngayon wala nang alam na work sa loob ng bahay hindi na marunong magdasal wala na ang GMRC so it’s a big challenge sa mga solo-parents kung papaano ang strategy or intervention na dapat gawin.” (It’s difficult for a solo parent to raise children uprightly. Although they’re grown up, my youngest daughter and my grandchild are under my supervision. However, nowadays when technologies are very popular and in demand, children’s values are at stake. They don’t know household chores and they don’t even know how to pray. They don’t have GMRC so, it’s a big challenge to solo parents to think of strategy or intervention to implement.”)

Delving deeper into this scenario, the abovementioned statements were supported by Participant 5 exclaiming that:

“As a single parent everyday struggle will be time management between work, parenting duties, and household duties. Lucky you if you have a helper who can lend a hand and share some of your duties but in reality, you have only you.”

It is undeniable that child-rearing is not an easy thing for solo parents. Two major concerns in this scenario that need to be investigated are their roles to provide and guide their children along the way. As providers, they see to it that children are provided with the necessities like food, water, clothing, and shelter. Not only these, but they also consider their kids’ school requirements and materials so they can effectively study and finish schooling on time. What is more interesting is their capacity to endure the pain of leaving their children with their family or friends and work miles away just to support their children’s needs.

Participant 7 further testified about the struggle she encountered along the way. She posted, *“As a solo parent it is very difficult to raise children because there is always conflict and the child is looking also for a father image even, I give all their needs and attention. One of the challenges that I experience that when*

my older child reveals the situation that we have, financial stability is also a challenge to me especially when they are now in college and one of my children is taking her medication, and I'm giving them attention personally."

Aside from providing those requisites for survival, solo parents' duties include guiding children to be value-laden individuals. Many factors such as limited time with children, distance from home and work, absence of a support system, and the negative impacts of technology may hinder a solo parent from teaching values and building their morals. This facet is an integral part of children's growth and development since it will define their personality and actions in the future, that is why solo parents' role in inculcating values and good conduct are manifestations of their affection for their children. This role could be challenging on the part of solo parents however, their longings to give what is best for their children is immensely unbeatable, and something to be proud of.

As a matter of fact, Participant 2 testified, *"Naghiwalay kami ng tatay ng anak ko bago ko pa man isilang ang anak ko kaya ang pinakamahirap na part ng pagiging solo parent for me ay nung nasa infant stage pa lang ang anak ko. While I am still recovering pa physically dahil sa CS ako and at the same time I am hurting pa emotionally, wala akong choice kundi magpatuloy sa buhay dahil may anak akong kailangang buhayin. Malungkot lang yung time nay un kasi wala akong katulong sap ag alaga ng anak ko. Though tumutulong naman family ko pero nakakalungkot pa rin isipin na wala yung dapat na kasama ko sa pag aalaga ng anak ko."* ("I separated from my son's father even before she was delivered into this world and was considered the hardest part of raising my child. While I was recovering physically because of cesarean section, I was also recovering psychologically. I don't have any choice but to take care of my child. It was really depressing when there's no one to help you take care of the baby. Although my family was there, I really felt sad thinking that the person who should support me was not around.")

Additionally, Participant 9 had a similar journey in solo parenting which was considered a not so easy adventure. She commented, *"Bilang solo parent naranasan ko kung paano ng magtrabaho mag isa yong halos gusto mo gawin araw ang gabi para sa mga nak mo maibigay mo lang ang lahat lahat sa mga anak mo dahil wala kang maasahan kung hindi ikaw lamang. Ngayong hamon sa akin kung pano ko palalakin mag isa ang mga bata at mapagtapos sila hanggang matupad ang mga pangarap ni;a sa buhay, ngayon pa lang iniisip ko pa lang ang kanilang kinabukasan kung kakayanin ko ba kaya kailangan lumaban sa hamon ng buhay at hindi papanghinaan para sa kanila."* ("As a solo parent, I experienced working so hard just to give the best for my kids. I was a solo earner, and I don't have someone to depend on. It was a challenge for me how to raise my children and how to send them to school. I thought of their future and in deep thought if I would be able to win the battle and be courageous enough.")

The lived experiences of solo parent participants of this study are synonymous with the findings and conclusions from the study of ¹Baluyot et al., (2023) titled *Kinsenas, Katapusan: The Lived Experiences and Challenges Faced by Single Mothers*. The latter supports the idea that solo parents experienced the worst work-life balance in terms of child-rearing. This further reveals that a single parent faced overwhelming demands from career, household duties, and bearing the cost. This study is linked to the present since both summed up that solo parents face various struggles in taking care of their children.

Additionally, the role of solo parents in the values formation of their children is emphasized in the study of ²Abing (2018). This study pointed out that familial, educational, and economic values are moderately important values as viewed by single parents. However, among the three, familial values are the most important among the three. On the contrary, solo parents experienced fair and balanced experiences in terms of child-rearing practices, time management, financial management, and self-image perception as

compared to the findings of the present study.

Financial Struggles and Survival: A Constant Balancing Act

Many solo parents face a constant uphill battle against financial instability. The absence of a second income puts immense pressure on the single earner, forcing them to juggle multiple roles while striving to meet even basic needs. Stories like Participant 12 and Participant 15 present a stark picture of this reality, highlighting the need to make ends meet with limited resources and little to no support.

Interestingly, Participant 12 mentioned that *“Kailangan ko magtrabaho para sa mga anak ko. Naglabada ako pumasok din akong katulong sa canteen at yun namumulot kami ng niyog para may pang gastos. Sa pagkain, sap ag aaral, at sa lahat ng importanteng pangangailangan. Gusto ko na makatapos ng pag aaral ang mga anak ko. Kahit hirap ako pag aralin ko sila hangga’t kaya ko.”* (“I need to work for my children. I accept laundry work, canteen assistance, and coconut picking so that we have something for food, for my children’s schooling and for other important stuff. I want them to finish their studies even though it’s difficult.”)

Moreover, Participant 15 shared that *“Madaming hamon sa buhay ang hinaharap ng isang solo parent dahil mag isa kang magtataguyod sa pamilya mo, mag isang ibabudget ang pangangailangan ng buong pamilya. Marami din sakripisyong ginawa upang maging maayos at makakain araw araw.”* (Solo parent faces a lot of challenges because you are a solo provider and at the same time budgeter. There are lots of sacrifices I made to ensure that children eats every day.”)

The financial struggle is exacerbated by the need to work doubly hard, often in low-paying jobs, while simultaneously shouldering the responsibility of caring for sick children. Participant 17 uttered *“Medyo mhirap ang sa pinansyal na aspeto kaya kailangang magsipag.”* (“Financial aspect is indeed difficult, so I need to be hardworking.”)

Moreover, Participant 19 illustrates the heart-wrenching dilemma of being away from a sick child to earn a living. This constant struggle takes a toll on physical and emotional well-being, leaving solo parents feeling drained and overwhelmed. She narrated:

“In terms of financial and economic aspects, sometimes it is very difficult to raise your child alone because the financial aspect does not suffice the need. But because I have only 1 child, I did not experience much of having financial problems especially when she studied in college because I saved my salary for her studies.”

Considering the above statements of the four participants, it can be settled that financial aspects are the topmost struggle experienced by single parents. This is the leading fight among solo parents who were not regularly employed or those who earned daily with tedious and manual labor such as those who work in non-office set up and construction sites. The discomfort experienced by solo parents in financial struggles is factual and comprehensible since in a normal family setup, the husband and wife share the responsibility of providing for the needs of the children. In the plight of single parents, all the burdens and hardships of managing the family are forcibly laid down on their subtle shoulders.

On the contrary, those who are employed or those who have support systems such as family and friends experienced lesser destitution than those who do not have stable jobs. This is possible since employees have something to wait and use for family expenses on a weekly or monthly basis. They have the opportunity to budget their salary reasonably by prioritizing what are the utmost needs of the family. As proof, Participant 7 expressed:

“Yes, I suffer from the economic and financial aspects of being a solo parent. I always tell them our real situation especially when it comes to financial status. I set priorities when making a budget for my salary.”

I have so many sacrifices when it comes to financial matters like buying clothes, going with friends which I spend money buying things that I want also for myself.”

The truths presented on the lived experiences of solo parents on the financial aspect were exposed in the study of ³Baluyot et al. (2023), revealing that contractual single women found difficulty in combining their personal lives and careers. Aside from, taking care of the kids, the reality is they need to provide those necessities. Additionally, contractual single mothers depend on their families when no one would, and they are worried about having no money in their pockets or having money but cannot save a penny for their kids’ future.

Interestingly, the lived experiences of the participants regarding financial stability align with the findings of ⁴Montgomery, Slane & Hanratty (2023) in their study, *The Impact of Financial Hardship on Single and Separated Parents*. This study revealed that forty percent of solo parents were struggling due to financial disturbance which occurred due to the loss of an earner or income, payment or non-payment of child maintenance, benefit, and adequacy, ineligibility for some parents, and the cost-of-living crisis. Although the setting of the study centered in the US, still this aforementioned financial shock was experienced by some of the participants in the present study.

Emotional and Well-Being Challenges: A Silent Burden

Beyond the financial difficulties, solo parents often grapple with the invisible burden of emotional and mental health struggles. Balancing responsibilities, dealing with financial anxieties, and navigating the complex world of parenting alone can significantly impact a solo parent's emotional well-being. Participant 18 exclaimed that:

“As a solo parent I have unique challenges that may impact emotional stability and some of them are increased responsibility and stress. The feeling of loneliness isolation and financial pressure. As to the strategies in managing my emotional demands as a solo parent, I seek support from my friends, family, and resources and it helps in managing my emotions and promoting well-being.”

Moreover, Participant 3 revealed her hardship as she embarked on solo parenting. She exclaimed, *“Hindi madali ang pagiging solo parent, nakaranas ako ng post-partum, lalo pang nadagdagan ito ng kailangan kong lumayo para magtrabaho. Laking pasalamat ko na lang at ang paaralang napuntahan ko ay mayroong mababait na co teachers at pinaramdam nila na pamilya ako bilang pinakabunsong katrabaho. Kumuha rin ako ng mga sidelines para malibang at kumite ng ekstrang pera gaya ng pagtutor at paghohost ng mga events.”* (“Solo parenting isn't easy. As proof I experienced postpartum. This was because I needed to work away from my child. I am just so blessed that the school where I am teaching has teachers who are very kind. They considered me their youngest colleague. I also indulge myself in side hustle just to entertain myself.”)

This invisible burden can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression, requiring significant resilience and coping mechanisms.

Parenting and Discipline: Navigating a Changing Landscape

Parenting is a continuous learning process, and for solo parents, it often involves unique challenges. Participant 12 highlights the changing behavior of children in the digital age, emphasizing the need to instill traditional values and good morals in their absence. He stated:

“Hindi madali and pagpapalaki sa mga bata lalo na sa panahon ngayon na mulat sila sa mga bagong teknolohiya. Yung mga pag-uugali nila dapat mabantayan kasi hindi lahat ng nakikita nila sa sa facebook ay tama at dapat gayahin. Bilang solong magulang dapat mabantayan ko ang mga pinapanuod nila at pinopost para hindi sila maimpluwensyhan na gumawa ng masama.” (“It’s not easy to raise children

especially in our times where children are exposed to technology. I need to make sure to look after their values because not all things posted in facebook are correct and be imitated. As a solo parent, I need to check what videos are they watching and posting so that they will not be influenced negatively.”)

The experience of raising a child with disabilities showcases the determination and strength of solo parents in overcoming hurdles and ensuring their child's well-being. As proof, Participant 13 recounted:

“Para sa akin mahirap. Napakahirap maging solo parent kasi sa tulad ko na PWD na solo parent paq. Ang hirap isipin kung pano mo palalaking ang iyong anak. Pano mo pag aaralin o papakainin araw araw. Ang hirap sa sitwasyon ko na pilit ko tinataguyod ang pag aaral ng anak ko kahit na napakahirap gumalaw pipilitin mo para sa anak mo.” (“It is hard. It is really hard to be a PWD solo parent. It is unfathomable how to raise my child, send him to school and provide him food every day. It is difficult on my part but I’m doing my best to send him to school despite my disability.”)

Nevertheless, Participant 14 acknowledges the initial difficulties of solo parenting, especially with young children. She said, *“Sa umpisa syempre mahirap. Mag-isa kang nagtataguyod ng pamilya lalo na pagmaliliit pa ang mga anak.”* (“At first, it is hard, since you are raising your family singlehandedly especially that they are still young.”). Furthermore, Participant 20 underscores the responsibility of discipline in shaping children into responsible individuals. The task of ensuring proper upbringing while navigating the complexities of single parenthood requires immense dedication and adaptability. She proclaimed, *“I raised very good children by inculcating to their minds they need to be good people even though I raised them alone.”*

Health Concerns and Personal Strength: Finding Strength in Adversity

The fear of the unknown and the constant worry for their child's health weighs heavily on solo parents. The absence of a partner creates a void in support and creates anxieties that can be overwhelming for single parents. Participant 6 exposed:

“Una po sa lahat ang hamon nakaharap ko kung paano palaking ang anak ng nag-iisa, syempre kailangan financial at pagmamahal na buong buo, pagnagkaksakit ang anak sobrang alala di mo alam kung saan ka huhugot ng lakas para sa anak mo.” (“First of all, the hardest is how to raise my child alone. There is financial struggle and wholesome parenting. When your child is sick, I worried a lot, don’t know where to build my strength for him.”)

Moreover, Participant 7 highlights the emotional and mental challenges of raising children without a father figure, acknowledging the emotional needs of children and the longing for a father's presence even when basic needs are met. These stories showcase the immense strength and resilience of solo parents. They navigate countless challenges, adapt to changing circumstances, and prioritize their children's well-being above their own. Their determination to create a loving and secure environment for their children speaks volumes about their unwavering dedication and love. Participant 7 directly quoted:

“As a solo parent, it is very difficult to raise children because there is always conflict and the child is looking also for a father image even, though I give all their needs and attention. Some of the challenges that I experienced when my older child revealed the situation that we have, financial stability also challenges to me especially when they now in college and one of my children is having her medication and I’m giving them attention personally.”

The Need for Support and Understanding

The experiences of solo parents highlight the critical need for support and understanding from society. Financial assistance, access to affordable childcare, and community resources are vital in alleviating the financial and emotional burden faced by these parents. Additionally, fostering a culture of empathy and

recognizing the unique challenges they face can empower them to navigate their journey with greater confidence and support. The lived experience of solo parents is a testament to human resilience. Their journey is riddled with challenges yet fueled by unwavering love and dedication. As we learn from their stories, we recognize the need for greater support, understanding, and compassion for these individuals who are building brighter futures for their children, one day at a time.

The testimonies of the participants in this study concerning emotional stability conform with the results of ⁵Morissette's (2018)' study. It was recorded that some single mothers have insufficient time and energy to spend with their kids and fail to provide the necessary affection. Each mother has melancholy days, sometimes for a longer period. In the same manner, some single mothers experience emotional discomfort because of juggling finances, time, and energy with their child's feelings and their own.

Navigating the Web: Solo Parents and the Quest for Acceptance

The experience of solo parenting is a multifaceted journey, filled with triumphs and challenges. While raising a child alone can be empowering, it often comes with societal pressures and judgments that can be deeply hurtful. The narratives of several solo parents illuminate the complexities of their experiences, showcasing resilience and the struggle for acceptance.

Resilience and Determination:

Participant 12 embodies this complex reality. They express strong resilience and determination, prioritizing their children's well-being above societal stigma. Their commitment to doing what's right for their children regardless of outside judgment is a testament to their unwavering strength. She uttered:

“Walang masama bilang isang solo parent kaya tanggap tayo ng lipunan. Wala akong natanggap na paghuhusga mula sa iba kundi paghanga galing sa ibang tao dahil naging matatag ako bilang solo parent. Na kaya kong buhayin, pag aralin ang aming 6 na anak.” (“Nothing is wrong with solo parent, that’s why society accepts us. I didn’t receive any judgments from other people. Instead, they admired me because I became resilient as a solo parent that I can raise and send my six children to school.”)

This theme is further echoed by Participant 16, who despite facing societal disapproval for early-age pregnancy, stood firm to ensure their child's acceptance within the family. This demonstrates a powerful drive to create a loving and supportive environment for their child, even in the face of adversity. She honestly shared:

“Acceptance in the community was my issue when, unfortunately, my family was one of them. They did not accept fully my early age pregnancy. However, I stood up to make sure that my son would be accepted in our family.”

Challenges and Judgment:

However, the journey is not without its hurdles. Participant 11 highlights the judgmental attitudes prevalent in their community, particularly when interacting with the opposite sex. This experience of societal scrutiny is shared by several participants. Participant 15 acknowledges that people will judge and interfere in their parenting decisions, while Participant 18 notes the varied opinions surrounding solo parents, even encountering negative labels like 'nagger wife.' These experiences underscore the constant pressure solo parents face to conform to societal expectations and the hurtful impact of these judgments.

Consequently, Participant 11 pointed out that:

“Paano ba ako tinanggap ng Lipunan? Bilang isang solo parent well in a way of giving financial and moral support pero sa local na gobyerno wala kaming support o kahit magkaroon ng financial support galing sa IRA ng LGU para sa mga solo parent association. maraming judgmental na tao dito sa amin na mga solo parent. Makipag usap ka lang sa babae/lalake ay gf o bf mo na or say o malandi.” (How does

society accept me as a solo parent? Well, in a way of giving financial and moral support but, in LGU, we did not receive financial support from LGU-IRA for solo-parent association. A lot of judgmental people in my neighborhood. When you try to talk with a man/woman they would say he/she is your bf/gf and you will be considered flirty.”)

Meanwhile, Participant 15 testified, “*Sa buhay hindi maiwasang magkaroon ng mga manghuhusga mga taong hihilahin ka pababa at ang ilan pa dyan ay sarili mong kamag anak. Nakikialam kong paano mo palakihin at disiplinahin ang iyong pamilya.*” (“In life, you cannot get rid of those judgmental people who will try to drag you down and the sad truth is, some of them are your **relatives**. They try to meddle on issues regarding how to manage parenting and disciplining your family.”)

In addition to that, Participant 18 detailed, “*Society’s acceptance of solo parents can vary across different cultures, communities, and individuals. Many societies are becoming more accepting and supportive of solo parents, but challenges and attitudes can still exist some accept solo parents in positive and negative ways. Yes, I have encountered so many judgments when I become a solo parent for that reason, they say I am a nagger wife which did they not the real situation.*”

Community Acceptance and Lack of Discrimination:

Despite the challenges, some participants express a sense of acceptance within their communities. Participant 13 acknowledges receiving assistance as a solo parent, while Participant 14 feels accepted by those around them without encountering negative judgments. Similarly, Participant 17 believes that society is becoming more accepting of solo parents, suggesting a positive shift in societal perceptions. However, Participant 20 reminds us that criticisms and negative feedback still exist, highlighting the ongoing need for greater understanding and support.

Participant 13 demonstrated, “*Kapag nag aaplay ako bilang solo parent nakakatanggap naman ako ng ayuda.*” (“Every time I apply as solo parent, I received assistance.”). Furthermore, Participant 14 proclaimed, “*Tinanggap naman po ako ng mga tao bilang solo parent.*” (“People accepted me as a solo parent.”) and Participant 17 conveyed, “*Sa panahon ngayon maging isang solo parent ay tanggap na ng Lipunan. Wala naman akong narinig na panghuhusga or diskriminasyon*” (“Nowadays, solo parents are already accepted in the society. I don’t hear any judgements or discrimination.”), Finally, Participant 20 denoted, “*Criticisms and bad feedback are common experiences encountered.*”

Emotional Impact and Hurtful Remarks:

The emotional impact of societal judgments is also evident. Participants 8 and 9 share their experiences of hurtful comments and the pain of being judged without others understanding their struggles. These experiences underscore the emotional toll that societal perceptions can have on solo parents, even when they are trying their best to provide a loving and stable environment for their children.

Participant 8 published, “*Minsan na kong nakatanggap ng masasakit na salita sa mga kapwa ko, magulang, sinsabi nilang hindi ko mapapalaki ng maayos ang aking mga anak dahil babae lamang ako.*” (“I once received hurtful comments from other people saying that I am not good in raising my kids because I am just a woman.”).

Furthermore, Participant 9 divulged, “*Sa pamamagitan ng pagtanggap sa katotohanan na solo parent minsan siguro nakakarinig ako ng mga hindi magandang salita na minsan ikaw pa ang sinisisi kung bakit nawala sa akin ang aking asawa na hindi nila alam, na ginawa mo naman ang lahat para maging okey pero wala talaga, kaya bilang isang babae masakit din sa pakiramdam ang mga sinasabi ng ibang taon na husgahan ka nila samantalang wala naming silang alam sa mga nangyayari sa aking buhay.*” (“By means of accepting the reality as solo parent where I heard negative comments, blaming me why our

family was ruined. However, they don't know how I did everything to save the relationship, but I cannot do anything better. As a woman, it's hurtful to hear judgments and the fact that they don't know anything about the situation.”)

By sharing their stories, these participants provide valuable insights into the complexities of solo parenting. They reveal the resilience and determination required to navigate societal expectations, the struggle for acceptance, and the emotional impact of judgment. Their experiences serve as a powerful reminder that societal attitudes towards solo parents must evolve to create a more supportive and understanding environment for these families.

Remarkably, ⁶Garcia et al., (2021) stated that the participants included themselves in other government perks and benefits for solo parents. He further concluded that it is the responsibility and accountability of the government to help its citizens follow their obligations. He also stressed that everyone is entitled to equality regardless of gender, color, age, status, and religion. Meanwhile, in this current study, the findings reveal that there was very limited support coming from the Philippine government even though Republic Act 8972 promotes awareness of the condition of single parents in the Philippines.

II. Solo Parenting: Navigating Challenges and Triumphs

Solo parenting, the sole responsibility of raising a child without a co-parent, presents unique challenges and triumphs. By delving into the experiences of solo parents, researchers have identified several prevalent themes that capture their journey.

Financial Strain: The Burden of Sole Income

Financial strain often weighs heavily on solo parents. They face the challenge of meeting their children's needs on a single income. Participant 1 expressed the need for assistance to alleviate this burden. As a proof, she uttered, “*Pinakamalaking hamon ang pinansyal para malagpasan ito. Konting ayuda sana para sa solong magulang.*” (The biggest challenge is on the financial aspect, hoping for assistance to solo parents.”). However, Participant 6 showcased resilience by adapting resourcefully to provide for their child. She added, “*Gumagawa ng paraan kailangan madiskarte sa paghahanap buhay para makabigay sa pangangailangan ng anak.*” (“Doing everything and being strategic just to provide the needs of my child.”)

Despite financial struggles, Participant 12 persevered, prioritizing their children's education. “*Ang pag aaral sa kolehiyo gusto ko silang makapagtapos pero kulang sa pinansyal pinipili kong kayanin kahit hirap na hirap ako.*” (College education-I want them to finish their studies, I choose determination, despite the hardship.”), are her exact words that express her eagerness to provide education for her child.

The above stories were supported by one of the participants during the interview. Participant 15 demonstrated remarkable resilience in managing financial strain alongside emotional well-being and parenting responsibilities. “*Ako na may pitong anak at solo parent nahirapan talaga ako sa pinansyal. Walang maayos na trabaho, pinagkakasya lang ang konting kita para makakain isang araw, ang aking mga anak lalo na mag isa ka na lang dahil wala kang katulong sa paggabay at pangangaral sa kanila pero nakayanan ko ding palakihin sila ng maayos at mababait sa kabila ng pagsubok na dumating sa buhay namin.*” (I have seven kids and I am really challenged on financial aspect. No stable job, I used to spend the money just for our food especially that I am a solo earner. I am alone in rearing and guiding them. But I was able to successfully nourish them despite the challenges we encountered.”), she added.

In essence, the study of ⁷Douglas (2015) supported the revelation of the participants in this current study. He pointed out that single mother's first concern is the finances for their respective family's needs, like

food, shelter, clothing, education, and medicine. Some single mothers who never work for their entire lives would be forced to look for a job just to cope with the financial needs of their children, even on a full-time or part-time basis. Single women struggle to balance their dual responsibilities of supporting their families and working to support themselves. It was also noted how difficult it was for these mothers to raise their children on their own.

Emotional Well-Being: Coping with Loneliness and Isolation

Emotional well-being is crucial for solo parents. While Participant 2 reported no significant challenges, *“So far wala pa naman po.”* (“So far, I haven’t experienced anything.”) others faced moments of loneliness and isolation.

In essence, Participant 5 relied on family support to manage family events. She declared, *“When one gets sick in the family or having family day, you must appear by yourself with your child ignoring the eyes, back chatting you. Just be yourself and confident enough. Seek help if its badly needed. Nevertheless, family always there.”* Also, Participant 9 skillfully balanced caregiving, teaching values, and financial needs, demonstrating their adaptability. She revealed, *“Bilang solo parent nagiging hamon sa akin na bantayan at alagaan silang Mabuti at turuan ng tamang asal lalo na ngayon ang mga Kabataan naiiba na kailangan bilang solo parent may alam din sila para pagkailangan nila lalong lalo na sa school walang tutulons sa kanila kung hindi ako lang, isa pa ang pinansyal na pangangailangan na kung halimbawa may kailangan sila maibigay ko sa kanila. Siguro nalalagpasan ko ito dahil sa pamilya ko na kahit papano iniisip ko na nandyan sila para sa amin ng mga bata..”* (“As a solo parent it is a challenge for me to take care and teach them values especially the children of today. As a solo parent I see to it that they know everything, especially in school. No one will help them, it's only me. Another example of financial constraint is when they ask for something. I usually overcome this problem because I have my family whom I can depend on.”)

Interestingly, Participant 18 emphasized the importance of self-care and self-love as essential pillars of their well-being. She revealed, *“The challenges that I have faced as a solo parent when it comes to child-rearing are balancing my responsibilities, financial strain, emotional well-being, and lack of time for my care. From the start, it was very hard to accept the situation but as a year passed by I overcame it by focusing on my work as my daily routine, having my children as my inspiration, and prioritize to love myself.”*

Discipline and Guidance: Balancing Authority and Nurturing

Solo parents often grapple with the task of providing discipline and guidance without a co-parent. Participant 3 encountered difficulty in disciplining their child but found motivation in their innate goodness. She declared, *“Dahil sa hindi sa akin purong lumaki ang aking anak masasabi kong nahirapan ako sa pagbibigay ng disiplinang nais ko. Ngunit dahil sa likas na mabait ang aking anak kahit paaano ay sumusunod sya.”* (“**Because my children didn’t grow up entirely with me, I can say that I had a hard time giving them the discipline I wanted. But because of my children kindness, they somehow obeys.**”)

Remarkably, Participant 7 emphasized the effectiveness of communication and honesty in disciplining their children. She said, *“Some of the challenges I’ve faced as a solo parent when it comes to child-rearing are disciplining them, giving a father image which I cannot give. I overcome this challenge with good communication and telling them the truth and the real situation.”* Moreover, Participant 10 overcame challenges in managing family life and discipline, highlighting their resilience. She honestly uncovered, *“It’s hard to manage a family as a solo parent but eventually I survived in managing them, especially when it comes to discipline.”*

Father Figure: Addressing the Child's Needs

In the absence of a father figure, solo parents navigate unique challenges related to raising their children. Participant 4 (P4) aspired to instill moral uprightness and a reverence for God in their children. She responded, “*Naging hamon sa akin ang mapalaki silang mabuting tao at may takot sa Diyos.*” (“**It has been a challenge for me to raise them to be good and Good-fearing people.**”) Consequently, Participant 8 used their children's desires as motivation to work hard and provide for their family. “*Katulad ng aking sinabi, naging malaking hamon sa akin ang mga bagay na gusto ng aking mga anak ngunit hindi ko naibibigay ngunit bagkus ginagawa ko itong motibasyon upang kumayod at maibigay ang mga nais nila.*” (“**Like I said, it has been big challenge for me the things my children want but I can’t give them, but instead of difficulties I use it as motivation to try my best and give them what the want.**”)

Beyond doubt, Participant 19 addressed their child's longing for a father figure, reflecting on the importance of emotional connection and support. She remarked, “*The major challenge I’ve met is that when my child is looking for a father figure inside our house. I must explain to her always that it is not easy to look for a father. I pitied my daughter every time she looked for a daddy.*”

The narratives of solo parents reveal their resilience, dedication, and resourcefulness in navigating the challenges of parenting alone. The themes of financial strain, emotional well-being, discipline and guidance, and father figure highlight these individuals' diverse experiences and triumphs. Through their unwavering determination and support from family, friends, and community, solo parents continue to provide a loving and nurturing environment for their children, profoundly impacting their lives.

Triumphs of Solo Parenting: A Profound Experience of Resilience and Love

The journey of solo parenting is often portrayed as a challenging one, yet within its complexities lies a profound wellspring of strength and dedication. By analyzing the narratives of solo parents, we can identify distinct themes that illuminate their triumphs in nurturing their children's development and well-being.

Educational Milestones: A Foundation for the Future

Solo parents prioritize their children's education as a cornerstone for future success. Participant 1 emphasizes the importance of celebrating academic achievements, acknowledging the significance of milestones. She bared, “*Ang mahahalagang yugto na nakamtan bilang solong magulang ay sa tuwing magtatapos sila sa paaralan at may mga certipiko silang tinatanggap.*” (“My greatest achievement as a solo parent is that every time they finished their schooling and received certificates.”)

Furthermore, Participant 2 demonstrates their commitment by securing a private education for their child, emphasizing the value they place on quality learning. She narrated, “*I was able to send him to a private school and sustain his needs.*” Along with this, Participant 6 finds deep fulfillment in seeing their child's academic success, a testament to the power of hard work and dedication. She proclaimed, “*Nasusuklian ng anak ang paghihirap ng magulang sa pamamagitan ng pag aaral ng Mabuti at makakamit nila ang mataas na grado pinagsisikapang at pinagtitibay ng pag aaral.*” (“Children express gratitude to their parents in their studies every time they excel and get good grades. Also, when they show perseverance and dedication in their studies.”)

Authentically. Participant 9 expresses immense joy at witnessing their child's diligent pursuit of their dreams, highlighting the positive impact of nurturing their child's passions. She described, “*Bilang solo parent siguro ang mahalagang milestone na aking nakamit ay ang makita ko ang anak ko na nagaaral ng mabuti napakalaking biyaya para sa akin dahil alam ko na nag aaral sya ng Mabuti para sa kanyang pangarap dahil gusto raw nya pag nakamit nya na pangarap sa buhay ay sya nman raw ang tutupad ng*

mga pangarap ko para sa aming tatlo at sya din ang magtatrabaho para sa aming pamilya.” (“As a solo parent my greatest milestone was to witness my child focusing and striving for his studies. It's a great blessing on my part because I know that he is diligent in his studies. He wants to achieve his dream for the three of us and he promised that he will work for our family.”)

Emotional Support and Responsibility: A Secure Haven

Beyond academic excellence, solo parents prioritize their children's emotional well-being, creating a safe and supportive environment. Participant 3 underscores the importance of being present for significant life milestones, instilling values and fostering a strong foundation. *“Kahit ako ay solo parent, masasabi kong kahit papaano ay nariyan ako sa tabi ng anak ko sa mga mahahalagang milestone ng buhay nya. Sinisiguro ko na ako ay presente sa mga okasyon na kailangan ng aking presensya. Isang achievement ko na ring maituturing na hindi lumaki ang anak ko sa layaw, marunong syang magpapahalaga ng mga bagay bagay na alam Nyang pinaghirapan ko. Hindi makapritso at kahit papaano ay malaki ang pagpapahalaga nya sa pag aaral.”* (“Although I'm a solo parent I can say that I am always at my child's side during important milestone in his life. I see to it that I am always present on occasions that I need to attend to. It is an achievement for me that he grew up simply and knows how to value things that I knew were the fruits of my sacrifices. He doesn't ask for important and he values his studies a lot.”)

In essence, Participant 7 exemplifies the unwavering dedication of solo parents by providing love, attention, respect, education, and unwavering support. She said, *“Some of the important milestones that I achieve as a solo parent; giving them support in terms of love, attention, and respect for one another, they grow as responsible children, give them education, and support their needs.”* Likewise, Participant 10 recognizes the crucial role they play as the sole decision-maker and financial provider, creating a sense of stability and security for their child. She stated, *“Pagdating sa decision making in all aspects, ikaw lang ang maririnig nila and when it comes to finances mas ok na solo mo ang desisyon.”* (“In decision making and all its aspect, you are the only one who has a final say. And when it comes to finances it's good that you decide alone.”)

Financial Accomplishments: A Sacrifice for a Brighter Future

Fulfilling their children's basic needs often requires significant financial sacrifice. Participant 11 exemplifies this by cutting expenses on personal indulgences to prioritize their child's needs, demonstrating unwavering love and commitment. He bravely said *“Ang pagtipid sa pagkain at pagbawas ng bisyo (cigar, liquor) para mailaan maibigay o mapunta sa food allowance at boarding house nila.”* (“Being thrifty when it comes to food and avoiding bad habits such as cigar and liquor. Instead prioritize their food allowance and boarding house.”)

Participant 11 utterance was reinforced by Participant 17 stating the need to focus on ensuring their children's necessities are met, illustrating the prioritization of their well-being above all else. He commented, *“Yung naipoprovide ko ang mga pangangailangan nila.”* (“Every time I provide the needs of my children.”)

Resilience and Independence: Cultivating Strength

Solo parenting often necessitates overcoming significant challenges, fostering both personal and child resilience. Participant 18 exemplifies this by navigating emotional and social hurdles, building resilience in themselves, and empowering their child to develop independence. He noted, *“Some of the important milestones that I achieved as a solo parent in terms of child development and well-being are that I provide the needs of my children in education. We overcome our emotional and social development, I build resilience and independence, and lastly, become a stronger*

person, and even my child become independent and responsible for their own.”

In addition, Participant 19 celebrates their child's graduation despite personal illness and medical challenges, showcasing the enduring power of hope and perseverance. She added, *“When she graduated in college despite her illness, studying and undergoing the rough medical attention was the worst and most challenging part for me.”* Moreover, Participant 20 instills values of goodness and independence in their children, equipping them with the tools to navigate life's complexities. She recalled, *“I raised very good children by inculcating to their minds they need to be good people even though I raised them alone.”*

Winning the Battles

These themes highlight the dedication and strength of solo parents as they navigate the multifaceted challenges and rewards of raising a child alone. Their commitment to nurturing their children's education, providing emotional support, ensuring financial stability, and fostering resilience paints of love, sacrifice, and triumph. These narratives are a testament to solo parents' unwavering dedication to shaping their children's futures, proving that love and resilience can overcome any obstacle.

Solo Parents' Stories of Resilience, Challenges, and Societal Perceptions

Solo parents navigate unique experiences that shape their self-perceptions and interactions with society. An analysis of their narratives reveals several key themes:

Resilience and Self-Confidence

Many participants exhibited resilience and self-confidence in the face of societal judgment. They focused on their children's well-being and their self-improvement, ignoring negative comments. The stories of Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant 7, and Participant 16 are manifestations of their courage and bravery in times of unpleasant situations. Their testimonies are cited below respectively:

“Di ko naman pinapansin ang sasabihin ng mga tao basta ako aalagaan ko mga anak ko.” (“I just ignored them but what is important to me is I am taking good care of my child.”)

“Like a normal human being judgmental people are everywhere. But if you have pitied yourself and made them affected by their judgment they will win. Rather improve yourself and prove them wrong, that we solo parents can still have and raise a good family.”

“Society accepted me as a normal citizen but sometimes there is judgment. That I'm not a good wife to my husband. I easily cope with this challenge by entertaining any comments on what my situation is.”

“I do not care what other people say. I do not hold back as long as I am not hurting other people, I am doing everything for him.”

Financial and Emotional Challenges

Solo parents often encountered financial and emotional challenges. They faced expenses related to daily needs and children's education. Participant 6 admitted *“Walang mapagkakakitaan syempre hadlang. Pano matustusan nanghihiram ng may porsyentohan. Huwag susuko mag-tiwala sa sarili at tibayan ng loob.”* (“No source of income so it's an obstacle. How to resolve financial constraints, I borrowed from other people however, with interest.”)

Participant 9 also disclosed, *“Mga hadlang na naranasan ko bilang solo parent yung gustong gusto mo maibigay sa mga anak mo mga kailangan nila pero wala kang pera masakit sa akin yun dahil di ko maibigay ang pangangailangan nila kung hindi sa tulong ng magulang at kapatid ito napakahirap kaya magpapasalamat din ako sa pamilya ko sa pagbibigay ng tulong sa mga anak ko dahil hindi nila kami pinababayaan kaya nababawasan ang aking mga problema dahil lagi silang nandyan.”* (“One of the challenges I encountered as a solo parent was, at times I cannot give what my children need. I don't have money and it hurts me. With the help of my family and siblings I am so thankful for them since they helped

me and supported me in raising my children. Because of this my burden was lessened because my family is there to help me.”)

Additionally, Participant 13 hurdles the burden of solo parenting stating that, “*Hadlang sa akin ang pagiging PWD solo parent kung bakit mahirap tustusan ang pangangailangan ng aking anak. Nagsisikap magtranaho kahit mahirap nagtitinda ng anong pwedeng mabenta.*” (The fact that I am at PWD makes it hard for me to raise my child. I my best to sell something or anything that can be sold.”)

Likewise, Participant 15 discovered the importance of making financial arrangements in raising the children. She revealed that, “*Kailangan kong i-budget ang kakaunti kong pera para may makain kami sa buong araw. Sa ngayon ang tagumpay na nakamit ko ay yung naipagtapos ko ang iba kong anak sa high school at ngayon ay may nag aaral pa. laban lang kahit anong mangyari may mararating din ang aking paghihirap hindi pa sa ngayon pero sa darating na panahon.*” (“I need to budget my small amount of money so we can eat all day. As of now, what I consider a milestone was that I was able to send them to school and finish their schooling. However, some are still studying. Just be courageous whatever happens. I'm sure everything will be better not now but soon.”)

The isolation and burden of providing for multiple children also weighed heavily on some. Participants 13 and 15 stories were solid confirmation of how solo parents faced the hardship of raising children alone. Their role as solo earners made them pillars of hope for the children to continuously live and win all the tests handed down to them.

Community Support and Coping Strategies

Some participants found support within their communities, while others sought assistance from organizations. For instance, Participant 10 uttered, “*Asking advice from trusted friends/ people and making God the center of my decisions helped me overcome any obstacles that I faced..*” Similarly, Participant 11 found solace in saying, “*Ika nga, all work no play makes a man dull and unhappy. So, love yourself. Paano kung magkasakit ka dahil sa sobrang house chores who will attend to your kids? Do your work smoothly but do your responsibilities seriously.*” (“As what they always say, all work no play makes a man dull and unhappy. So, love yourself. What if you got sick because of too much work who will attend to your kids? Do your work smoothly but do your responsibilities seriously.”)

In addition, Participant 17 expressed determination in dealing with the challenges of solo parenting. She exclaims, “*Patuloy na lumaban at wag iisipin ang pagod alang alang sa mga bata.*” (“Never give up and always think of children’s welfare.”) Also, Participant 19 was wise enough to divert the attention to worthwhile things. She narrated, “*I devoted my time to my daughter, see to it that our time is managed equally. We have time to relax, to have a vacation, time to church, and time for studies.*”

The participants in this study navigated societal obstacles by ignoring negative comments, focusing on their families, and seeking support when needed.

Stigma and Societal Shifts

Participants acknowledged the impact of societal perceptions on single parents. Thus, Participant 18 professed, “*The perception and acceptance of solo parenting in society can significantly impact the experience of single parents. But in recent years, there has been a shift in societal attitudes towards recognizing and accepting different family structures like solo parents. There can still be negative stigmas attached to solo parenting, which some people hold biases or judgment towards single parent which may result from them isolate.*”

Additionally, Participant 19 had a concrete action regarding society’s impression of solo parenting. He noted, “*I joined the community so that I can handle my situation better.*” However, some brushed off

negative comments, asserting their autonomy and the value of their family. For instance, Participant 20 declared, *“Negative or bad comments. I just don’t mind it because I have my own choice and decision for myself.”* These narratives reflect both the lingering stigma surrounding solo parenthood and the evolving attitudes that recognize their resilience and contributions.

Irrevocably, these themes illustrate the complex and multifaceted experiences of solo parents. They demonstrate their resilience, highlight the challenges they face, and emphasize the need for continued societal support and acceptance.

Balancing Emotional Well-being as a Solo Parent

As a solo parent, maintaining emotional well-being is paramount for overall health and resilience. Several strategies shared by other solo parents provide valuable insights into how to achieve this balance.

Self-Care and 'Me' Time

Participants 2 and Participant 11 emphasize the importance of prioritizing self-care. Engaging in activities that bring joy, such as relaxing hobbies or occasional pampering, can prevent burnout. Their testimonies confirm that there are many ways to secure healthy living among solo parents. Their lines spelled, *“As a parent, not just as a single parent, I think it’s important that you still make time for yourself. Do things that you like, do things that make you happy, pamper yourself, and have ME time from time to time. Those helped me stay sane.”*

“Ika nga, all work no play makes a man dull and unhappy. So, love yourself. Paano kung magkasakit ka dahil sa sobrang house chores who will attend to your kids? Do your work smoothly but do your responsibilities seriously.” (“As what they always say, all work no play makes a man dull and unhappy. So, love yourself. What if you got sick because of too much work who will attend to your kids? Do your work smoothly but do your responsibilities seriously.”)

Seeking Support

Leaning on support from family and friends is essential. Participant 5 relies on relatives, she testified, *“My support system comes from my relatives and family. Family politics are always there at the end of the day.”* On the contrary, Participant 7 finds solace in the company of classmates and colleagues. She mentioned, *“I balance my emotional well-being as a solo parent through engaging in production work in my workplace and attending to the needs of my children. Another is pursuing my studies which my classmates and colleagues help me in balancing my emotional stability.”*

On the other hand, Participant 10 turns to trusted friends and faith for guidance. Her words were, *“Asking advice from trusted friends/ people and making God the center of my decisions helped me overcome any obstacles that I faced.”*

Mindset and Resilience

Solo parents demonstrate resilience in facing challenges. Participant 9 draws strength from meeting obstacles head-on *“Sa pamamagitan siguro ng lakas ng loob at tapang sa hamon ng buhay at hindi ko pinapakita sa mga anak ko na pinanghihinaan ako ng loob kailangan pagkaharap ko sila malakas ako para sa akin sila kukuha ng lakas din para sa araw araw. Naisip ko na strategies to support sguro na magkaroon ng ekstra income tulad ng pagtitinda ng mga kakanin para makadagdag sa pang araw araw na gastusin.”* (“Maybe self-confidence and resilience to battle challenges in life I never let my kids see that lowest point in my life. I need to be strong so they can depend on me every day. Strategies that I think of is having extra income such as selling of kakanin.”)

Meanwhile, Participant 15 refuses to surrender, knowing that his family depends on her. She admitted, *“Iniisip ko na hindi tayo pwedeng sumuko na may pamilya tayong kailangan buhayin kaya hindi pwedeng*

panghinaan ng loob. Pag napapagod magpahinga lang hindi susuko. Malapit na ako sa aking tagumpay kaya ipagpapatuloy lang ang buhay.” (“I remind myself not to give up because I have a family to care for. There's no chance of surrendering. In times I'm tired I need to just rest but never yield.”). Similarly, Participant 16 maintains a positive mindset by taking life one step at a time. She admitted, “*Just one step at a time. One budget at a time. It is all mind-setting and how to apply it in real life.*”

Communication and Connection

Solo parents seek ways to connect with others. Participant 8 chats with friends to share burdens. She narrated, “*Nakikipagkwentuhan ako sa mga kaibigan ko para kahit papano tumawa an mawala ang problema.*” (“I did talk with my friends to enjoy, to relax, so that stress and problem disappear.”) Similarly, Participant 14 engages in conversations with neighbors. She disclosed, “*Minsan nakikipag usap sa kapitbahay o kaibigan para malibang.*” (Sometimes I talk to my neighbors and friends for entertainment.”)

Remarkably, Participant 19 prioritizes a balanced schedule that includes relaxation, vacation, and religious activities. As proof, she said, “*I devoted my time to my daughter is see to it that our time is managed equally. We have time to relax, to have a vacation, time to church, and time for studies.*”

It's crucial to remember that solo parents are not alone. Seeking support from loved ones, faith, or self-care is essential. By prioritizing well-being, solo parents create a healthier environment for themselves and their children.

Looking closely into the realm of solo parenting, the study of ⁸Monte-Casili (2020) uncovered the journey of solo parents. Most of the participants took the role of the father and mother to their children. Every time they are depressed, their source of strength and wealth is their children. They consider their children as their solace and purpose in life. The women's solo parents' lifestyle was transformed into being empowered, strong, and believers.

III. The Unique Challenges of Solo Parenthood: Insights from Participants

The journey of solo parenting is often fraught with unique challenges, as evidenced by the insights shared by our participants. While the rewards of raising children independently are undoubtedly immense, the path is frequently paved with difficulties requiring resilience, resourcefulness, and unwavering dedication.

Emotional and Disciplinary Challenges

Emotional and Disciplinary resonated strongly among the participants. Participant 2 expressed the difficulty of disciplining children without the second parent's influence. She narrated, “*Sa pagdidisiplina sa anak. Iba pa rin ang epekto ng disiplina ng ama lalo na sa anak na lalaki.*” (“In terms of discipline, usually father is a better disciplinarian especially for boys.”)

However, Participant 3 delved into the complex task of addressing children's curiosity about their family situation and navigating potential social intrigue. Her testimony was, “*Habang lumalaki ang aking anak hindi maiwasang sya ay magtaka sa sitwasyon namin. May mga pagkakataon na kailangan Nyang magpasa ng family picture at ito ay tinago nya sa kin, Nakaranas din sya ng mag intriga mula sa kanyang mg kamag aral na naghahanap ng kniyang tatay. Laking pasasalamat ko na lang at mayroon syang malawak na pang unawa sa aming sitwasyon.*” (“As he grew up it, he was confused of our situation. There were times he needed to submit a family picture and he kept it to himself. He also experienced intrigue when his classmates were looking and asking for his father. I am so thankful that he is so understanding.”)

Participant 9 further echoed this sentiment, highlighting the challenges of tackling stubbornness and discipline issues alone. “*Siguro ang mga hamon na aking kinakaharap pagdating sa pagpapalaki ng mga*

anak ay minsan nagiging matigas ang ulo nila at hindi sumusunod sa akin na minsan naiisip ko kung hindi lang ako solo parent ay may makakatulong ako pagdating sa pagdididisciplina sa mga anak ko naminsan naisip mo na dati nung Kabataan ko hindi tulad ng mga bata ngayon na mas marunong pa sa mga magulang nila na samantalang sa tradisyunal na sitwasyon ng pamilya sama sama silang lahat at masaya pag kumpleto sila.” (“Maybe some of the challenges I encountered in the aspect of discipline, sometimes my children are hardheaded. I think that if their father was with us, he could help. Especially that children nowadays think they are better than their parents. Unlike in a traditional family, they are complete and live happily together.

These experiences underscore the need for solo parents to find effective strategies for establishing clear boundaries and consistently enforcing them.

Financial Strain and Stability

Financial strain and stability emerged as another significant challenge. Participant 8 highlighted the difficulties of coping with financial limitations and the lack of support in providing for their children. She recounted, *“Yung kakulangan sa pera at wala kang Karamay sa pagtataguyod sa mga anak.”* (“Lack of money and no one to turn to in raising the children.”)

Furthermore, Participant 13 emphasized the weight of managing financial responsibilities without a partner's contribution. The struggle for financial security underlines the importance of seeking resources and support systems to alleviate financial burdens and ensure the well-being of both parent and child. She said, *“Ang pagkakaiba ng solo parent ay sobrang mahirap dahil sayo lahat aasa ang anak mo. Sobrang mahirap dahil wala kang katuwang sa financial keysa sa ordinaryong magulang na may asawa.”* (“The difference of solo parent with the traditional family lies on the idea that solo parenting was hard since children depend on you alone. It was difficult since no one supports you financially.”)

Time and Workload Management

Presented a constant source of stress for many participants. Participant 6 described the overwhelming task of juggling childcare, household chores, and work responsibilities, particularly when a child is sick. *“Pag magkakasakit ang anak mag-isa mong aasikasohon ang pag-aaruga, mga gawaing bahay, talagang hamon ito na maiiba sa sitwasyon ng komplitong pamilya.”* (Solo parenting is different from traditional family since you are alone, taking care when someone is sick, raising the kids, and doing household chores. It is really challenging and so different from a traditional family.)

Likewise, Participant 15 further emphasized the heavy responsibility of being the sole caregiver and decision-maker, leading to limited personal time and constant pressure. She uttered, *“Ang mag isa kang mag aalaga at gagabay sa iyong mga anak at di tulad ng may katuwang sa buhay meron silang masasandalan kong sila ay pagod at may mapagsasabihan ng problema lalo na sa pinansyal. Pag mag isa ka lang sa buhay, kailangan mong sarilinin ang problema sa pera dahil kailangan ikaw ang bubuhay sa kanila hindi pwedeng mapagod palaging lalaban.”* (“In solo parenting you are alone taking care and guiding the children. Unlike a traditional family, you have someone with whom you can share your problems, especially in the financial aspect. If you are a solo parent, you need to take problems and solve them by yourself because you have no one to turn to and it is your sole responsibility to raise the children. There is no chance to surrender but rather keep on fighting.”)

The need for effective time management, prioritization, and potential outside assistance becomes critical for solo parents navigating this demanding landscape. ⁹Carisola (2023) revealed that solo parents' routine is problematic since the demand for parenting is heavy. It also showed that financial difficulties are the primary concern for bill payment daily food consumption, and children's allowance. Many of them faced

problem in problems in imposing discipline. All the participants that affected their relationship with God expressed their frustrations about having challenging life experiences in Spiritual Management. Solo parenting was also affected by the environment which sometimes hindered them from functioning as parents.

Social Acceptance and Support

Social acceptance and support proved to be a crucial aspect of the solo parenting experience. Participant 7 voiced the struggle of providing a father figure and navigating differences from traditional family setups. She summoned, *“As a solo parent faced so different when it comes to child-rearing because a solo parent can’t give a father image. Solo solo-parent setup of the family is different from the traditional one because in the traditional setup, children have a complete parent (mother & father) who gives them full support in all aspects of their life.”*

In addition, Participant 18 underscored the emotional toll of loneliness and the lack of readily available emotional support, highlighting the importance of fostering strong social connections and seeking out support groups. She revealed, *“As a solo parent I faced so many challenges when it comes to child rearing and some of these are emotional support, financial strain, decision making, and emotional toil. Compared to parents in traditional family setup, as a solo parent, I carry a heavier load of responsibilities, less time for myself and I face additional financial and emotional challenges due to the absence of my partner.”*

Communication and Decision-Making

Communication and Decision-making rounded out the key themes. Participant 11 emphasized the ongoing task of balancing discipline, caregiving, and household tasks, necessitating open and consistent communication with children. He opened that, *“Ang pagdisiplina, ang pag aruga kung maysakit sila, ang pagluto ng gusto nilang recipe, ang paglinis ng bahay.”* (“Imposing discipline, taking care when they are sick, preparing their favorite recipe and cleaning the house.”)

In addition to that, Participant 19 underlined the importance of open and honest communication about feelings, decisions, and plans, creating a sense of shared understanding and trust within the family. She said, *“You must be open to your children come what may, what may they should know your feelings, your decisions, and plans for them.”*

The challenges faced by solo parents require unwavering strength, adaptability, and a robust support system. Despite the obstacles, the participants' insights offer valuable perspectives on the unique complexities of navigating solo parenthood. These themes serve as a crucial reminder of the importance of emotional resilience, resourcefulness, and self-care in the solo parenting journey.

Extent of Support for Solo Parents: Existing Programs and Support Systems

Some participants mentioned existing programs like the 4Ps and RA 8972, as well as local initiatives. However, they also noted the need for more comprehensive and accessible support nationwide. Participant 1 revealed that *“Mayroong umiiral na programa katulad na lamang ng 4ps.”* (“There is an existing program like 4Ps.”) Moreover, Participant 2 validated this statement by disclosing that, *“May ibang lugar na nagbibigay discounts sa mga solo parents like sa ibang establishments, grocery store at scholarship sa anak ng mga solo parents. But I haven’t experienced it yet since all the places I’ve lived in don’t have this program. Hope the govt will have this program for the entire country.”* (“In some other places discounts are given to solo parents like in establishments grocery stores. Also, call ma children of solar parents were given scholarships. But I haven't experienced it yet since all the places I've lived in don't have this program. Hope the government will have this program for the entire country.”)

In essence, Participant 5 recalled that *“So far the national government has provided RA 8972 or SOLO*

Parent Act. But still, it depends on the capacity of the municipality they belong if they will get any support. In metro Manila, they are receiving 500 pesos for every qualified dependent of the SOLO Parent. The government should provide more livelihood programs for all qualified solo parents.” Meanwhile, Participant 7 unveiled that, *“The solo parent act is a program that supports the solo parent in some financial burden, especially the education of my child but not enough because only one child is covered in educational support and a very small amount.”*

It is good to note that Participant 8 and Participant 9 had truthful testimonies regarding support from the community. Participant 8 voiced out that *“Oo nakakatulong ang bawat programa ng gobyerno hindi lamang sa solo parent pati na rin sa mga mahihirap.”* (“Yes, every program is beneficial not only to the solo parents, but also to the poor.”).

Furthermore, Participant 9 confirmed that *“Siguro para sa akin na maaprubahan na dito sa ating lugar ang pagbibigay ng suporta tulad ng sa ibang lugar mayroon silang nakukuha na maliit na halaga kahit dito man lang malaking tulong na din sa pang araw araw na gastusin at sana mabigyan din ng puhunan na pagkakakitaan bilang solo parent at sana din magkaroon ng effective na programa ang gobyerno para sa mga solo parent.”* (“I am hoping that the Local Government Unit would approve the proposal on giving support to solo parents, since in other municipality they received assistance from the LGU. In this manner, they could already extend support to solar parents’ family and provide livelihood program for them. I hope these programs would be effective for the solo parents.”)

Limited or Inadequate Support:

Participants highlighted challenges such as lack of awareness, insufficient assistance, and absence of effective programs. They expressed frustration due to the lack of tangible support. Participant 3 declared that *“Sa aming lugar ang ganyang suporta ay limitado lamang sa mga solo parents na hindi regular ang trabaho, ngunit kung ikaw ay empleyado ng gobyerno asahan mow ala kang makukuha suporta tulad ng iba. Kaya sana patas ang batas at mga polisiya sa lahat.”* (“In our place that kind of support is limited only to solo parents who don't have regular job. However, if you are a government employee you won't receive any support from the government. That's why I hope there is equality in every law and policy.”)

In the same manner, Participant 6 expressed that *“Wala naman kami nakukuha na suporta sa TV meron. Sa totoo wala naman dito.”* (We never received any support. It's only on TV. The truth is, there's no assistance.) This revelation is aligned with the testimony of Participant 10 asserting that *“Meron naman siguro. But I don't know yet dahil di pa naman ako nakakatanggap ng mga yon. For employees who are solo parents, you can avail a 7-day service credit.”* (“Maybe there is but I don't know yet because I haven't received any. For employees who are solar parents you can avail a 7-day service credit.”)

Last, of all, Participant 18 also had negative feedback on this, and she cited that *“As of now there is no existing systems or program available for the solo parent to alleviate the financial burdens and provide emotional support.”*

Educational Support and Financial Assistance:

Participants in this study emphasized the importance of educational support but pointed out limitations such as coverage only for one child or small amounts. Their statements are crucial in understanding their journey as solo parents with assistance given to them by public or private entities.

For instance, Participant 5 testified that *“So far the national government has provided RA 8972 or Solo Parent Act. But still, it depends on the capacity of the municipality they belong, to if they will get any support. In Metro Manila, they are receiving 500 pesos for every qualified dependent of the Solo Parent. The government should provide more livelihood programs for all qualified solo parents.”*

Participant 7 expresses a favorable experience with assistance given to a solo parent. As proof, she mentioned that *“The Solo Parent Act is a program that supports the solo parent in some financial burden, especially the education of my child but not enough because only one child is covered in educational support and very small amount.”*

Equally, Participant 9 is hopeful with regards to the implementation of assistance for solo parents. She narrated that *“Siguro para sa akin na maaprubahan na dito sa ating lugar ang pagbibigay ng suporta tulad ng sa ibang lugar mayroon silang nakukuha na maliit na halaga kahit dito man lang malaking tulong na din sa pang araw araw na gastusin at sana mabigyan din ng puhunan na pagkakakitaan bilang solo parent at sana din magkaroon ng effective na programa ang gobyerno para sa mga solo parent.”* (“For me, I hope programs that focus on giving support be approved, same with in other places. They received a small amount of money as assistance where they can use for everyday expenses. Also, I hope solo parents be given money to start business and provide effective programs for solo parents.”)

Desire for Equitable Policies and Local Initiatives:

Some participants called for fair policies and equal opportunities for all solo parents, regardless of their employment status or location. They advocated for more localized efforts and budget allocation.

Remarkably, Participant 2 described, *“May ibang lugar na nagbibigay discounts sa mga solo parents like sa ibang establishments, grocery store at scholarship sa anak ng mga solo parents. But I haven’t experienced it yet since all the places I’ve lived in don’t have this program. Hope the govt will have this program for the entire country.”* (“In some other places solo parents are given discounts such as in establishments, grocery stores, and the scholarships were given to children of solo parents. But I haven't experienced it yet since all the places I've lived in don't have this program. Hope the government will have this program for the entire country.”)

In the same manner, Participant 3 was brave enough to admit *“Sa aming lugar ang ganyang suporta ay limitado lamang sa mga solo parents na hindi regular ang trabaho, ngunit kung ikaw ay empleyado ng gobyerno asahan mow ala kang makukuha suporta tulad ng iba. Kaya sana patas ang batas at mga polisiya sa lahat.”* (“In our place that kind of support is limited only to solo parents who don't have regular jobs. However, if you are a government employee you won't receive any support or assistance. That's why I wish that law and policy is fair and just for everyone.”)

In connection, Participant 9 wished for something beneficial for solo parents. She coined, *“Siguro para sa akin na maaprubahan na dito sa ating lugar ang pagbibigay ng suporta tulad ng sa ibang lugar mayroon silang nakukuha na maliit na halaga kahit dito man lang malaking tulong na din sa pang araw araw na gastusin at sana mabigyan din ng puhunan na pagkakakitaan bilang solo parent at sana din magkaroon ng effective na programa ang gobyerno para sa mga solo parent.”* (“Perhaps, programs intended to support solo parent be approved for them to receive even a small amount of money. In that way they would be supported in their everyday expenses. I hope too that they be given effective livelihood programs by the government.”)

Additionally, Participant 11 was honest to commend that *“So far wala pang panukala o batas ang dyan partikular ang local na gobyerno. Siguro sa pamamagitan ng ating MSWDO officer siya po ang mag initiate na magkaroon ng pondo during budget hearing.”* (“So far there are no approved programs especially from the local government unit. Maybe through MSWDO officer, he must initiate to have fun during budget hearing.”)

The enumerated participants' experiences highlight the complexities of supporting solo parents and the need for improved programs and equitable assistance.

IV. Parenting as a Solo Endeavor: Insights from Solo Parents

Navigating the journey of parenthood independently presents unique challenges and fosters a distinct set of parenting priorities and values. These are manifested in the responses they provided during the interview.

Parenting Priorities and Decision-Making:

Participants in this current study emphasized how being a solo parent has influenced their parenting style and priorities. They prioritize their child's well-being, adaptability, and resourcefulness in decision-making. Participants recognize the importance of making choices that benefit their children and have adapted their parenting approach accordingly.

Remarkably, Participant 2 showed inflexibility in his priority when it comes to her role as a solo parent. She articulated, *"When it comes to decision making, I always prioritize the well-being of my kid. Bago ako magdesisyun ang laging tanong ay makakabuti ba yung gagawin kong desisyun sa kanya."* ("When it comes to decision making, I always prioritize the well-being of my kid. Before I decide, I see to it that it is for the good of my son.")

In the same manner, Participant 3 shared the bright side of solo parenting. She narrated, *"Ang pagiging magulang ang siyang nagmulat sa aking para mas maging responableng tao. Aaminin kong maraming nawalang oportunidad simula ng ako ay nagging solo parent. Nagbago ang priyoridad ko sapagkat nagon ay mas inuuna ko ng iniisip ang aking anak. Naisip ko aanhin ko ang maraming salapi kung hindi ko man lang masusubaybayan ang aking anak. Kaya mas pinili ko magstay sa aking propesyon hindi man ito nagbibigay ng malaking pera pero kahit papaano ay narito lng ako."* ("Being a solo parent molds me to become a responsible person. I know there are lots of opportunities that failed when I became a solo parent. My priorities were changed because I focus on my child. I thought, what the use of money is if I were not able to supervise my child. That's why I remain in my profession although it has meager salary. What is important is I am here with him.")

Likewise, Participant 5 is accurate in her remark about solo parenting. She exclaimed, *"Reality check it is very tough raising a family on the status of a solo parent. The mother or father or the grandparents parenting one hand, first how to discipline the child by providing basic needs. One must be firm in the family."* Nevertheless, Participant 7 optimistically spoke about the impact of being a solo parent in her life. She described, *"Being a solo parent has significantly influenced my sense of identity in terms of child-rearing. It has taught me the importance of being strong resilient and adaptable to provide the best possible care to my child. It has also made me more aware of the challenges and responsibilities that come with raising a child on my own. Yes, as a solo parent, I have my own style of parent and priorities. I have had to become more organized, resourceful, and independent to manage all aspects of my child's upbringing on my own."*

Looking closely at the situation, Participant 10 expressed the integrity behind solo parenting. She mentioned, *"Nagkaroon ako nang stability sa aking mga desisyun and natuto akong maging independent sa lahat ng aspeto."* ("I have developed my stability in decision making and learned to be independent in all aspects."). This utterance was supported by Participant 11 informing that *"Mas lalo ko napahusay ang aking personal na kakayahan sa parenting."* (My personal growth was enhanced together with my ability in parenting.)

In addition to the cited responses, Participant 14 conveyed things that need to consider in imposing discipline to children. She said, *"Sa pagiging solo parent kinakailangan kong gampanan at pagiging maunawain at pagiging istriktung magulang sa pagdidisiplina sa aking mga anak. Naimpluwensyahan"*

ako nito sa dahilang naging mas mahirap ang pagbabalanse ng pagdididisciplina.” (“Being a solo parent, I need to do my role to impose discipline and at the same time be understanding. By doing so I was influenced by this and thought it's quite hard to give effective discipline.”)

Moreover, Participant 15 accepted the challenge of solo parenting. She told, *“Dahil solo parent ako, ako lang ang kanilang masaandalan kaya alam ko ang mga pangyayari sa kanilang buhay at sa akin sila tumatakbo pag mayroong problema, prayoridad nating alagaan ang ating mga anak at tulungan sila.”* (“Because I'm a solo parent I am the only one whom my children can depend on. That's why I know what's happening in their lives. They look for me every time they have problems. I prioritize them, help them, and care for them.”) These words are concurred upon by Participant 20 confiding that *“My colleagues see me as a strong mother because I was able to raise my kid with a good attitude and behavior even, though I am a solo parent.”*

Emotional Resilience and Independence

Several participants highlighted the need to be emotionally resilient and independent. Being a solo parent has taught them to face life's challenges head-on and manage their responsibilities. For example, Participant 7 talked about how to be tough in solo parenting. She reported, *“Being a solo parent has significantly influenced my sense of identity in terms of child-rearing. It has taught me the importance of being strong resilient and adaptable to provide the best possible care to my child. It has also made me more aware of the challenges and responsibilities that come with raising a child on my own. Yes, as a solo parent, I have my own style of parent and priorities. I have had to become more organized, resourceful, and independent to manage all aspects of my child's upbringing on my own.”*

Also, Participant 10 responded certainly on the issue of resiliency during discomfort brought by solo parenting. She mentioned, *“Nagkaroon ako nang stability sa aking mga desisyon and natuto akong maging independent sa lahat ng aspeto.”* (“I have developed stability in decision making and learned to be independent in all aspects.”) Equally, Participant 11 has same realization with Participant 10 stating, *“Mas lalo ko napahusay ang aking personal na kakayahan sa parenting.”* (“I have improved my personal and parenting ability.”)

Finally, Participant 12 *“Ang alam ko lang kahit solo ako kakayanin kong palakihin ng maayos at pag aralin ang aking mga anak. Hindi naman. Hindi naman.”* (“What I know is that I am a solo parent, and I will do everything to give good life for my kids and send them to school. No of course. No.”) In the same manner, Participant 18 articulated her views on the matter. She pointed out, *“As a solo parent, raising my children becomes my central part of the identity I become strong in terms of resilience, independence, and resourcefulness when it comes to the needs of my children, and one thing that I learned as a solo parent that I can face all challenges just to survive.”*

Positive Identity and Pride:

Five participants expressed pride in their role as solo parents. They view it as a positive aspect of their identity and celebrate their ability to raise their children despite the challenges. These participants find fulfillment and strength in their parenting journey.

To add, Participant 6 exclaimed, *“Masaya ang pagiging magulang dahil nakikita mo patuloy na paglaki ng iyong anak.”* (“Being parent is something to be proud of especially when you saw your children growing.”) Moreover, Participant 16 narrated, *“I am proud to be a single mom for so many years. I have chosen great decisions that both benefit my son and in our present life.”* Likewise Participant 17 uttered, *“Masaya akong patuloy kong binubuhay ang aking mga anak sa pamamagitan ng pagtrabaho ko.”*

In essence, Participant 19 was exhilarated to boost, *“After my daughter’s grad in college, I proved to myself that solo parenting is not a hindrance to raising your family. I can testify and say that if you know how to budget your time and resources, solo parenting is just easy.”* This reaction was also agreed upon by Participant 20 declaring *“My colleagues see me as a strong mother because I was able to raise my kid with a good attitude and behavior even, though I am a solo parent.”*

Balancing Responsibilities and Sacrifices:

Participants acknowledged the difficulties of being a solo parent. Balancing daily life, responsibilities, and discipline can be challenging. Sacrifices are necessary, but participants remain committed to their children. For example, Participant 3 narrated her burden and *mentioned’ “Ang hamon ng pananalapi bilang isang solo parent ay isang normal na pangyayari sa amin hehe. Ang tanging magagawa na lang ay kumayod ng kumayod at maging madiskarte bawal maging maarte at tamad para sa tulad naming sapagkat sarili lang naming ang aming masasandalan.”* (“For a solo parent, it is normal to experience financial difficulties all I can do is work very hard, be strategic, and refrain from laziness because I don’t have someone to depend on.”)

Moreover, Participant 13 expressed how she hurdled the journey of raising the family despite his disability. She uttered, *“Ang kahirapan sa buhay ang nakakapag impluwensya bilang solong magulang bukod sa nagkasakit ka na wala pang hanap buhay o negosyo kang inaasahan. Ang pagiging PWD, hirap kumilos.”* (“Being a solo parent, poverty has a great impact in the family. Aside from the fact that I am a PWD I don’t have a job or even a small business where I can get our expenses. I found it hard to move.

Participant 14’s experience was synonymous with the above utterance. She exposed *“Minsan nakakstress din lalo na ang pagprovide sa needs nila.”* (“Sometimes it is stressful specially in providing their needs.”)

Likewise, Participant 18 admitted, *“As a solo parent I experienced depression when financial problems came but because of the support of my family and friends I easily coped with this situation. So learn that you should be a strong woman for your children and must give priority to yourself.*

Remarkably,¹⁰ Garin & Dagupon (2022)” explored the lived experiences of solo parents as to the aspects of physical, psychological, social, emotional, spiritual, and financial experiences, as well as the coping mechanisms. Results reveal that the majority of the respondents have experienced financial difficulty because they lack a regular source of income to sustain their needs. The respondents use different coping mechanisms, the majority use physical, spiritual, and social coping strategies in addressing solo parenting problems. Most of them focused on their hobbies or spending time with family. Faith in God kept them going, some aired grievances to friends, while others felt relaxed browsing their social media accounts.

Navigating the Journey: Solo Parents Share Their Experiences

The experiences of solo parents provide a multifaceted lens into the realities of raising children independently. A recent study, based on interviews with twenty participants, reveals a complex tapestry of support, stigma, resilience, and financial challenges.

Supportive Environment and Consideration

Participants shared heartwarming stories of understanding and assistance from colleagues, organizations, and friends. These moments highlight the vital role of a supportive environment in easing the burdens of solo parenting. Being acknowledged and supported as solo parents, they expressed, brings immense relief and strengthens their ability to navigate the challenges.

As a matter of fact, Participant 2 mentioned, *“Sa trabaho dahil alam nilang solo parent ako mas nagging considerate sila sakin lalo na nung sa malayo pa ako ngtatrabaho. No questions ask pag nagpapaalam akong magleave para umuwi sa anak ko.”* (“At work, teachers are very considerate knowing that I am a

solo parent and far from my child. No questions asked every time I filed for a leave just to visit my child.”). Participant 5 had a similar experience on this, stating that, *“Sometimes in LGU where I engaged with, normally they valued the importance of a solo parent in the society like, assistance or supplemental livelihood”*

Interestingly, Participant 7 uttered, *“As a solo parent I have experienced a mix of social acceptance and stigma from others. While many people are very supportive and understand my situation, there have been circumstances in which they criticized me for what happened to my life. And this stigma may result in my isolation from them because it hurts me. But I need to be a strong solo parent to overcome the situation. And I have learned to focus on the positive relationship and connection that uplift and improve me in my parenting journey.”* However, Participant 10 was very sincere in saying she never experienced any negative treatment from other people as a solo parent. She exclaimed, *“Wala naman po masyado.”* (“None so far.”)

Furthermore, Participant 11 had an exceptional way of coping with social stigma, He said. *“Yet when I joined in the religion, civic, and people’s organization I was elected as chairman.”* In the same manner, Participant 15 had a great impression with the community saying that *“Ang pagbibigay ng trabaho lalo na sa aming mga solo parent pag uuna sa amin.”*

(“By providing us employment and being prioritized.” Likewise, Participant 18 has almost the same perception uttering, *“As of now solo parent is already accepted in society without any from the society. As a solo parent, must prioritize my care, and seek support from other individuals.”* Correspondingly, Participant 20 stated, *“All of my family and friends accept wholeheartedly my situation.”*

Mixed Reactions and Stigma

However, the journey is not without its complexities. Participants candidly acknowledged encountering both acceptance and stigma. While some individuals empathized with their situation, others expressed criticism or doubt about their choices. These mixed reactions reflect the evolving societal attitudes towards solo parenting, showcasing the need for greater understanding and acceptance.

As proof, Participant 3 has a positive experience regarding how other people treat solo parents. She commented, *“Meron naman kahit papaano at ito ay masarap sa pakiramdam ang ma appreciate ang sitwasyon mo bilang isang solo parent.”* (“There are those who appreciate us and it feels good to be a solo parent.”) However, on the part of Participant 7, he had a different experience, sharing that, *“As a solo parent I have experienced a mix of social acceptance and stigma from others. While many people are very supportive and understand my situation, there have been circumstances in which they criticized me for what happened to my life. And this stigma may result in my isolation from them because it hurts me. But I need to be a strong solo parent to overcome the situation. And I have learned to focus on the positive relationship and connection that uplift and improve me in my parenting journey.”*

However, Participant 8 admitted that it is not easy to be a solo parent. She said, *“Naging hamon sa akin ang kawalan ng kaalaman mo sa ibang bagay na pwede sanang makadagdag sa pera o salapi ng aking pamilya.”* (“It was challenging that you failed to learn other things that could be of great help to earn money for the family.”) On the contrary, Participant 13 pointed out, *“The reason we choose social in this aspect of Filipino value is the sense of hiya or shame in the Philippines and some other.”* This was synonymous with the words of Participant 14 reiterating that, *“Karaniwan na tanggap sa ating susyudad ang pagiging solo parent nguit hindi mawawala ang pagkaawa kasabay ng pagdududa kung paano itataguyod ang pamilya.”* (“Almost everyone accepts the reality about solo parent, however, we cannot get rid of those who will pity us and even doubt us how to raise a family.”)

Resilience and Independence

Despite the challenges, many participants demonstrated remarkable resilience and independence. Participants emphasized their commitment to focusing on their own well-being and parenting journey, choosing not to be defined by negative comments. This inner strength and self-reliance serve as a powerful testament to the human spirit's ability to overcome adversity.

It is good to note that Participant 7 is tough in her journey as a solo parent. She commented, *“But I need to be a strong solo parent to overcome the situation. And I have learned to focus on the positive relationship and connection that uplift and improve me in my parenting journey.”* On the contrary, Participant 8, honestly confessed, *“Naging hamon sa akin ang kawalan ng kaalaman mo sa ibang bagay na pwede sanang makadagdag sa pera o salapi ng aking pamilya.”* (“It was challenging that you fail to learn other things that could be of great help to earn money for the family.”)

On the other hand, Participant 12 revealed, *“Wala akong masyadong experience na stigma sa lipunan.”* (“I haven't experienced much negative treatment from the society.”) Likewise, Participant 16 declared, *“I do not care what people say. So I did not pay attention to social acceptance. Any kid that doesn't have both parents on their side growing still should be treated as normal.”*

Furthermore, Participant 17 affirmed, *“Wag nang pansinin ang anumang negatibong sinasabi kasi di naman ito makakatulong.”* (“Just don't mind negative things people thrown at you Since it really won't help.”) Also, Participant 18 acknowledged, *“As of now, the solo parent is already accepted, without any judgment from the society. As a solo parent, I must prioritize myself, care, and seek support from other individuals.”*

Financial Challenges and Coping Strategies

Financial hurdles were also a recurring theme. Participants shared the difficulties of managing finances as solo parents. However, they also revealed their coping strategies, including prioritizing self-care, seeking support from various sources, and carefully managing their resources. These practical approaches exemplify the resourcefulness and adaptability that many solo parents embrace.

For instance, Participant 8 shared her harsh experience in solo parenting. She admitted, *“Naging hamon na sa akin ang kawalan ng kaalaman sa ibang bagay na pwede sanang makadagdag sap era o salapi ng aking pamilya.”* (“It was challenging that you feel to learn other things that could be of great help to earn money for the family.”)

Meanwhile, Participant 14 had similar experience with Participant 8, claiming that, *“Malaking hamon ang pagiging solo parent sa kadahilanang ngmumula ang aming income sa aking asawa. Ngayon mag isa kong kailangan itaguyod ang aking pamilya naging napakahirap sa aming sitwasyong pananalapi.”* (“It is really challenging to be solo parent since my husband was the provider in the family. Now I am a solo learner and at the same time solo in raising the kids. So difficult especially on financial aspects.”)

Lastly, Participant 19 shared positivity in her lines, *“I was not able to suffer much financially because there are other resources aside from my salary. God provides everything we need.”*

The study provides an expressive indication of the lives of solo parents. It showcases the importance of supportive environments, the complexities of societal attitudes, and the remarkable resilience and adaptability of those navigating this unique journey. The findings emphasize the need for continued efforts to foster empathy, understanding, and practical support for solo parents, ensuring they are equipped with the resources and acceptance they deserve.

Supporting solo parents is necessary to ensure a safe and happy well-being. That is why, ¹¹Haudar et al., (2016) conducted a phenomenological study on their journey, challenges, and prospects. Responses from

the participants show that solo parents prioritize recreation or bonding with their children to overcome loneliness. These include going to church, engaging in enjoyable activities, and chatting with them. The participants considered recreation as vital to fighting any emotional constraints.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses of the twenty solo parents were presented and interpreted in this section. These data were scrutinized with utmost care to formulate the conclusions and provide the recommendations, which are vital parts of this chapter.

Key Concepts

This phenomenological study which explores the journey of solo parents aims to provide salient and updated information about the plight of what society branded as modern-day heroes. This research encapsulates the bulk of data from the twenty solo parents of Sta. Magdalena, a fifth-class municipality in the province of Sorsogon. Through questionnaires and interviews, the researcher was able to collect pertinent information to concretize thoughts and impressions about the participants.

In essence, the central concepts in this study include part and parcels of the lived experiences of solo parents in four aspects such as child rearing, social acceptance, financial stability, and emotional stability. In this phase, the researcher identified significant encounters of the 20 participants through their active participation in the interview conducted. Also, distinctive themes came out highlighting the diverse reactions and answers, as they embark on the journey. Additionally, this phenomenological study identified the achievements of solo parents which centers on how they manage to raise children, treat social stigma, face financial difficulties, and deal with emotional constraints.

Furthermore, the researcher successfully determined challenges and issues encountered by solo parents in parenthood, recognized emotional set-up, overcame financial strains, and weighed social pressures. Also, this research discovered the implication of solo parent status in realizing their identity and self-esteem.

Remarkably, this study paved the way for the completion of the system framework which aims to resolve issues and conflicts based on the findings. For instance, the need for parenting workshops, public campaigns, financial literacy programs, and income diversification was considered by the researcher to assist solo parents as they get on the journey of parenthood.

Research Questions

This phenomenological study on the lived experiences of solo parents aimed to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the lived experiences of solo parents in terms of:
 2. Child rearing
 3. Social acceptance
 4. Financial stability
 5. Emotional stability
- a. What are the significant milestones of solo parents regarding:
 6. Child rearing
 7. Social acceptance
 8. Financial stability
 9. Emotional stability
- a. What are the challenges and issues of solo parents:

10. Child rearing
11. Social acceptance
12. Financial stability
13. Emotional stability
- a. How does solo parent status affect their identity and self-esteem in terms of:
 14. Child rearing
 15. Social acceptance
 16. Financial stability
 17. Emotional stability
- a. What system framework for solo parents could be designed to assist and support them toward a successful parenting journey?

Research Process

The completion of this phenomenological study commenced with the initiative of the researcher for the approval of the research title. During the title defense, the panel members were convinced of the importance of this study because of its relevance not only to the participants but to the community in general. Through constant advice and supervision by the research adviser, the researcher was able to conceptualize the variables that comprised this study.

Since there was a need to consider the related literature and studies, the researcher browsed books and online reading materials to determine the focus of this phenomenological study. Interestingly, the researcher discovered that there were limited numbers of research that centered on determining the impact of solo parenting in child rearing, emotional stability, financial stability, and social acceptance. By checking and ensuring the availability of references, the researcher was enlightened and guided on his next steps to complete this paper.

Moreover, to gather pertinent data for this book, the researcher prepared a set of questions or interview questions that guided her on the information she needed for the discussion and interpretation. Luckily with the help of her research adviser, she was able to craft a tool that would elicit insights from the participants. In line with this, she also submitted a letter of permission to the Dean of Graduate Studies for the conduct of the said study.

Moreover, since there is a need to identify the participants in this phenomenological study, the researcher visited the office of the DSWD in the municipality of Santa Magdalena to ask for the complete list of solo parents in the locality. Through purposive sampling, the researcher identified twenty out of fifty-three solo parents from the different barangays in the municipality. To wit, these barangays included Barangay 1, 2, 3, and 4, San Roque, San Rafael, San Eugenio, and San Bartolome.

During data gathering, some of the participants were not confident enough for a face-to-face encounter with the researcher. Consequently, to extract the lived experiences of solo parents, they were allowed to answer the questions through writing. In that manner, the participants were given a chance to share their encounters and at the same time practiced ethical considerations in research, because the topic itself needs to be taken seriously, with the utmost care, and confidentiality. After four months of thorough collection of data, the researcher successfully compiled them and scrutinized every response of the participants. She had effectively identified emerging themes from participants' responses which enabled her to present, discuss, and interpret data.

This phenomenological study underwent a careful, systematic, and comprehensive process to explore the lived experiences of solo parents in the locality. With ample time and unquestionable dedication of auth-

rities and the active involvement of the participants, this study was made possible.

Findings:

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, the salient findings of the study are as follows:

1. Solo parents face unique challenges in their daily lives. Here are their lived experiences in terms of child-rearing, social acceptance, financial stability, and emotional well-being: Solo parents often juggle multiple roles, acting as both caregiver and provider. They face the demands of parenting alone, from homework assistance to emotional support. Despite the challenges, many solo parents exhibit remarkable resilience, finding creative ways to nurture and guide their children. Solo parents may encounter societal judgment or stigma. Their status as solo parents can lead to feelings of isolation or exclusion. Some solo parents find solace in support groups or communities that understand their experiences. Managing finances single-handedly can be overwhelming. Balancing work, childcare, and bills are constant struggle. Solo parents often develop resourcefulness, seeking assistance from government programs, charities, or part-time work. Solo parenting can be emotionally isolating. Loneliness, lack of companionship, and emotional support can take a toll. Prioritizing self-care becomes essential. Solo parents learn to manage stress, seek counseling, and build resilience.
2. Becoming a solo parent often starts with the birth of a child. The early years involve sleepless nights, diaper changes, and learning to navigate parenthood alone. Sending their child to school marks a significant step. Solo parents attend parent-teacher meetings, help with homework, and support their child's education. Adolescence brings new milestones—first crushes and navigating emotional ups and downs. Solo parents guide their teens through these experiences. Accepting their role as a solo parent is a crucial milestone. It involves overcoming stigma and embracing their unique family structure. Connecting with other solo parents or seeking professional counseling signifies progress. Finding acceptance within these networks is essential. Securing stable employment is a significant milestone. Solo parents work hard to provide for their children and achieve financial independence. Learning to manage finances efficiently—budgeting, saving, and planning for emergencies—marks progress toward stability. Recognizing the importance of self-care is a milestone. Solo parents prioritize mental and emotional well-being. Reaching out for emotional support, whether through friends, therapy, or support groups, is a positive step.
3. Solo parents often struggle with managing time effectively. Balancing work, household chores, and parenting responsibilities can be overwhelming. Lack of emotional support can impact child rearing. Solo parents may feel isolated, affecting their ability to provide consistent emotional guidance. Juggling multiple roles can lead to exhaustion and burnout, affecting their patience and ability to be present for their children. Solo parents still face societal stigma. Judgment or exclusion due to their family structure can affect their self-esteem and well-being. Feeling alone or misunderstood can impact mental health. Building a support network is crucial for combating isolation. Single parents often operate on a smaller budget. Balancing childcare costs, housing, and other expenses can be challenging. Managing finances alone can lead to stress. Debt, unexpected expenses, and lack of savings can exacerbate financial instability. Solo parents may experience loneliness due to the absence of a partner. Isolation can impact mental health. Juggling responsibilities alone can lead to self-doubt and anxiety about parenting abilities. Feeling guilty about not doing enough or being overwhelmed by responsibilities can affect emotional well-being.
4. Solo parents struggled with their identity as they transitioned from being part of a couple to being the sole caregiver. Their self-concept may shift, and they might feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of

raising children alone. Successfully managing child rearing can boost self-esteem. However, challenges like time constraints and emotional stress may affect their confidence. Solo parents may face societal stigma or judgment due to their family structure. Feeling accepted by others positively influences self-esteem. Lack of social acceptance can lead to feelings of isolation and lower self-worth. Managing finances alone can shape a solo parent's identity. They may feel empowered by their ability to provide but also stressed by financial constraints. Financial stability contributes to self-esteem. Struggling financially may lead to feelings of inadequacy or stress. Emotional resilience is crucial for solo parents. They must navigate loneliness, self-doubt, and stress. Their identity may evolve as they learn to cope. Emotional stability directly affects self-esteem. Coping effectively and seeking support positively impacts their self-worth.

5. *A System Framework for Solo Parents: Building a Foundation of Support and Success* was designed to assist and support them toward a successful parenting journey. This output consists of five phases: The Future: Planning for the Long Term, The Mindset: Cultivating Resilience and Strength, The Resources: Building a Support System, The Foundation: Self Care and Wellbeing, and The Structure: Organization, and Routine.

Conclusions:

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Solo parents, facing unique challenges, juggle multiple roles as caregivers and providers, exhibit resilience despite societal judgment, seek support, manage finances single-handedly, and prioritize self-care to combat loneliness and build resilience.
2. Becoming a solo parent involves navigating parenthood alone, from sleepless nights and diaper changes to supporting a child's education, guiding them through adolescence, overcoming stigma, securing stable employment, managing finances, and prioritizing self-care for mental and emotional well-being.
3. Solo parents face numerous challenges, including managing time effectively, balancing work, household chores, and parenting responsibilities, coping with emotional isolation, combating societal stigma, operating on a smaller budget, and dealing with loneliness and self-doubt related to parenting abilities.
4. Solo parents transitioning from couplehood to sole caregiving struggled with identity shifts, feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities, and facing societal stigma. Successfully managing child-rearing boosts self-esteem, but time constraints and emotional stress can impact confidence. Social acceptance positively influences self-worth, while financial constraints shape identity. Emotional resilience and effective coping impact self-esteem.
5. *A System Framework for Solo Parents: Building a Foundation of Support and Success* is an effective basis and guide for solo parents to keep track, assist, and support their journey in solo parenting.

Recommendations

From the emerging themes and findings, the following recommendations were formulated:

1. Solo parents be encouraged to actively build a robust support network, seeking assistance from family, friends, and community resources.
2. Solo parents who are embarking on a challenging journey be supported to establish a comprehensive support system.
3. Solo parents be given a tangible support program on how to navigate the multifaceted challenges of prioritizing time management and self-care.

4. Government programs be given to solo parents to prioritize self-care and seek emotional support.
5. Solo parents be encouraged to utilize the output of this study, *A System Framework for Solo Parents: Building a Foundation of Support and Success* to support and assist them in hurdling the challenges of solo parenting.

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