

Challenges Encountered by Solo Parents' in Raising their Children in Nagcarlan, Laguna: Basis for an Action Plan Development

Asnar L. Aloro¹, Adelaida S. Berbano², Menchie B. Ellamil³,
Glaiza Calubiran⁴, Grace-Stella Paulette A. Suarez⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Faculty of Laguna State Polytechnic University – San Pablo City Campus, San Pablo City, Laguna, Philippines

Abstract

Solo parents can be defined as a parent who is exclusively in charge of caring for their children alone and come with specific difficulties that can affect the welfare both parents and children. The study is carried out to identify the hardships faced by single parents, in terms of improving their means of living in order to bring awareness to relevant organizations in Nagcarlan Laguna.

Solo parents frequently struggle balancing financial responsibilities, child rearing, and child care. The need to perform both work responsibilities and childcare duties. This poses a major concern for them. On the one hand, they need time to take care of their children, also, they have to find employment or ways to support their children financially. In this light, solo parents often find ways and means to perform both of these responsibilities. They face increased levels of stress, anxiety, and social isolation, which makes emotional well-being a major concern for them because they feel isolated. Despite these challenges, however, they still find joy and satisfaction in solo parenting. Solo parents often struggle to find enough time for themselves and balance various responsibilities, making time management a vital skill for them. Affordable and dependable childcare, along with understanding the education system, are challenges that single parents to ensure their children receive good care and chances for good educational. Social support, such as having peer networks and community resources available, is crucial in alleviating the difficulties of single parenting and promoting a feeling of inclusion and assistance.

Solo parenting poses numerous obstacles that necessitate comprehensive assistance and involvement for the emotional and mental stability of both caretaker and offspring. Through the implementation of comprehensive support services, community initiatives, society can enhance its assistance to solo parents as they fulfill their crucial role as family providers.

KEYWORDS: Challenges encountered, Solo parents, sustainable program

Introduction

Family is the basic unit of society. In the Philippines, a family is normally composed of both parents and their children. Oxford dictionary refers to the term “parent” as “a mother or a father” while the term “parenting” according to Cambridge Dictionary refers to “the raising of children and all the responsibilities and activities that are involved in it.”

However, in today's world, the structure of families has experienced marked changes due to several factors. (Fergusson, D. M., et al 2007). Single family is defined as one in which either the mother or father resides along with their children (Chingovo and Munyati, 2012). As distinguished by Kessie (2023) as cited by Bannawi, A. F. E. et al, (2023) single parent families can be a result of marital disruption (divorce or separation), parental death, or a never-married parent.

In the Philippines single parents are also referred to as solo parents. In fact, Section 3 of the Republic Act 8972 also known as 'Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000' categorizes solo parents as a) a woman who gives birth as a result of rape and other crimes against chastity even without a final conviction of the offender; provided, that the mother keeps and raises the child, b) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to death of spouse, c) a 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, d) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to physical and/or mental incapacity of spouse as certified by a public medical practitioner, e) a 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, as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children, f) a 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 as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children, g) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to abandonment of spouse for at least one (1) year, h) unmarried mother or father who has preferred to keep and rear her or his child or children instead of having others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution, i) any other person who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children, and j) 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 (Philippines, 2000).

Furthermore, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8972 or AN ACT PROVIDING FOR BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO SOLO PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES as the title suggests intends for ensuring a better life for solo parents and their household by lessening their financial burden. However, it is still undeniable that despite government assistance, solo parents are still faced with different and multiple challenges. These include the struggles to sustain everything for their child. Solo parents are generally worried by financial aspects (Dawe 2005, Burgund et. al. 2013).

It cannot be disputed that despite government assistance, solo parents are still faced with financial difficulties especially if they have several children to support.

Another struggle solo parents face is their multiple roles as a mother and father. Three major parenting practices are shared around the world: ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults, and transmitting cultural values. (American Psychological Association, 2019). Given these practices to ensure good parenting, solo parents will surely have a lot of responsibility resting on their shoulders.

Another struggle solo parents' faces are lonesomeness felt while supporting oneself. No matter what the cause of being a single parent is, it drastically influences the well being of an individual. Financial worries, child care and personal challenges are multiplied by being alone in facing them.

According to a World Health Organization-funded study by the Department of Health (DOH) and the University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health, the number of solo parents in the Philippines is currently estimated at 14 million in the year 2017. The rising number of single-parent or single-family

households is posing a challenge to the society. This is also true in other parts of the world (Stack and Meridith 2017, Burgund et al. 2013, Iovan and Oprea, n. d.).

It is in this sense that the study was conducted to determine solo parents' challenges particularly on livelihood development and on employment opportunities that will serve as an eye-opener to concerned agencies. Moreover, a study about social aspects and vulnerability of solo parents' families is a must to establish databases about the said phenomenon and map the dispersion of solo parents' families. Data gathered also serve as an opportunity for policy makers to make an action plan that will help in creating sustainable solutions to help solo parents in Nagcarlan, Laguna.

Purpose of the Research

The study aims to identify the challenges faced by solo parents in Nagcarlan, Laguna. Specifically, it aims to;

1. Determine the socio-demographic profile of the registered solo parents
2. Identify challenges faced by solo parents in different aspects (psychological, social, financial and physical well-being)
3. Determine the effects of these challenges in raising solo parents' children.
4. Identify solutions to the identified challenges.
5. Develop an Action Plan that will ensure a sustainable programs and solo parents' empowerment.

Methodology

The study employed mixed method, both quantitative and qualitative approaches of research from sociological point of view. Fraenkel et al. (2013) suggested that mixed method helps in authenticating results in research. The qualitative approach was done through an in-depth face-to-face interview and focus group discussions. Content analysis was used to analyze the responses. In quantitative approach, a documentary analysis was used to analyze secondary data.

The respondents of the study include the registered solo parents in Nagcarlan, Laguna. The socio-demographic profile of registered solo parents was gathered from MSWDO. In each barangay, respondents were picked, regardless of registration, through purposive sampling to participate in the said study.

Unstructured interview schedule was used in qualitative approach. After in-depth, face-to-face interviews, series of focus group discussions were conducted.

The collected information was coded and analyzed differently in the mixed method approach. Responses from qualitative approach were coded and interpreted and provided with meanings while the information gathered through quantitative approach were tabulated, analyzed and evaluated using descriptive statistics.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile

1. Determine the socio-demographic profile of the registered solo parents'

Table 1.1: Gender Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the respondent

Gender	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	1	3.33%
Female	29	96.67%
TOTAL	30	100%

Table 1.1 shows the Gender Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the respondents. It can be gleaned

that the study is female dominated implying that most of the solo parents are female. In general, single mothers seem to face more challenge in raising children, than single fathers do. Families that are headed by single mothers are among the poorest households (United Nations Bureau, 2016). Generally speaking, single mothers worked alone and earned less compared to single father. Homes headed by women, made their financial struggles much worse.

Table 1.2: Age Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the respondents

Age	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
20 years old below	2	7%
21 – 30	2	7%
31 – 40	9	30%
41 – 50	10	33%
51 and above	7	23%
TOTAL	30	100%

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1.2. Results show that respondents were within the age range of 20 to 51 years old. On average, respondents were 31 to 50 years old. This finding indicates that most respondents are still in their productive stage.

Table 1.3: Number of Children Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the respondents

No. of Children	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	15	50%
2	6	20%
3	5	16.7%
4	3	10%
5	1	3.3%
TOTAL	30	100%

Table 1.3 shows the number of children frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents. The result shows that in terms of the number of children, it ranges from 1 to 5 children. This suggests that households have a high reliance ratio and thus have financial difficulties. A family's resources are shared more among its children the more children there are, which means that the children receive less. Case (2009) in her research study cited that the family size and parent child relationships as other contributing factors to single parent challenges for provision of their children's quality learning and development.

Table 1.4: Educational Attainment Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the respondent

Educational Attainment	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Vocational	2	6.67%
High School Undergraduate	5	13.33%
High School Graduate	8	26.66%
College Undergraduate	8	26.66%
College Graduate	8	26.66%
TOTAL	30	100%

Table 1.4 shows the educational attainment frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents.

Almost all of the respondents were high school graduate denoting that all of them have undergone formal education.

The level of education can significantly affect the lives of single parents, determining their parenting results, and overall health. Dedication in education as a solo parent can have long-term positive outcomes for both the parent and their children, establishing a basis for economic advancement, family security, and success for future generations.

Table 1.5: Monthly Income Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the respondent

Monthly Income	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Below 10, 000 Php	24	80%
11, 000 – 20, 000 Php	5	16.67%
21, 000 – 30, 000 Php	1	3.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Table 1.5 shows the monthly income frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents. As regards to economic characteristics, majority of the respondents have a monthly income below P10, 000.00. This finding shows that respondents had low income and lived below the poverty line, having not met the Philippine Statistics Authority or PSA's poverty threshold. According to the PSA (2023), a household with five members should have a minimum monthly income of P13, 797.00 to cover essential food and non-food requirements. Families earning less than this amount are considered poor. Marther (2009) reveal in her research findings that some single parents may fail to provide their children’s basic needs because of unemployment. Poverty has been reflected in single parent households at rates of 50 percent in comparison to close to 5 percent in two-parent, secure households (Lee, Kushner & Cho, 2007). Marther (2009) also supports Tassoni (2002) that because of economic hardships and unemployment some single parents fail to provide their children’s educational material needs, for their children to acquire academic and skills competence during their childhood development period.

2. Identify challenges faced by solo parents’ in different aspects (psychological, social, financial and physical well-being)

Table 2.1. Employment and Financial Status Challenges

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. My job offers the flexibility needed to accommodate my parenting responsibilities	4.033	1.098
2. My employer is supportive and understanding of my needs as a solo parent.	3.800	1.095
3. Being a solo parent has not hindered my opportunities for career advancement.	3.800	1.031
4. I am satisfied with my working conditions (e.g., hours, environment, safety).	3.600	1.248
5. The cost of childcare does not significantly impact my financial stability.	3.300	1.119

6. I feel confident in my ability to provide a stable financial future for my family.	3.333	1.184
7. My income is sufficient to cover both my personal needs and those of my children.	3.067	1.413
8. I am satisfied with my savings and investments for future needs.	2.733	1.413
9. I feel financially secure for the future.	2.800	1.349
10. My income is sufficient to meet my daily needs.	2.867	1.196
	3.333	1.215

Legend:(1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4- agree, 5 – strongly agree)

Table 2.1 shows the employment and financial status challenges of the respondents. The statement “My job offers the flexibility needed to accommodate my parenting responsibilities” has the highest mean which implies that as a solo parent it is favorable for them to be engaged in a work that offers them flexibility to deal with several obligations. A single parent may feel overwhelmed by the demands of juggling child care, a career, paying bills, and maintaining household responsibilities (Baluyot et al, 2023). Work-life balance can be difficult for single parents. They struggle to keep their jobs while taking care of their family because they are the only ones in charge of the children. But in some cases, they are engaged in a work that is not stable or do not have a secured tenure. Based on the study of Garcia et al. (2021), the results indicated their primary areas of difficulty were finding stable financial and emotional support. The statement “I am satisfied with my savings and investments for future needs” got the least mean score of 2.733 denoting that they are financially unstable. Single parenthood raises further economic challenges compounding the level of stress, possibly causing more difficulties in parent-child relationships (Lee, Kushner & Cho, 2007). Economic disadvantage can further lead to higher rates of emotional and behavioral problems in children. Mugove (2017) found that the type of work of single parent did was time consuming and involved a lot of physical activity like vending where they walk from one station to another looking for customers. The returns in such activities were very little. The research results are in agreement with those of Tassoni (2002) who found out that most single parents were either unemployed or involved in work that involved doing lowly activities. The activities would be so tiresome that the single parent had no time to assist their children. This further explains their low-income status. Villa (n.d.) has been pointed out that when there is only one parent, the family is often less well off financially and this is the main reason for so many family problems.

Table 2.2. Emotional Well-Being

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. I often feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of being a solo parent.	3.600	1.037
2. I frequently feel isolated or lonely as a solo parent.	3.133	1.074
3. I feel a deep sense of fulfillment from my role as a solo parent.	3.500	1.042
4. Being a solo parent has positively contributed to my sense of self-worth.	3.667	1.093
5. I often feel stressed about managing household and parenting responsibilities on my own.	3.400	1.192

6. I feel confident in my ability to raise my children as a solo parent.	3.767	0.971
7. Despite the challenges, I find joy and satisfaction in solo parenting.	3.967	0.850
8. I effectively manage stress through healthy coping mechanisms.	3.467	0.937
9. I feel resilient and capable of overcoming the challenges of solo parenting.	3.633	0.809
10. I often feel burnt out and struggle to find energy for my personal needs.	3.633	0.890
	3.577	0.990

Table 2.2 shows the emotional well-being of the respondents. The statement “Despite the challenges, I find joy and satisfaction in solo parenting” got the highest mean of 3.967 which explains that even if they feel lonely and they experience struggles on financial issues (including battles to provide for the basic necessities of the family and children) they rely heavily on their faith, the support of their family and community, and their job. As a result, they felt good about themselves and were able to raise their kids on their own with confidence and independence. (Ramos & Tus, 2020).

The statement “I frequently feel isolated or lonely as a solo parent” obtained the least mean score of 3.133 which imply that feelings of emotional tiredness, guilt, loneliness, and isolation are common among single parents. Not having a partner to help with decision-making and emotional support might result in a lack of understanding and validation. Common struggles seen among single mothers are financial problems and loneliness. Financial problems for them to have a living and educate their children, together with having the basic needs in the family.

Taylor et. al, (2022) connotes that single parent who seem to be frequently the main provider for their families, may be particularly prone to mental health and stress issues. In addition, mothers still handle the most of house work pertaining to children, family functioning and work, which indicates that their emotions while spending time with their children may be not that important than the wellbeing of their children. Garcia et. al (2020) connotes that single parents find it hard to find stable financial and emotional support, because they don’t have spouses and proper jobs.

Table 2.3. Time Management

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. I am able to prioritize my tasks effectively each day.	3.900	1.094
2. I often find it challenging to keep a well-organized schedule.	3.833	0.913
3. Planning meals and household chores in advance helps me manage my time better.	3.967	0.809
4. I can easily adjust my plans when unexpected parenting duties arise.	3.800	0.847
5. Maintaining a flexible schedule is essential for managing my time effectively.	3.800	0.805
6. I feel confident in balancing my work responsibilities with my parenting duties.	3.867	0.860

7. My job allows for flexibility in my schedule to accommodate my parenting needs.	3.867	0.860
8. I often have to sacrifice personal time to meet work and parenting demands.	3.933	0.944
9. I regularly make time for self-care and personal interests.	3.800	0.947
10. Finding time for social activities with friends or family is challenging.	3.700	0.988
	3.847	0.918

Table 2.3 shows the time management of the respondents. The statement “Planning meals and household chores in advance helps me manage my time better” has the highest mean score of 3.967 and the statement that obtained the lowest mean score of 3.700 is “Finding time for social activities with friends or family is challenging”. This implies that effective time management is crucial for single parents who wish to maintain a healthy work-family-personal balance. According to Mortelmans et al. (2019) work-life balance is difficult for single parents in contrast to their colleagues, who are living, married, and without children, or with a partner.

Table 2.4. Childcare And Education

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. Finding flexible childcare options that accommodate my work schedule is challenging.	3.767	0.898
2. The cost of childcare places a significant financial burden on my family.	3.733	0.785
3. I feel confident in the quality of care my child receives when I am not present.	3.633	0.850
4. I have a good relationship with my child's teachers and school staff.	3.833	1.147
5. I am actively involved in my child's educational activities and homework.	3.833	1.117
6. Balancing work and participating in school events is often difficult for me.	3.567	1.040
7. Communicating with the school and staying informed about my child's progress is manageable for me.	3.667	1.061
8. I feel supported by the school system in addressing the unique challenges I face as a solo parent.	3.433	1.165
9. I have to make significant adjustments to my work life to support my child's educational needs.	3.500	1.196
10. I have access to resources and support services to assist with my child's learning needs.	3.433	1.135
	3.640	1.031

Table 2.4 shows childcare and children’s education of the respondents. It is quiet overwhelming that respondents have a good relationship with their child's teachers and school staff and they are actively involved in their child's educational activities and homework as evident that it obtained the highest mean score. Considering that the study was female dominated, it can be noted that mothers in this study have the characteristic of "Unwavering Care," which demonstrates their willingness to support and sacrifice for their families. There is an emerging concept of unconditional love that demonstrates its potency in our lives (Marci, 2012).

However, in terms of accessing resources and support services to assist their child's learning needs, it obtained the lowest mean score same as with the statement “I feel supported by the school system in addressing the unique challenges I face as a solo parent”. Many solo parents are struggling to manage their children's education while still trying to find a job to support their needs especially in school. Due to being sole wage earners, most of them have fewer available funds as well as less psychological and social support. (RAPID, 2020).

Table 2.5. Social Support

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. I feel emotionally supported by my family and friends.	3.667	0.758
2. Sharing my parenting experiences with others provides me with comfort and relief.	3.733	0.785
3. Friends or family members are readily available to assist me in emergencies.	3.733	0.907
4. The lack of practical support makes daily parenting tasks more challenging.	3.700	0.837
5. I receive adequate help from others with childcare and household tasks.	3.633	0.765
6. I feel connected to a community of solo parents or a support group.	3.700	0.837
7. I am aware of and can access resources designed to support solo parents.	3.533	0.819
8. Financial assistance or subsidies for solo parents are sufficient and helpful.	3.633	0.850
9. Participation in community activities or events is manageable for me.	3.400	0.724
10. I often feel isolated from social gatherings due to my parenting responsibilities.	3.176	0.913
	3.590	0.819

Table 2.5 shows the social support received by the respondents. The statement which says that their friends or family members are readily available to assist them in emergencies has the highest mean score which implies that receiving family social support from their parents or siblings and from friends are of great help like extending support by temporarily taking care of the children, providing advice in times of trouble, and interacting with them regularly either in person or online. Ramos and Tus (2020) stated that most

single mothers were seen to be relying on their faith, support from their family and community, and also their job in order for them to cope with the struggles that they are facing. Family and friends are important yet distinct sources of social support for single mothers (Zhou et al, 2022).

The statement which says that respondents often feel isolated from social gatherings due to their parenting responsibilities has the low mean scores which means that within the social aspects of their lives, they try to avoid attending social gatherings. Kotwal and Prabhakar (2017), noted the bulk of single mothers felt lonely, helpless, hopeless, lack identity, and lack confidence. Single mother are judged by society; they often get to face many more social problems than a lone father (Smith, 2020).

Table 2.6. Legal and Administrative Issues

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. I am fully informed about my legal rights as a solo parent.	3.900	0.885
2. I have easy access to affordable legal assistance to address my parenting needs.	3.533	0.860
3. I have experienced fair treatment in custody and visitation matters.	3.667	0.844
4. I receive adequate child support promptly, without unnecessary legal disputes.	3.567	1.006
5. Legal disputes related to my solo parenting are resolved efficiently and justly.	3.500	1.009
6. Applying for parental or child benefits is straightforward and user-friendly.	3.633	0.890
7. I receive government support (e.g., financial aid, and housing benefits) intended for solo parents without significant delays.	3.367	1.159
8. I clearly understand the eligibility criteria for various support programs available to solo parents.	3.667	0.844
9. I have access to assistance with the paperwork and administrative processes required for solo parent benefits.	3.533	0.860
10. Communication with agencies providing solo parent support is clear, timely, and helpful.	3.800	0.887
	3.617	0.928

Table 2.6 shows the legal and administrative issues faced by the respondents. Based on the Republic Act No. 11861 expanded solo parents act a Philippine law that provides support and assistance to solo parents, including social protection services, work discrimination protection, parental leave, educational benefits, child minding centers, breastfeeding in the workplace, social safety assistance, additional benefits, and the establishment of solo parents’ offices.

It is found out on the data in Table 2.6 legal and administrative issues for solo parents can be multifaceted and varied depending on the jurisdiction and circumstances. Navigating these legal and administrative issues can be challenging for solo parents, but seeking guidance from legal professionals, social service agencies, or community organizations specializing in family support can provide valuable assistance and

resources. Furthermore, solo parents in Nagcarlan are fully informed about the legal rights with mean of (3.900), when it comes to the government support intended to solo parents are not the priority or important wherein from the the respondent information it is the lowest mean with 3.367.

Table 2.7. Health and Well-Being

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. I consider my physical health to be good.	3.933	0.907
2. I can manage the stress associated with solo parenting effectively.	3.967	0.890
3. I feel mentally and emotionally well as a solo parent.	3.993	0.944
4. I am satisfied. with my life as a solo parent.	3.733	0.980
5. I have easy access to healthcare services when needed for both myself and my children.	3.633	0.964
6. I have a strong support network that helps me cope with the challenges of solo parenting.	3.433	0.817
7. I have no difficulty accessing medical care for myself or my child(ren) when needed.	3.533	0.899
8. I regularly attend health check-ups and screenings for preventative care.	3.433	1.040
9. I maintain a healthy diet for both myself and my child(ren).	3.633	0.964
10. I have effective strategies for managing stress.	3.667	0.994
	3.690	0.940

Table 2.7 shows the health and well-being of the respondents. In terms of health and well-being, respondents’ feel mentally and emotionally well as a solo parent. This denotes that they are resilient despite the situations they are in. It explains how brave they were to face their trials, how dedicated to their work, and how willing to fight for survival daily for the sake of their children. This can also be attributed to the reason that their children are one of the sources of strength to fight and continue.

Having strong support network that helps them cope with the challenges of solo parenting got the lowest mean scores indicating a negative interpretation wherein in this aspect, they still need a much more stable support. “Solo parents go through a multitude of stresses, which is a combination of psychological, physical, and emotional anxieties (DSWD, 2003).”

Table 2.8. Suggestions for Support Services

Please read the statements carefully and indicate the rank that you encountered.	Mean	SD
1. Improving employment flexibility and opportunities for solo parents is crucial for their financial stability and work-life balance.	3.900	0.803
2. Increasing affordable childcare options should be a priority for supporting solo parents.	4.000	0.788

3. There should be more financial assistance programs specifically tailored to the needs of solo parents.	4.100	0.885
4. Solo parents need more legal and administrative assistance for issues like custody and access to benefits.	4.267	0.828
5. Programs focused on the health and well-being of solo parents, including mental health services, are essential.	4.300	0.877
6. Creating stronger community networks and social support for solo parents would help address many of their challenges.	4.233	0.858
7. Support services for solo parents (e.g., childcare, financial assistance, counseling) are readily available in the community.	4.100	0.885
8. The support services I have used significantly improved my situation as a solo parent.	4.000	0.947
9. The solo parents are well-informed about the different types of support services available to them.	3.967	0.850
10. The quality of support services provided to solo parents meets my needs.	3.867	0.899
	4.073	0.862

Table 2.8 shows the suggestions for support services of the respondents. Support services for solo parents can provide valuable assistance and resources to help them navigate the challenges of raising children on their own. Family counseling or therapy can help solo parents and their children cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of solo parenting, such as adjusting to changes in family dynamics, managing stress, and fostering healthy lifestyle wherein based on the data it is the highest mean of (4.300). While the quality of support services to meet the needs of solo parents have only mean of (3.867). Therefore, solo parents may also be eligible for various assistance programs aimed at supporting low-income families, such as food assistance, childcare subsidies, and cash assistance programs and other related programs in the area. Community resource centers that may also offer a range of support services for solo parents, including case management, referrals to other service providers, workshops, and assistance with accessing community resources. In addition, encourage solo parents to prioritize self-care and seek out resources such as exercise programs, and mental health resources to help them maintain their well-being while juggling the demands of solo parenting.

Accordingly, it can also be asserted that single parents need more support from the community where they belong. Parent support acts as a protective factor countering some of the risk factors these children encounter (The Black Family Initiative, 2014). By accessing these support services, solo parents can build a network of support, gain access to valuable resources, and receive assistance in navigating the various challenges they may face.

3. Determine the effects of these challenges in raising solo parents' children.

Identified challenges faced by the solo parents affect their children in various ways. Financial factor is the respondents very first identified challenge. As noted by Yang and Bullecer (2016) monetary hardships were an everyday issue for single parents. Money issues and poorness are the sources of increased pressure

and increasing levels of distress among solo parents which in return affect their child's development as follows:

a. Impact on Cognitive Development and Academic Performance

Research has indicated a decline in academic achievement, motivation, and inventiveness among children raised in single-parent households. Children were more likely to work outside of school, drop out, and receive lower grades. Reduced academic performance may be caused by the parents' disengagement from school activities and their socioeconomic condition as single parents. Compared to the children whose fathers were less involved, higher paternal involvement in school was associated with better academic function and behavior, including higher scores, fewer absences, and a positive attitude towards school (Mahmoodi, 2022)

b. Impact on Economic Resources and Social Support System

Compared to married-parent households, single-parent families—and particularly mother-only households—are significantly more likely to be disadvantaged. Because of this, children of single parents are more likely to suffer the effects of growing up in poverty.

Children in single-parent families usually don't have the same resources as regular families (Haimi, 2016). Kail (2002) found similar results in a study conducted in Asia that single parents did not have adequate time to properly provide and supervise their children due to lack of resources and time. Furthermore, children from low-income families (those who fall below or above the poverty line) frequently reside in less safe neighborhoods with limited access to enriching activities, quality health care, and support services. These factors all have an impact on the children's ability to thrive.

Moving with the noncustodial parent's or other family members may cause the child to lose social support networks such friends, neighbors, teachers, and grandparents. In addition, the children can grow less religious, lose family customs, and experience disruptions to festivities and regular schedules (Anderson, 2014).

c. Impact on Emotional and Behavioural Well Being

Children in single-parent households grow up to be well-adjusted adults, kids from single-parent families may be more likely to face emotional and behavioral health challenges — like engaging in high-risk behaviors. Research has linked these challenges with factors often associated with single-parent families, such as parental stress, parental breakups, witnessing conflict, lost social networks, moving homes and socioeconomic hurdles. Children of single parents have low self-esteem, negative self-talk, feelings of rejection, and continuous comparisons with children raised by both parents. This could result in suppressed grief and loneliness as well as bitterness and animosity toward their absent parent (Rathus, 2013).

d. Impact on Social Development and Social Communication

Children raised by single parents may exhibit distinct parenting methods, silent conduct, unstable emotions, and other social development issues that affect their ability to interact with others and communicate their emotions. Compared to their counterparts with dual parent cohabited children, children of single parents may have different perspectives on adult intimate relationships and sexual behavior, including greater acceptance of premarital sex, cohabitation, early age of initiation of sexual activities, teenage pregnancies, and divorce.

Lack of parenting and supervision by the single parent can lead to wrong choice of friends, cyberbullying, being aggressive, over-involvement in social media, being influenced inappropriately by social media and various internet sites, and having less physical interaction. Lack of social skills, in turn, can lead to low self-esteem (Chapani, 2021). Further the stigma, lack of social support, lack of social acceptance faced by

single-parent children and constant negative judgments by extended relatives may lead to a socially challenging experience, reducing their motivation to seek social support, lower participation in social and recreational activities, experiencing sadness, vulnerability, and lowered sense of belongingness (Sangeet & Singh, 2022)

4. Identify solutions to the identified challenges of single parents

Implementing solutions, communities can better support single parents in overcoming their challenges and thriving in their roles as providers for their families.

a. Employment and Financial Status Challenges:

Offer solo parents job training, career counseling, and assistance with finding employment to ensure they obtain stable jobs. Advocate policies that support equal pay, flexible work options, and accessible childcare to ease financial burden.

b. Emotional Well-Being:

Provide counseling, support groups, and mental health resources for single parents dealing with stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties. Encourage self-care activities like practicing mindfulness, using relaxation techniques, and maintaining a regular exercise routine. Promote interactions among individuals and foster relationships with peers to address feelings of solitude and lack of companionship.

c. Time Management:

Plan time management training and resources for solo parents to assist with prioritizing tasks, establishing achievable goals, and effectively organizing their schedules. Promote the act of entrusting tasks and asking for assistance from relatives, or supportive communities when necessary.

d. Childcare and Education:

Support for greater availability of affordable childcare choices, such as financial assistance for families with low incomes and adaptable childcare options for different work hours. Provide parenting classes and workshops to assist single parents in fostering their children's educational growth.

e. Social Support:

Create support groups among peers, form community connections with individuals experiencing similar difficulties. Proposed family-friendly events, and provide support systems to encourage a feeling and part of the community. Promote involvement in community groups, religious organizations, and volunteering opportunities to broaden social networks.

f. Legal and Administrative Issues:

Offer legal assistance through legal aid services or legal clinics to assist single parents in dealing with legal matters like custody agreements and child support. Provide information and resources pertaining to pertinent laws, rights, and responsibilities. Advocate policy changes to challenges obstacles and safeguard the legal rights of single parents.

g. Health and Well-Being:

Encourage preventive healthcare and wellness programs to commend the physical and mental well-being of single parents and their children. Make healthcare services accessible by offering affordable health insurance choices and preventative screenings.

h. Suggestions for Support Services:

Create a wide range of support services for single parents, such as counseling, legal aid, help with childcare, and programs to educate on parenting. Work together with community organizations,

government agencies, and nonprofit groups to increase availability of support services and resources. Advocate for policies and funding to maintain and improve support services for single parents.

5. Develop an Action Plan that will ensure a sustainable programs and solo parents' empowerment.

Empowering solo parents involves a comprehensive action plan that addresses various aspects of their needs and challenges sustainable program by conduct a thorough needs assessment to understand the specific challenges faced by solo parents in the community. Based on the needs assessment findings, design a holistic program that addresses the key challenges faced by solo parents, including legal, financial, emotional, and social support needs. Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for solo parents to enhance their parenting skills, improve their financial literacy, and develop employability skills. Create opportunities for solo parents to connect with and support one another through peer support groups, mentoring programs, and online communities. Mobilize community members, stakeholders, and policymakers to support initiatives aimed at improving the rights and welfare of solo parents at the local, regional, and national levels. Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the program in achieving its objectives and outcomes. By implementing this action plan, sustainable programs can be developed to empower solo parents, enhance their well-being, and support them in fulfilling their parenting responsibilities and achieving their goals.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the data presented earlier, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most respondents are still in their productive stage. Almost all of the respondents have undergone formal education. They have low income and live below the poverty line, having not met the Philippine Statistics Authority or PSA's poverty threshold.
2. Financial problems are the major challenges faced by single parents, especially single mothers. They have little or no social support during the time of helplessness. Also, they lack quality time spending with their children due to their schedule as work-life balance can be difficult for them.
3. Cognitive development and academic performance, economic resources and social support system, affected their emotional and behavioural well-being as well as their social development and social communication has an impact on children raised by solo parents.
4. Loneliness is unavoidable, so much so that single parents must go and socialize to gain more friends around, realize that supporting shoulder that could be leaned on is vital. Interact in community activities, and be productive, replace negative thoughts with positive thinking to air their energy. Lastly, regarding social justice, do not let this stigma erode confidence; interact in activities that may assist in regaining self-worth, and be amidst people.

Recommendations

1. In support of low-income households, the Local Government Unit should help and support solo parents at the local level.
2. Organize a support system. It can ease tension, fight feelings of isolation, offer useful support, and promote a sense of community. More significantly, this support system helps reassure single parents that they are not traveling alone by helping them feel appreciated, heard, and seen.
3. Develop social activities that would lessen the emotional and psychological stress. Loneliness is unavoidable, they must go and socialize to possess additional friends around, realize supporting

shoulder that would listen, and perceive what you were feeling. Interact in community activities, and being productive, replacing negative thoughts with positive thinking to air their energy. Lastly, regarding social justice, do not let this stigma erodes your confidence; interact in activities that may assist you in regaining your self-worth, and be encircled by those who believe you.

4. Build a strong collaboration and partnership between and among the Local Government Units, academe, private sectors, and other institutions are highly recommended to help solo parents in all aspects.
5. Conduct an in-depth study in different municipalities. Additional variables should be looked into.

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