

Narrative of Endurance: The Difficulties of Single Parents in Raising Children and Their Coping Techniques

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Abstract: *The main purpose of the study was to understand the narrative of endurance and the difficulties of single parents in raising children and their coping techniques. This study was conducted in the year 2021-2022, in Barangay Improgo Banga, South Cotabato. The method used in this study was descriptive qualitative design using the Key Informant Interview (KII). The study sample consisted of four (4) single parents which had one (1) male and three (3) females. The theoretical lens that was used in this study was Parent Role Development Theory (1991), Goffman's Stigmatization Theory (1963), and Richard S. Lazarus Coping Theory (1966). The present study focused on single parents' difficulties encountered in raising children, their coping techniques, as well as the life lessons they learned as single parents. The results of this study revealed that the challenges faced by single parents are financial problems, emotional distress, and dealing with children's misbehavior. On other hand, the study revealed that single parents utilized coping techniques such that, single parents grabbed work opportunities, maintained self-care, spending quality time with children and establishing and finding a support system. Lastly, this study reveals that single parents possess a striving attitude regardless of their status quo. This study would serve as the basis for Sociology practice to contribute therapeutically in terms of educating, empowering single parents, practical assistance, and social networking to better their lives, and those of their children.*

Key Words: *Sociology, Difficulties, Coping Techniques, Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION:

According to World Vision Philippines (2019), reasons for becoming a single parent include desertion, annulment, abandonment, death of a partner, teenage pregnancy, childbirth by a single woman or single-person adoption. Single parents are those who are left to raise their children alone because of the absence of a spouse. Furthermore, financial hardship, less quality time with children, poor academic performance of children, societal stigma, and child custody are common challenges faced by single parents. Single parents become the primary caregiver to their children, economic provider, and sole decision maker in the family (Simon et al., 2010).

In coping with the challenges problem solving skills, personal resources, self-care, social support and spiritual guidance all influence a single-parent family's ability to cope. Coping techniques attempt to displace the stress or discomfort. It helps find ways in order for single parents to relieve their stressors in shouldering dual responsibilities (Chester, 2010). The present study focused on single parents difficulties encountered in raising children and their coping techniques. As a Sociology student, the researcher was motivated to extend her sympathy and empathy toward single-parent families. Also, this study inspired the researcher in helping to empower the role of the single parents in communities and society by using this study the participants stand as the voices of those other single parents as eye-openers for them not to lose hope in facing challenges in their lives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

This chapter presents the related literature and studies which the researcher finds useful in the development of the study.

According to Saarni (2011), single parenthood has a variety of causes, which typically influence how society regards it. For instance, becoming a single parent after the loss of one partner is typically accepted. However, it does not take on the associated obligations. In contrast, single parenthood brought by separation has difficulties integrating into society in addition to having more duties.

Struggling with money while being a single parent is common. Due to the fact that only one parent worked and assumed the responsibilities of two, single-parent households are more likely to be low-income households. As a result,

the family is more likely to be in financial difficulty, which is the root cause of many of the issues single parents face (Taylor et al., 2013).

Due to their poor income, most single-parent families may find it difficult to pay their bills, buy food, or appropriately provide for their children's educational needs, including computers, books, and other learning aids that will help them learn concepts at home and succeed in school. Additionally, some single-parent households in the Philippines may be unable to provide their children's basic needs due to unemployment. Single parents might not have the chance to take their kids to educational facilities like museums, zoos, learning centers, and other locations to expose them to the topics they study in school (Diyana et al., 2010).

Sociologists believe that single parent families frequently provide less effective parenting and discipline for their children. There are more parents working full-time who are single or without children. For some single parents, doing two jobs is much more difficult. It makes sense that one person would have less time and energy to watch over his or her children and administer discipline if he or she is working and juggling the responsibilities of running the home. The person would have more time and energy if they didn't work as hard. Nobody will argue that it's ideal for kids to live in single-parent households, but it seems obvious that the majority of the negative impacts result not just from the lack of a particular parent but also from the stress on the family's finances (Maldonado et al., 2019).

Due to their simultaneous obligations as mothers and fathers, single parents are rarely present for their kids because they have debts to pay, work to do, and places to be. Children who are already emotionally disturbed by living in a single location start to interpret their parent's absence as a sign of their lack of importance to the latter. They start to perceive themselves as undesirable and much lonelier than before. This worsens their depression and causes them to think only negative things, which is one of the obstacles faced by single parents (Denver, 2018).

In addition to juggling the demands of childcare and work schedules, single parents also have the financial burden of running a household by themselves. It can be quite difficult for single parents to balance the same tasks as dual-working-parent households while still having to take on their own responsibilities. Additionally, there is conflict between the desire to be a good parent and spend time with their children and the necessity of working to pay the bills. Without a domestic partner to share the load, single parents have a lot to do (Lamanna, 2012).

According to Doyle (2019), the education and professional development of children is essentially the responsibility of their parents. When both parents are involved in their children's education, academic achievement improves. Married parents are more likely to be involved in their children's education than single parents. Parent involvement in their children's academic pursuits is most likely to have a favorable impact on their academic performance.

Compared to children who live with both parents, children raised in single-parent households receive less parental involvement in their schooling. This is the negative void that the dissolution of the family leaves in the child's life. Being a child from a single-parent household is incredibly difficult and stressful, and they may experience difficulties in school. In other words, they are unlikely to perform to the standards set by the school due to their frequent absenteeism (truancy) from school and extracurricular activities, reduced capacity to function in school, violence-related behaviors, emotional problems, low attention span in class, personality disorder, stress, etc (Smith, 2019).

In order to support their family and make ends meet, the majority of single parents put in numerous hours at work. They frequently lack sufficient time to complete all of their tasks. As a result, kids may feel abandoned and alone as they grow older. Poor performance at school or with homework may result from this lack of supervision. When kids get older, they'll inevitably have bad work ethics and struggle to keep a job. Additionally, it's possible that they don't get as much academic support or don't know how to use their academic strengths. Overall job dissatisfaction and a failure to discover one's true "calling" in life are the effects of this (Lawson, 2018 as cited by Cobato, 2018). Single-parenthood is one distinguishing attribute that might lead to discrimination or societal stigma. In connection with that, single parents experience humiliation, dread, low self-esteem, anxiety, a sense of desperation, stress, and guilt (Cruz, 2017).

The countless stereotypes that society holds about single parents have a detrimental effect on the lives of these people. The idea that single parent homes are dysfunctional because there are no other adults in the home to help with kid discipline is one of the prejudices that single parents must contend with (Carroll, 2019). As they strive to raise their children like other families, single-parent households must overcome a number of obstacles. In some societies where they are despised and rejected, they also experience stigmatization. How to integrate into society with their family is one of the hardest issues that single parents face. The majority of society only acknowledge married couples as capable of raising children in an efficient manner. Additionally, children feel alone in educational settings as others adore both parents while they gape in awe at them (DePaullo, 2020).

Parenting is a challenging job, and single parents may find it more tough than parents who have a spouse, domestic partner, or other family members nearby to support them. Maintaining employment may be necessary for a

single parent to support their children. Unfortunately, prioritizing a job over a child's safety might lead to loss of custody (Duran, 2019).

Single parents face difficulties with regard to visitation, paying child support, and shared custody of their children, among other things. In the Philippines, families are regarded as a unit even if the parents are not married or are no longer together. The law aims to protect the safety and welfare of the child whose status is defined by the law as being illegitimate, in the event that their relationship does not work out. Illegitimate children automatically fall under the mother's sole parental authority and custody (Perez, 2019).

It doesn't matter how old the child is or whether the father acknowledged paternity and gave his agreement for the child to use his surname. In the strictest sense, the mother's sole custody of the child entails that the father cannot override her when it comes to crucial choices involving the child. With the mother's permission, the father has the right to visitations and occasionally temporary custody of the child. Typically, visitation arrangements are made confidentially and with consideration for the child's needs by both parents. When the child is old enough to comprehend the situation, he may have a say in it because there are no specific legal requirements (Rivera, 2018).

According to Broussard et al. (2012), the individual and collective strengths or assets that make up the single-parent family's coping resources are different from the family's coping practices, which are the things that family members actually do, think, and feel when using these resources. To protect the family from the demands of stressful encounters, lessen the sources of stress or bad emotions, and promote harmony in family functioning are the objectives of coping mechanisms.

The amount of personal resources a person has will affect how well they can handle difficult circumstances. A single-parent family is less likely to see their status as a problem if they have enough personal resources at their disposal. Financial, educational, health, and psychological resources are the fundamental parts of personal resources. A person's capacity to address difficulties is facilitated by educational resources. Self-esteem and personality traits are psychological resources. Health includes the material and physical well-being of family members (McCubbin et al., 2010).

Social support can be characterized as people, organizations, or institutions that offer aid to other people in order to help them cope with challenges that put a burden on their resources. Financial, emotional, educational, material, formal, and informal help are only a few of the many major categories of social support. Individuals (family, friends, neighbors, relatives, coworkers) and groups are examples of informal sources of support (religious organizations, single-parent organizations). Professional helpers (doctors, social workers, counselors) and organizations are included in the official support (government intervention programs). In single-parent households, seeking social support has been favorably correlated with family strength and increased family confidence (Thompson, 2010).

Religion is one of the best indicators of how people would react emotionally. Since spirituality can mean different things to different people, it is challenging to describe. These consist of trust in fellow humans, moral conduct, care for others, or communication with a higher power. "Spirituality aids people in appreciating what they are unable to control for themselves." People find spiritual support through prayer, reading, religious activities, affiliation with groups, and attendance at religious services. The most frequently mentioned coping mechanism among parents is faith and religion, and some use religious reframing to change their perspective and make the situation more manageable. Some single parents may perceive the challenging circumstance through the lens of religion, which provides moral guidelines and a sense of stability as an opportunity for spiritual growth (Pearce et al., 2010).

Effectiveness of Coping Techniques in Relieving Difficulties

According to Caver et al. (2013), coping mechanisms enable single parents to manage their stress in an appropriate way. These coping mechanisms make an effort to shift the stress or discomfort. It aids in figuring out solutions for single parents to reduce the stress caused by juggling two obligations. In an effort to preserve mental health and emotional well-being, coping mechanisms are used in reaction to psychological stress, which is typically brought on by changes.

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All coping methods have the positive and healthy adaptive purpose of lowering or managing stress, however certain coping mechanisms might actually be maladaptive (unhealthy) or just useless. Maladaptive habits prevent a person from being able to adapt to a given environment. Although this kind of action is frequently utilized to lessen anxiety, the outcome is dysfunctional and unproductive. However, many people also employ proactive coping techniques to reduce or avoid stressors before they materialize. The term "coping" typically refers to dealing with the

stress that results after a stressor is introduced. The sort of coping mechanism that an individual chooses depends on their personality, the environment they are in, and the type of stressor they are dealing with (Hepworth et al., 2013).

Coping styles are a collection of largely consistent features that influence how an individual responds to stress and are used to describe the various ways in which people deal with stressors. Over time and in various contexts, these remain constant. The two types of coping that are typically distinguished are proactive coping and reactive coping (a response to the stressor) (aiming to neutralize future stressors). As a result of their greater routine, rigidity, and lack of reactivity to stimuli, proactive people function better in stable circumstances, whereas reactive people do better in more unpredictable ones (Algorani et al., 2021).

3. MATERIALS:

After the interviews, the data provided by the participants was analyzed and transcribed. Upon analyzing and transcribing the data, the researcher employed the methods introduced by Moustakas (1994) and Colaizzi (1978). This method is commonly used in descriptive qualitative design and involves seven steps. First, by reading and rereading the participants' descriptions of the phenomenon to acquire a feeling for their experience and to make general sense of their experience. Second, by extracting significant statements that pertain directly to the phenomenon under study. Third, formulating meanings for these significant statements to illuminate hidden meanings. Fourth, categorizing the meanings into clusters of themes and confirming consistency between the emerging findings and the participants' stories without giving in to the temptation to ignore data that does not "fit". Fifth, integrating the findings into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study; this includes coding segments of text for topics, comparing topics for consistent themes, and bridging themes for their conceptual meanings. Sixth, validating the findings by returning to the study participants for them to check the accuracy of the given data that was interpreted in the transcribed paper. And seventh, incorporating any changes offered by the participants into the final description of the phenomenon.

4. METHOD:

This study utilized descriptive qualitative design. In the data gathering, Key Informant Interview (KII) was used. Furthermore, the data analysis of the study was based on the study of Colaizzi (1978) as considered by Moustakas (1994) and Groenewald (2004). According to Kumar (2011), a descriptive qualitative design is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on describing a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or program, or provides information about, say, the living conditions of a community, or describes attitudes towards an issue.

5. DISCUSSION:

This chapter presents the summary of the phenomena, insights and implications based on the insights drawn in the descriptive qualitative study of the difficulties of single parents in raising children and their coping techniques.

A. The Difficulties of Single Parents Face in Raising Their Children

This study was able to draw out several difficulties single-parents face in raising their children. This study revealed that single parents faced challenges as they shouldered multiple responsibilities where they acted the role as both instrumental leaders and expressive leaders of their families. As seen in the responses of the participants, the challenges faced by single-parents are the financial problems, emotional distress, juggling of priorities and dealing with children's misbehavior.

B. Coping Techniques Utilized by the Single Parents to Cope the Difficulties

This study was able to draw out several coping techniques utilized by the single parents for the difficulties encountered in raising children. It was a good idea that despite the fact that single parents encounter challenges in managing household responsibilities and raising their children, they have techniques that help them in coping up with those challenges. First, single parents grabbed work opportunities to earn an additional income in order for them to cope up with their problems financially. Second, single parents maintained self-care despite the juggling of priorities. Another thing, they gave an undivided attention with their children during their vacant hours through spending quality time, that way, the child feels that they are being given importance so this prevented from triggering of child's misbehavior. And third, single parents cope up with their challenges by establishing and finding a support system.

C. Life Lessons Learned by Single Parent in Facing Difficulties in Raising Their Children

This study was able to draw out the life lessons learned by single parents in facing difficulties in raising their children. This study revealed that Filipino single parents nurtured a positive character despite the difficulties they encountered. Further, single-parents are known to be resilient, this is an expression of a single parent's determination and perseverance in taking the roles of a mother and father. Thus, it is the willingness of the single parent to sacrifice and to endure challenges, because they have to be strong and have to believe in themselves, in order to accomplish

things that can help them and their children survive. Having said that, being a single parent is not easy, it is one of the toughest jobs in the world. It takes a lot of work, dedication, and love, but most of all it requires the law of attraction; a strong sense of determination, and trust in one's ability. Single parents have to face by themselves a set of difficult problems, yet they manage to do impressive things just by following their heart and intuition.

Implication for Future Research

This descriptive qualitative study on the difficulties of single parents in raising children and their coping techniques. Being exploratory and interpretative in nature, this study raises a number of opportunities for future research in terms of theory development. More research is in fact necessary to define, redefine, and further elaborate findings for future and more learning. Considering the result and the processes that this study has gone through, this implies that: First, this study offers the opportunity to refine and define the challenges encountered by single parents in raising their children and their coping techniques. Through this, the future research will help single parents to appreciate themselves more despite the difficulties they faced in raising their children, and keep on being mindful of their time in order for them to prevent them from neglecting their own children and would keep them motivated to provide nurture and structure that their children need. Second, this study would serve as a basis for future research to examine how the difficulties encountered by single parents affects themselves, to their children and how they create interrelationships with other people in communities and societies. Lastly, this study would serve as reference material for conducting research similar to this study. This would provide valuable information that can be used to extend existing supporting details for a role in practice.

6. ANALYSIS:

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7. FINDINGS:

According to the study's findings, single parents confront difficult obstacles in their capacity as the family's head since they must juggle a number of responsibilities, including acting as their children's managers and teachers in addition to providing for the family's financial needs. Additionally, because only one parent assumes responsibility for supporting the family financially, houses with single parents are more likely to be low-income homes. As a result of having to pay their expenses, work, and go to various locations, single parents are rarely available for their kids, which leaves them with little free time. Children start to think that their parent's absence is an indication that they won't matter in the future in this scenario. This A child's feelings of inadequacy, guilt, shame, lack of self-worth, anxiety, and dread are all brought on by resentment. Furthermore, single parents experience stigmatization in some societies, where they are shunned, disapproved of, and treated poorly. The stereotype that single parent homes are dysfunctional because there are no partners to share daily tasks or make family decisions is one of the stereotypes that single parents must contend with. The development of coping mechanisms by single parents to deal with the challenges of parenting their children alone was therefore a sensible idea. According to this study, a single-parent family's coping mechanisms are made up of all of its resources, including its members' individual and communal strengths.

Through this study, it is overwhelming to realize that single parents must perform the duties of two people, as they lack a partner to share the burden of the stressful times. However, single parents have an impressive inner confidence that is contagious, they always know what to do and how to do it, and they are never willing to give up when times get tough.

8. RESULT:

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the Key Informant Interview (KII) generated data. In the process of identifying the themes, the researcher transcribed the audio version of the gathered data from the interview.

These were utilized in the response to the main research questions on the difficulties encountered by single parents residing in Barangay Improgo Banga, South Cotabato in raising their children and their coping techniques.

Participants

There were 4 (four) single parents residing in Barangay Improgo Banga, South Cotabato who underwent the Key Informant Interview (KII). The four participants were selected based on the following criteria; they were identified as single parents, they shoulder dual responsibilities as mother and father to their children, and they have 5-15 years of experience as single parents. Moreover, code was assigned to each participant to maintain confidentiality.

Riza is a 40 years old single mother living in Barangay Improgo Banga, South Cotabato. 13 years ago, she had been separated from her partner when their child was just three years old. Since then, she raised her child alone. Now, her child is 16 years old.

Randy is a 32 years old single father living in Barangay Improgo Banga South, Cotabato. Six years ago, he had been separated from his partner when their child was just one-year-old. Since then, he has raised his child alone. Now, his child is 7 years old.

Glory is a 30 years old single mother living in Barangay Improgo Banga, South Cotabato. She was a raped victim 15 years ago. Since then, she raised her child alone with the guidance of her parents. Now, her child is 15 years old.

Marlyn is a 46 years old single mother of a child with down syndrome living in Barangay Improgo Banga, South Cotabato. Nine years ago, her husband died due to cardiomyopathy. Their child was only 10 years old at that time. Since then, she raised her child alone. Now, her child is 19 years old.

Since there were several significant statements that were extracted from the transcript of the interview, the researcher ensured that the statements were relevant to the study. The organization of the findings in this chapter was based on the themes which significantly answered the research questions.

I. THE DIFFICULTIES OF SINGLE PARENTS AND THEIR COPING COPING TECHNIQUES.

A. What difficulties do single parents face in raising their children?

Table 1 presents the different difficulties that the single parents encountered in raising their children.

TABLE 1. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY SINGLE PARENTS

| Emergent Themes | Cluster Themes |
|--|--|
| 1.1 Financial problem | • Financial insufficiency for sustaining needs |
| | • Inadequate Income due to Pandemic |
| 1.2 Emotional distress | • Faces Depression |
| | • Encounters frustration; develops anxieties |
| | • Social prejudice and discrimination |
| 1.3 Juggling of Priorities | • Pre-occupied with too much work resulting to less time with child |
| | • Balancing work and child tending |
| 1.4 Dealing with Children’s Misbehavior | • Feeling of Inadequacy |
| | • Difficulty in managing child behavior and discipline |

FINANCIAL PROBLEM

Participants pointed out that the parent who took the primary custodial responsibility for the children was construed to be the parent with the primary financial problem. Financial sufficiency for sustaining needs as described by the participant is one of the difficulties faced by a single parent.

“...Bilang single parent, ang... ang mabudlay financial needs kailangan mo gid na matus-tusan. Amo na...”(Riza:P1/17-20)

(As a single parent, the...the hardest part is the financial needs, you have to provide for them. That’s why...)

Almost all of the people, especially single parents, encountered insufficient income due to the pandemic. As shared by the participant, he cannot deny the fact that the pandemic affected his financial stability to support his family alone.

“...kaso hindi gid malikayan nga pigado gid labi na subong oh nag pandemic perti gid ka crisis...”(Randy:P2/134-135)
(...In this case, it is an inevitable financial predicament, especially this pandemic, it is such a crisis).

EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

In dealing with multiple responsibilities as economic provider of the family, sole decision maker and caregiver of the children, it is inevitable to encounter emotional distress. The participant shared that she faced depression.

“Daw na depressed ko sito nga time maam eh...”(Glory:P3/75)
(I feel depressed that time, ma’am...)

A participant expressed that out of her frustration her anxiety developed throughout her difficulties. In addition to her response, she can’t avoid holding her tears in front of her co-teachers because of the burden and hardship her heart felt as light and pillar of the family. At the same time, being worried about her child’s future, if ever the time comes that she will lose her strength because she was the only one who cares for her child.

“Daw frustrated gid ko abi maam... Nag hibi ko sadto, gin hibi ko gid. Bal-an sang iban na co-teachers ko kung paano ko nag hiriribion. Kay as in kapoy2x na gid ko maam. Aminon ko gaka loss control ko sometimes...ako lang daan isa mo, nanay tatay ka sa bata ko. Gina himo ko tanan para may pang sustain lang gid ko sa mga needs niya. Pero hindi man madula sa utok ko kung kis-a nga paano na lang kaya siya... ang bata ko... kung madula ko, kung kuhaon na sang Ginoo kami nga gaalaga saiya kay bal-an namun nga kami lang may ara siya ma’am mo.”(Marlyn: P4/136-143)
(I feel so frustrated, ma’am... I was crying, I was sobbing. Some of my colleagues knew how I cried that time. Because I was exhausted ma’am. I admit that I lose control sometimes... I am alone, I am a father and a mother at the same time to my child. I’m doing everything I can just to sustain all his needs. But, sometimes I am thinking how my child will be, if I am not around anymore, if God takes me and those who take care of my child knowing that we are everything my child has).

Moreover, a participant shared that she was a rape victim. She faced environmental prejudice and discrimination through gossip she heard from her neighbors where she was being judged and degraded that she and her child had no future.

“...hindi gid malikayan nga damo gid ko mabatian nga chismis diri sa palibot namun nga disgrasyada nga babae, nga amo na iya bata bata ka rapist. Tapos amo na, ano na lang bwas damlag ko?”(Glory:P3/59-61)
(It is unavoidable that I hear people talking around about me being a disgraced woman, and that my child is a child of a rapist. Then, how can I have a future with that?)

JUGGLING OF PRIORITIES

Preoccupied with too much work resulting in less time with a child was one of the difficulties she faced as a single parent since she played the roles as economic provider and primary caregiver of her children. In addition to her response, she felt bothered by the times her child was nagging by having less time for her child.

“Pero daw nakita ko na nag siya kag nag sabat... “wala ka na sang panahon sa akon permi ka man lang siling niya abi sa trabaho”... ang sabat niya nga wala daw sang gasapak saiya tapos inang wala man daw siya pamangkutan kung diri lang daw siya sa balay amo na nga naga out siya kag mag upod sa barkada, kay amo lang daw na ang maka... makabulig saiya nga hindi siya masyado malungkot sa dira sa kwan dira... sa balay, kay permi lang daw ako sa ubra wala daw ako panahon para saiya”.(Riza:P1/45-52)
(But I saw him nagging and he said “you have no time for me because you are always at work”... I have nothing to talk to in this house so I’d rather go and hang out with my peers... He also added that his peers help him to ease his boredom, since I am always at work and I have no time for him...).

A participant shared that the juggling of priorities was unavoidable as a single parent. He was a tricycle driver and while earning a living he sacrifices to take his with him while working because there’s no one left at home to take care of his son.

“Oo kay gamay pa bata ko ga sakripisyo sa... kung dalhon dalhon ko siya sa pag drive sang tricycle mo... dira ko siya gina pasakay sa may gasolinador bala haw... te...wala man may mag bantay mo”.(Randy:P2/57-59)
(Yes, he’s still a young boy but I sacrificed... bringing him with me driving a tricycle... He will always sit on top at the gasoline tank... because nobody’s around in the house to tend for him).

In addition, managing and balancing time with work, child care and other tasks can be very tough. Participants experience juggling of priorities without the assistance from a partner. She needs to work out necessities for her family’s needs. Additionally, she needs to give quality attention to child care.

“Before ko mag kadto sa work gina make sure ko anay nga maasikaso ko anay siya sa morning, tapos every pag puli ko amo man. Bisan tambak ang hilimuon, pero dapat abi na saila is may ara ka gid proper attention nga mahatag saila ba.”(Marlyn:P4/28-31)

(Before I go to work, I make sure that I tend to all her needs before going out early in the morning. Then, every time I come home; I still tend to her despite having a lot of work chores to do, but it is important for children that you should give them proper attention).

DEALING WITH CHILDREN’S MISBEHAVIOR

Moreover, the participant confessed that he encountered challenges in terms of his child’s misbehavior. Consequently, the child felt inadequacy, a feeling of emptiness of care of one’s mother so this was the reason that leads a child into misbehave.

“Isa ka beses may ara parlor games ba... kailangan kumpleto ang... kumpleto may nanay, tatay kag bata, gusto niya mag sali te ang... te kay hindi pwede kay ako lang man. Nag maoy, nag hibi...” (Randy:P2/81-84)

(One time, there was a parlor game... and the game...requires a mother, a father and a child... he wanted to join, but we can’t because we are not complete. He threw tantrums, he cried ...)

Participant said that there are times that her child loses temper when they are in the mall. That is why as a single parent one of her difficulties was managing child behavior and discipline.

“Dugay kami nakahalin kay gin waswas niya gid sarili niya sa sulod mall, as in halos nag lumpasay gid siya sa floor... nag maoy gid siya ya...”(Marlyn: P4/111-113)

(It took us a long time to leave the mall because we took a whole tour inside, as if she wanted to stay there for good... she even threw a tantrum ...)

B. What are the techniques do single parents utilize to cope with the difficulties?

TABLE 2. COPING TECHNIQUES UTILIZED BY THE SINGLE PARENTS TO COPE THE DIFFICULTIES

| Emergent Themes | Cluster Themes |
|--|---|
| 2.1 Earning Additional Income | • Engage in online business |
| | • Grab work opportunities such as driving tricycle and do carpentry works |
| | • Engage in part-time works such as online selling and as a helper in buy and sell store |
| 2.2 Invest Time with Care | • Visit beauty salon and avail manicure and pedicure services |
| | • Spend leisure time with child by eating in fast food restaurant and visiting amusement areas |
| 2.3 Establishing and Finding a Support System | • Parental encouragement and assistance |
| | • Family’s support and comfort |
| | • Support from organization |
| | • Faith in God |

EARNING ADDITIONAL INCOME

Filipinos are known to be resourceful in every way possible, so the participants pointed out that by earning additional income through engaging in online business during their vacation time was one of their coping techniques in order for them to sustain their family needs.

“...gina cope ko ang akon nga mga... labi na finances na siya naga pursigi gid ako nga... naga ano ako sa...naga tutok ako sa online business every time sang akon nga day off.”(Riza:P1/94-96)
(I cope up... I worked hard especially for our finances... I focused on my online business every time during my day off.)

Financial strain is inevitable in single-parent households since only one income comes into the house. So, the participant shared that during the day she works in a buy and sell establishment as a helper while at night she sells online as a side-hustle.

“Sa buy and sell ako naga ubra helper ako didto tapos kung gab-i bilang diskarte nga pagka nanay maka dugang sa income ko naga live selling ako ng online selling bala.”(Glory:P3/128-130)
(I worked as a helper in the buy and sell and then every night I found ways to have additional income, so I do live selling on online selling.)

The participant expressed willingness to sacrifice and endure all the challenges that come along, regardless of its nature. In addition to his response, he grabbed work opportunities such as driving a tricycle, and sometimes accepting carpentry work for another additional income.

“Naga tricycle driver ako. Tapos kung kaisa naga extra ko labor kung may ipa ubra nga ginagmay nga palandayan ah...”(Randy:P2/130-131)
(I am a tricycle driver. Then, sometimes I do some extra labor in carpentry, just like some light work).

INVEST TIME WITH CARE

Since a single parent has to put double the efforts in raising a child, practicing self-care like according to the participant visiting in beauty salon and avail manicure and pedicure services is of utmost importance and should be included in the lists of priority.

“Sa tuod lang maam every mag batyag ako nga naga pop up naman ang stress ko... ang fatigue ko... dayun...dayun ko sina kadto sa salon gapa manicure, pedicure ako...”(Marlyn:P4/180-182)
(Actually ma'am, every time I feel like my stress is going to pop out...and fatigue...I'll cope with it by going to a salon to do my nails).

In addition, spending quality time helps children feel secure and loved. Participants shared that strong relationships with a child are built in the moments that every single parent creates a bond with them, like spending leisure time with a child by eating in a fast food restaurant and visiting amusement areas.

“...gina lagaw-lagaw ko na siya didto sa mall... ang permi gid namun nga destenasyon kay sa World of Fun... nan... lipay-lipay gid na siya tapos bago kami mag puli... pag mag tulok na siya sa akon kag mag ngisi-ngisi bal-an ko nana meaning sina Jollibee... te makaon kami sina didto eh sang paborito niya.”(Randy:P2/146-150)
(We always stroll around the mall...our first destination is always World of Fun... right...then, he will always be happy about that...then before we go back home...he will grin at me, I know what it means, it means he wants some Jollibee...and we will go there and have his favorites).

ESTABLISHING AND FINDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM

Establishing and finding support systems helps find ways in order for single parents to eliminate, modify, and manage a difficult situation in shouldering dual responsibilities. Participants shared that parental encouragement and assistance comforted her in facing the challenges as a single parent.

“...gin buligan ako sang akon ginikanan bali sila ang naging sandigan ko sang time nga to. Gin paintindi gid nila sa akon nga kailangan ko atubangon ang kamatuoran kag batunon ang natabo sa akon...”(Glory:P3/84-86)
(...My parents helped me a lot. They were my pillars at that time. They made me understand that I need to face the truth and accept what happened to me).

Moreover, family's support and comfort may help release pent-up feelings, so the participant preferred to open-up her difficulties as a single parent in order for her to release the load of burdens inside her.

“Through sharing, gina open up ko mga burdens ko with mother and to my sister.”(Marlyn:P4/190-191)

(Through sharing, I open up all my burdens to my mother and sister).

Engaging in particular organizations like the organization for single parents help to encourage, educate and empower single parents to rise up and successfully lead their families to become contributing and productive citizens in their communities. The participant knew the importance of having a social support system so she used her free time for establishing and finding a support system through attending seminars or organization for single parents.

“Tapos pag bakante ang oras naga attend ako sa mga seminar sang organization bala sa single parent or ng tipon2 diri sa Barangay.”(Glory:P3/132-133)

(Then, in my free time I always attend our community organization seminar for single parents here in our barangay).

Moreover, applying Filipino values of ‘Maka-Diyos’ (faith in the Almighty) is something that helps single parents keep reminded that He is above all things, and they can able to cope with the challenges that life brings.

“Mag tuo ta sa Mahal nga Diyos.”(Randy:P2/79)

(Let us believe in God).

C. What are the valuable lessons in life gained by single parents in facing difficulties in raising their children?

TABLE 3. LIFE LESSONS LEARNED BY SINGLE PARENTS IN FACING DIFFICULTIES IN RAISING THEIR CHILDREN

| Emergent Themes | Cluster Themes |
|---|--|
| 3.1 Nurturing a Positive Character | • Tenacity; Faith in God’s guidance |
| | • Develop optimism and determination despite prejudice |
| | • Be persistent and determined |
| | • Never lose hope |
| | • Be steadfast and optimistic |
| | • Be Patient and learn how to balance time |
| | • Never resort to vices |
| | • Never get discouraged |
| | • Learn to believe in your self |
| | • Appreciate each other’s company by showing affection and care |

NURTURING A POSITIVE CHARACTER

The participant expressed that tenacity-a faith in God’s guidance helped her and other single parents to stand up against things that threaten them despite the difficulties they faced in raising their children alone. They take action in a way that is consistent with their values.

“...kilanglan maging matapang sila sa pag harap sa maragtas sang kinabuhi kag tapos hindi lang kalimtan nga may ara nga Ginoo nga ga guide gid sa atun para... para sa atun ika ayo.”(Riza:P1/174-176)

(They need to toughen up in facing the hurdles in life then they should never forget that God is there to guide us...for our well-being).

The response from the participant shared that forgiveness, love and moving forward in life are the best things that a single parent should do. Developing optimism and determination despite prejudice keep them looking forward and pushing hard for their dreams. Thus, according to the participant, dreams are the real treasure that every human should have.

“Pag patawad, pag palangga kag pag bangon amo na ang... amo na nga bisan ano na nga husga sang... ang mabatian ko sa palibot namun uhmmm...padayun gyapun sa kabuhi kay may pangarap... kay ang pangarap mo amo na ang tunay nga kayamanan nga may ara kita.”(Glory:P3/172-175)

(Forgiveness, love and perseverance, that’s it...despite the judgements I hear around us, I still persevere in life because of my dreams... because dreams are the real treasure that we have).

The participant shared that being a single-parent one must need to be persistent, and determined. In addition, Filipino single parents are known to be very resilient. This is an expression of a single parent's determination and resilience in child rearing and as a financial provider.

“...kilanglan maging ano kita mapursigi, mag pinisan kita, kag hindi mag pabaya sa sarili...”(Riza:P1/159-160)
(You need to persevere, we need to be diligent and take care of ourselves).

The participant stands as a mother and father to her children. It was her willingness to respond fearlessly despite the difficulties she faced. In addition to her response, being more courageous and not losing hope in life was a big help to respond appropriately to risks and accomplish positive things in life no matter what the hardships are.

“...bilang isa ka ginikanan dapat hindi gid ta madulaan sang pag-laom, bisan ano pa ka budlay sang atun maagyan...”(Randy: P2/190-191)
(...As a parent, you should not to lose your hope, no matter how hard the experiences are...)

The participant expressed that it was the willingness of the single parent to sacrifice and to endure challenges, because they have to be strong and have to believe in themselves. They will be able to accomplish things that can help them and their children survive.

“...samtang buhi ta, gapangabuhi ta diri sa kalibutan ma ahon ta gid sarili ta kag pag ano ta sa earth kung mapa depress2x lang ta permi wala gid may mabulig sa atun ang pag... kung sige lang gid ta ka focus sa negative sa atun kinabuhi, dapat kabalo ta mag lift up sang atun nga sarili bisan despite sa mga naagyan ta sa nakaraan, hindi man ini maayo pero dapat maging strong lang gid ta sa atun kinabuhi...”(Glory:P3/182-186)
(...As long as we are alive in this world, we can pull ourselves up. We can't succumb to depression because nobody will help us except ourselves. If we only focus our energy on the negative things in our life, we should know how to lift ourselves up, despite our past experiences that are not good but we need to be strong in life).

Furthermore, patience is a virtue. The participant pointed out that raising a child can be very rewarding, but also very challenging. Children with special needs are still children above all else. As a parent she faced some challenges different from other parents, especially that she was a single parent and she handled dual responsibilities as a mother and a father to her child. The participant added the statement that she, as a single parent and to other single parents as well, need to be patient and learn how to balance time between work and giving proper attention and care to a child with special needs.

“Actually bilang single parent, especially parent sang child with special needs need natun maging mag pasensiyahon. Kay sa tuod lang...hindi basta2x mag alaga sang bata nga amo sina labi na gid na nanay tatay ang role ko. Need mo gid dapat ma learn kung paano mo ibalance ang time mo between saila kag sa work mo.”(Marlyn:P4/226-230)
(Actually, as a single parent, especially a parent of a child with special needs we need to be patient because in reality...it is not easy to take care of this kind of child especially in my part that I'm the father and mother. You need to learn how to balance your time between home and work).

The participants pointed out that never resort to vices no matter what difficulties encountered in raising children alone. Because tolerating bad habits is something that can ruin life.

“Kay diba ang iban nga... ang iban pag parihas sini may ara sang failure nga matabo sa kabuhi nila ga bisyo2 na, gapahubog. Hindi dapat amo sina kay sa punto nga mag amo ta sina hindi lang sarili ta gina guba ta, pati man ang kabuhi sang bata ta...”(Randy:P2/205-208)
(Because the other...the others who experience failures in life resort to drinking. It should not be like that, because the moment we become like that, we are not only ruining ourselves, but the life of our child as well...)

Moreover, the participants shared that no matter what the difficulties are they should never be discouraged. Instead, broaden the perspective and be positive because the children draw strength from the parents.

“...una-una natun-an ko gid nga hindi gid dapat kita maging bitter sa atun kinabuhi.” (Glory:P3/163-164)
(First of all, I learned that we should not be bitter in our life).

According to the participant, being a single parent was not easy. It was one of the toughest jobs in the world. It takes a lot of work, dedication, and love, but most of all it requires the law of attraction; a strong sense of determination, and trust in one's ability. In addition, single parents have to face by themselves a set of difficult problems, yet they manage to do impressive things just by following their heart and intuition.

“It took almost years before things settled down. Pero ang gin pairal ko is trust lang gid sa sarili ko... dapat may salig ka sa sarili mo nga kaya mo. Law of attraction ba... pag patihan mo sarili mo na kaya mo, kaya mo gid na.”(Marlyn:P4/238-241)

(It took me almost a year before everything settled down. But I am always conditioned to trust myself...that I should have trust in my capability. Like the law of attraction... If you manifest that you can do it, you can do it).

A participant expressed parental love, and affection to his child. He never made his child feel the emptiness of mother's love, he did not regret what happened in the past despite his separation from his partner, instead he considered his child a gift.

“...nak, palangga ka gid ni papa nak... bisan duwa lang ta gapangabuhi ikaw lang gid ang kalipay ko nak. Bisan tuod may dako ko kadumot kay mama mo pero pag makita taka nak gaka panas ang sakit kay pasalamat man ko gin hatagan niya ko regalo sa akon kabuhi... kag ikaw to nak.”(Randy:P2/216-220)

(Son, Papa loves you very much...even though it is just the two of us, you're my only happiness, son. Though it is true that I harbor a huge grudge against your Mama but whenever I see you, all my pain fades away. I want to thank her though for giving me a gift... and that's you, son).

9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

These implications could serve as a basis to strengthen the advocate for single-parents. According to Crossman (2019), the role of sociology is to examine how the difficulties encountered by single parents affects themselves, to their children and how they create interrelationship with other people in communities. Furthermore, Sociology contributes therapeutically in terms of educating, equipping and empowering single parents providing them practical assistance, emotional encouragement and social networking to better their lives, and those of their children. Additionally, the finding shows that despite difficulties in financial, time, and child-rearing concerns single parents stand up against what threatens them through coping techniques that help them effectively deal with their stress. Through difficulties and burdens that single parents encountered, they learned a lesson on how to survive and handle a family- as mentioned in the results. The findings could serve as a basis for sociology practice to strengthen the program or organization for single parents that will serve as their voices to empower their roles in communities and societies and to encourage them to rise up successfully no matter what difficulties they faced as single parents.

10. CONCLUSION:

The findings of this study showed that challenges faced by single parents as head of the family are arduous because they have to shoulder multiple roles where they are not only the breadwinners, but they are also the managers and educators of their children. Furthermore, single parent's homes are more likely to be low-economic homes since there is only one parent who takes the responsibility as economic provider of the family. Therefore, single parents are rarely available for their children because they have bills to pay, work to do, and places to be, which results in a lack of time to spend with their children. In this case, children begin to perceive their parent's non-availability as a sign of their insignificance for the future. This resentment leads a child to a feeling of inferiority, guilt and shame, feeling lack of self-worth, anxiety and fear. Additionally, single-parent faced stigmatization is some societies where they are rejected, disapproved and being degraded. Among the prejudices faced by single parents is the perception that single parent families are dysfunctional families as there are no partners to share day-to-day responsibilities or for family decision-making. That is why, it was a good idea that single parents used coping techniques in managing their encountered difficulties in raising their children alone. This study revealed that the single-parent family's coping techniques are the individuals and collective strengths or assets the family has available. Through this study, it is overwhelming to understand that single parents have to fulfill the jobs of two people. They have to do twice more work, having no one with whom they could share the burden of the stressful moments. They have an impressive inner confidence that is contagious, they always know what to do and how to do it, and are never willing to give up when times get rough. In other words, single parents stand up against things that threaten them despite the difficulties they face in raising their children alone. Thus, this study has been one of those pieces of wisdom that could help the readers to understand more about the difficulties encountered by single parents in raising their children and their coping techniques used.

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