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Experiences of solo parents in facing life challenges

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Abstract

Aim: This study explored the lived experiences of solo parents in Magallanes, Sorsogon, particularly the challenges they encounter, the coping strategies they employ, and the sources of support that sustain their well-being and parental responsibilities. It also sought to generate insights that may inform responsive social welfare programs, community-based interventions, and policies for solo parents.

Methodology: The study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach. Seven solo parents participated in the study. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2022).

Results: The findings revealed that solo parents experienced interconnected financial, emotional, parenting, and social challenges while managing multiple roles as caregivers, providers, and household managers. Financial pressure, debt, difficulty meeting children's needs, emotional and physical exhaustion, parenting and child-rearing concerns, social judgment, and limited social interaction were among the major challenges identified. Participants used various coping strategies, including self-preservation, faith-based coping, and commitment to their children, although some also experienced maladaptive coping under prolonged stress. Family members, community networks, and children served as important sources of support, motivation, and hope. Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated resilience through a strong sense of purpose, future-oriented perspectives, and values-driven parenting.

Conclusion: Solo parenting involves substantial and interconnected challenges that require sustained social and community support. The findings suggest the importance of strengthening psychosocial services, parenting and stress-management programs, community support networks, and other social welfare interventions responsive to the needs of solo parents. These insights may contribute to the development of more inclusive and responsive local policies and programs that support the well-being of solo parents and their children.

Keywords: Solo parents, lived experiences, coping strategies, social support, resilience

INTRODUCTION

Solo Parents are parenting their children alone, without the assistance of a spouse, and confront particular and overwhelming challenges and difficulties. Solo parents are expected to fulfill the combined tasks of caregiver and provider, often under emotional, financial, and social strain, whether as a result of separation, divorce, the death of a spouse, or personal choice. Solo Parents bear the burden of providing care and earning a living, often with little assistance from their families, communities, or government agencies.

Solo parenthood is a developing global trend that reflects shifting family arrangements and socioeconomic realities. Across countries and cultures, solo parents encounter a variety of obstacles, including financial stability, emotional well-being, social acceptance, and child-rearing obligations. The International Labour Organization (ILO) explains that solo parents regularly experiencing difficulties in managing employment

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and caregiving responsibilities. This situation limits their earning capacity and financial stability which leads to bigger risk of financial vulnerability and economic constraint. The solo parents are frequently experiencing challenges in providing care to their children which also resulted to challenge on economic stability (Addati, 2022).

Conversely, this global phenomenon is continuously changing across different culture. The qualitative study of Terrell (2025) on the lived experiences of single Black mothers, found out that single Black mothers face numerous social, economic**,** and emotional challenges that affect their children's education and overall development. Hernandez (2024) explored the experiences of 13 low-income single mothers of color in the University of California, the study identified challenges related to maternal responsibilities, academic demands, institutional barriers, and limited support systems**,** which affected their educational progress.

While, numerous Filipino Solo Parents exhibit remarkable resilience and strength despite these difficulties. Their coping mechanisms, formal and informal support networks, and everyday hardships provide important insights into the dynamics of solo parents in a Filipino sociocultural context. Solo Parents frequently face economic pressures, including low income, job insecurity, or lack of access to opportunities to meet the basic needs of their children. Juggling work and childcare responsibilities often means sacrificing personal time, rest, and self-care, which can lead to burnout and stress. Despite these hardships, solo parents continue to persevere, often driven by a strong sense of duty and love for their children.

Under Republic Act No. 11861**,** or the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act, the government strengthened and expanded the benefits and support services available to qualified solo parents. These include monthly cash assistance for qualified low-income solo parents, a 10% discount and VAT exemption on selected goods and health-related needs of children six years old and below, seven days of parental leave with pay, flexible work arrangements, livelihood and employment opportunities, educational assistance and scholarships, PhilHealth coverage, and priority access to housing programs**.** The law also provides for broader social protection services, including counseling, legal assistance, parent effectiveness services, and other interventions that promote the welfare of solo parents and their children (Philippine Commission on Women [PCW], 2022).

The expansion of the law honors and privileges solo parents who continuously nurture their children with the limited resources they have. Despite the scarcity in various aspects of their lives, the solo parents remain steadfast in providing a better future for their families. In addition, the law has paved the way for addressing challenges in their real-life situations and recognizing their hardships amid trials and difficulties.

According to the Manila Bulletin (2023), approximately 15 million solo parents live in the Philippines, and an estimated 95% of them, or about 14 million, are women. These figures highlight the importance of examining solo parents' lived experiences to recognize their struggles and strengths and to develop evidence-based recommendations for strengthening support networks, mental health services, and social policies tailored to their needs.

This study explored the experiences of solo parents in facing life challenges at Magallanes, Sorsogon. Magallanes is primary considered a coastal town as 24 of its 34 barangays are situated along the coast with abundant marine resources, which the locals take to daily for food and livelihood. Marine and fishpond fishing are the town's prime industry despite large agricultural lands being engaged as well in crop and livestock production (Wikipedia contributors, 2026).

Meanwhile, the Municipality has a total of 526 solo parents based on the 2026 record of Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO). At the local level, Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office, as the municipal social-welfare arm of the local government unit (LGU), plays an important role in delivering social services to vulnerable households.

Solo parents face a unique set of life challenges as they fulfill the dual roles of caregiver and provider. Exploring the lived experiences of solo parents provides valuable insights into how they cope with daily challenges, sustain their caregiving roles, and maintain hope for their children's future. Understanding these experiences is essential not only for recognizing their struggles but also for appreciating their resilience, determination, and sacrifices.

Understanding the experiences, coping mechanisms, and support needs of solo parents is vital for establishing inclusive policies, tailored interventions, and supportive environments. The findings may provide significant insights for government organizations and community leaders striving toward a more equal and supportive society for all family structures. The study contributes qualitative evidence concerning the social vulnerability, social support, and family dynamics among solo parents. The local government responsiveness in

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delivering social services for the solo parents may be further strengthened. This may also include the full implementation of the Republic Act 11861 or the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act.

Moreover, this study intends to fill research gaps by examining the lived experiences and challenges of solo parents. Majority of the existing research examines particular dimensions such as employment, poverty, stress, or social support, whereas this study uses a phenomenological approach to examine the interconnected lived experience. Existing research identifies challenges, but less attention is given to how the lived experiences of solo parents can inform local social-welfare interventions, community support, and implementation of solo-parent policies. Hence, the study also established recommendations from the participants on how other external resources could assist them in carrying out this great responsibility for their children.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Family Resilience Theory of Froma Walsh (2021), which views resilience as a dynamic and developmental process that enables families to adapt, recover, and grow stronger despite experiencing adversity. Walsh emphasized that resilience is not an inherent trait possessed by only a few individuals; rather, it is a set of strengths, resources, and adaptive processes that emerge through interactions among family members and their social environments. The theory highlights three key domains that promote resilience: belief systems, organizational processes, and communication processes.

The philosophical foundation of this study is grounded in the belief that reality is socially constructed through human experiences and meanings. The study recognizes that solo parents develop unique understandings of their challenges, coping mechanisms, and resilience based on their lived experiences. Their realities are shaped by personal struggles, family relationships, social interactions, cultural influences, and the responsibilities associated with raising children independently.

Family Resilience Theory supports the view that adversity does not solely produce negative outcomes. Instead, challenges may become opportunities for growth, adaptation, and transformation. In the context of solo parenting, resilience is demonstrated by the ability to maintain hope, reorganize family roles, seek support, and remain committed to children's well-being despite economic difficulties, emotional burdens, and social pressures. Walsh (2021) emphasized that resilient families are characterized by positive meaning-making, flexibility, connectedness, and effective utilization of available resources.

This philosophical perspective aligns with the study's purpose, which seeks to understand how solo parents make sense of their experiences and develop resilience amid life's challenges. By exploring their lived experiences, the study acknowledges that resilience is a continuous process shaped by individual strengths, family values, support networks, spirituality, and purpose-driven parenting. Through this lens, solo parents are viewed not merely as individuals facing hardships but as active agents capable of adapting, persevering, and fostering positive outcomes for themselves and their children.

Moreover, Family Resilience Theory provides the theoretical lens for examining how solo parents and their families respond to adversity, maintain functioning, and develop strengths despite challenges. It highlights processes such as meaning-making, family organization, communication, problem-solving, and the use of social and community resources that contribute to resilience. Thus, Family Resilience Theory provides a meaningful framework for understanding the experiences of solo parents, emphasizing their capacity to overcome adversity, build strengths, and sustain family functioning despite the complex challenges associated with solo parenting.

On the other hand, the phenomenological approach provides the methodological lens for exploring how solo parents actually experience and make sense of their everyday realities. Through their narratives, the study can capture their experiences of financial difficulties, emotional and physical exhaustion, parenting responsibilities, social relationships, coping strategies, sources of support, and resilience based on their own perspectives.

Thus, the relationship between the two is that Family Resilience Theory explains the processes and strengths that may help solo parents cope with adversity, while phenomenology allows the researcher to understand how those processes are experienced and given meaning by the solo parents themselves**.** In the present study, the theory helps interpret the participants' resilience, while the phenomenological approach ensures that such resilience is grounded in their actual lived experiences in Magallanes, Sorsogon.

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Statement of the Problem

Solo parents assume multiple and interconnected responsibilities as caregivers, providers, and managers of their households, often while navigating financial difficulties, emotional and psychological strain, parenting and child-rearing demands, and challenges in maintaining social relationships. These circumstances may affect their well-being and their capacity to meet the needs of their children while sustaining their parental responsibilities. Although existing studies have documented various challenges experienced by solo parents, there remains a need to understand how these challenges are experienced, interpreted, and managed within specific local contexts.

In Magallanes, Sorsogon, understanding the lived experiences of solo parents is important for recognizing the realities underlying their daily struggles, coping practices, support needs, and resilience. Such understanding may provide context-specific evidence that can assist social welfare practitioners, community leaders, and relevant government institutions in developing responsive interventions and support mechanisms for solo parents and their children.

Thus, the problem addressed by this study is the limited contextual understanding of how solo parents in Magallanes, Sorsogon, experience and navigate the interconnected financial, emotional and psychological, parenting and child-rearing, and social challenges associated with solo parenthood, as well as how they cope, draw upon available support, and demonstrate resilience. The study further seeks to use these findings as a basis for proposing an intervention plan responsive to the identified needs and experiences of solo parents.

Research Objectives

General Objective

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of solo parents in Magallanes, Sorsogon, as they navigated the challenges of solo parenting.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study aimed:

1. To explore the lived experiences of solo parents in managing their daily responsibilities;
2. To identify the challenges encountered by solo parents in terms of:
   a. financial stability;
   b. emotional and psychological well-being;
   c. parenting and child-rearing responsibilities; and
   d. social relationships;
3. To examine the coping strategies employed by solo parents in managing the challenges they experience;
4. To identify the sources of support on which solo parents rely in navigating their daily challenges
5. To explore how solo parents, demonstrate resilience in responding to challenges and fulfilling their responsibilities to themselves and their children; and
6. To develop a proposed intervention plan based on the findings of the study.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do solo parents describe their lived experiences in managing their daily responsibilities?
2. What challenges do solo parents encounter in terms of:
   a. financial stability;
   b. emotional and psychological well-being;
   c. parenting and child-rearing responsibilities; and
   d. social relationships?
3. How do solo parents cope with the challenges they experience?
4. What sources of support do solo parents rely on in managing their daily challenges?

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5. How do solo parents demonstrate resilience in responding to challenges and fulfilling their responsibilities to themselves and their children?
6. What intervention plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of solo parents in Magallanes, Sorsogon. A phenomenological approach was appropriate because the study sought to understand how solo parents experienced, interpreted, and made meaning of the challenges associated with managing their parental, household, financial, social, and emotional responsibilities.

Through this design, the study examined the participants' personal experiences, perceptions, coping strategies, sources of support, and manifestations of resilience. The phenomenological approach enabled the researcher to identify and interpret recurring meanings and themes emerging from the participants' narratives while maintaining focus on their experiences as solo parents.

Population and Sampling

The seven (7) participants of this study were composed of 1 male and 6 females, all of whom are solo parents residing in Magallanes, Sorsogon, identified in accordance with Republic Act 8972 (Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000) and its amended version, Republic Act 11861 (Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2022). They were individuals who have been solo parents for at least one year and are willing to share their lived experiences.

The study employed purposive sampling, selecting participants who could best articulate their experiences. The participants under various solo parents' categories were profiled and interviewed that fit the research question. Subsequently, snowball sampling was also used by asking identified participants to recommend other qualified solo parents in the community. Since this is a phenomenological study, the focus is on depth rather than breadth. Seven participants were interviewed and recruitment ceased when the researcher determined that sufficient thematic saturation had been reached and at which no new themes or insights emerge from additional interviews.

Instrument

The primary data gathering instrument for this study was a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher. It contains five (5) sections with 31 specific questions based on the research objectives and questions. This instrument was designed to elicit rich, in-depth narratives from solo parents regarding their lived experiences in facing life challenges. The instrument used underwent content validation by an expert with doctoral-level qualifications and expertise in Philosophy and Social Work. The recommendations provided were incorporated into the final guide.

The interview guide contains a set of open-ended questions that allow participants to freely express their thoughts, emotions, and coping strategies while ensuring that discussions remain aligned with the research objectives. Probing questions are also included to clarify and explore significant responses in greater detail.

Data Collection

Before data collection, the researcher secured the necessary institutional and community permissions to conduct the study. Following approval of the research protocol and finalization of the interview guide, formal requests were submitted to the appropriate institutional and local authorities, including the Dean of the Graduate School, the Local Chief Executive, the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), and the concerned barangay officials in Magallanes, Sorsogon.

Eligible participants were identified based on the established inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling was initially used to identify solo parents who met the criteria and could provide relevant and information-rich accounts of their lived experiences. Snowball sampling was subsequently used to identify additional qualified participants through referrals from individuals who had already participated or were aware of other eligible solo parents. Participation remained voluntary, and referral did not obligate any individual to participate.

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Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the seven participants in a private and appropriate setting agreed upon by the participants and the researcher. Before each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and the measures adopted to protect confidentiality. Written informed consent was obtained before the interviews were conducted. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate accurate transcription and analysis.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and organized for analysis. Where participants used a language other than English, the responses were translated into English while preserving the intended meaning of the participants' statements. Identifying information was removed or anonymized from the transcripts and research records. Data collection continued until the researcher determined that the interviews were providing sufficient and recurring information relevant to the research questions.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the approach of Braun and Clarke (2022). The analysis began with the transcription and organization of the interview data, followed by repeated reading of the transcripts to familiarize the researcher with the participants' accounts.

The researcher then identified meaningful segments of the data and assigned initial codes that represented significant experiences, perceptions, coping strategies, sources of support, and manifestations of resilience. Related codes were subsequently examined, grouped, and developed into preliminary themes. The emerging themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the complete dataset to determine whether they adequately represented the participants' accounts.

The themes were then refined, defined, and named based on their central meanings and relevance to the research questions. The researcher interpreted the final themes in relation to the participants' lived experiences of solo parenting and the study's theoretical framework. Relevant participant narratives were used to substantiate the interpretation of the themes while maintaining the confidentiality of the participants.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Before data collection, the researcher secured the necessary institutional and local permissions and explained the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and expected benefits of the study to the participants. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before participation.

Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or adverse consequences. Because the study involved personal experiences related to family circumstances, financial difficulties, emotional challenges, and parenting responsibilities, interviews were conducted in a respectful and private manner, and participants were allowed to pause or discontinue the discussion whenever they felt uncomfortable.

Confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the research process. Participant names were replaced with codes or pseudonyms as "SP" or solo parent, and identifying information was removed or minimized in transcripts, notes, and reported findings. Audio recordings, transcripts, and other research materials were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher or authorized research personnel. The data were used solely for research purposes and were handled in accordance with applicable institutional requirements for data protection and confidentiality.

Participants were also informed that audio recording would be undertaken only with their permission. In reporting the findings, quotations and narratives were presented in a manner that protected participants from unnecessary identification. Particular care was taken because the study involved a small number of participants from a defined local community.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the participants. The themes are organized according to the researcher-developed questionnaire with reference to Family Resilience Theory. The discussion also highlights governance and policy implications for the welfare of solo parents while navigating their life challenges.

Problem 1: **How do solo parents describe their lived experiences in managing their daily responsibilities?**

There were three themes emerged from the participants lived experiences.

Theme 1: Balancing Multiple Responsibilities

> SP1 shared: "*Maga adjust ka lang talaga. Halimbawa kung wara sapnaon, su mga aki kaito naga skwela pa. sige ko pangutang. Ngunyan ta may nakatapos na ako na aki, medyo maray-maray naman ang pag mati ko, dae na masyadong na stress".* (You really have to adjust. For example, when you have nothing to cook, the children were still in school, I would resort to borrowing money).
>
> SP2 uttered*: "Pag banggi mariparo kana kan mga aki, may babaye pati ako na aki. Pagtrabaho ko tiga time manage ko man an, may panahon na nasa trabaho pero mas dakul an oras ko sa mga aki".* (At night, I make sure that my children are secure, especially since I have a daughter. Even though I am working, I manage my time, but most of the days are devoted to my children).
>
> SP4 said: "*Ang gusto ko lang magawa ko ang role ng isang ina. Pero mahirap kasi kailangan ko lang pagsabayin ang trabaho, pag-asikaso sa bahay. Pinipilit ko hatiin ang oras".* (All I want is to fulfill my role as a mother. However, it is difficult because I have to balance my work and household responsibilities. I do my best to divide my time between them).

The participants described their daily lives as focused on balancing parental and financial responsibilities alone. They continuously worked hard to provide for their children's needs, such as school expenses, safety, and daily care despite limited resources and busy schedules. Despite the challenges of juggling work and childcare, they remained committed to prioritizing their children's welfare through sacrifice, dedication, and perseverance.

Rago et al. (2024) in their phenomenological study examined the dual roles of solo parents**.** The findings indicated that single parents must manage both parental and economic responsibilities**,** often while facing social judgment and discrimination from society**.** Despite these pressures, solo parents remain devoted to their children's welfare, balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. The study highlighted that many solo parents view their parental role as a source of strength and motivation**,** enabling them to overcome societal stigma and continue supporting their children's development.

This emerging theme highlights that solo parents manage dual roles as both provider and caregiver while handling household and parenting duties. Solo parents described their experiences as demanding because they must fulfill multiple roles simultaneously. As the sole provider and caregiver, they are responsible for earning income, managing household chores, making important family decisions, and ensuring the emotional and physical well-being of their children.

Theme 2: Emotional and Physical Exhaustion

> SP1 said: *"Napagalan ta dae ako kaito tatao, garo dae ko kayanon. Nagtrabaho ako pero nagahibi ako, ta garo dae ko kaya an mga aki ko, pero padiit diit nakayanan man".* (I thought I could not handle this before, and it felt like I could not manage. I was working but I was crying because I felt I could not handle my children, yet little by little I managed).

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SP3 mentioned: *"May mga times naisip ko gusto ko na ipaampon ang mga bata, kasi instead na mahirapan sila sa akin, ipaampon ko na lang sa iba na kaya ibigay yung pangangailangan nila, kasi wala naman ako nakukuhang tulong mula sa tatay o pamilya nila".* (There were times when I thought about giving my children up for adoption. I felt that instead of suffering with me, maybe it would be better for them to be with someone who could provide for their needs. I receive no support from their father or their families).

The participants described solo parenting as emotionally and physically exhausting due to the pressure of balancing work, childcare, and household responsibilities alone. They experienced stress, mental exhaustion, and feelings of being overwhelmed, especially during financial difficulties and the absence of support from partners or family members. One participant shared that the sudden loss of her partner forced her to carry full parental responsibilities, resulting in emotional distress and anxiety. Despite these struggles, the participants continued to adapt and persevere in order to provide and care for their children and demonstrated perseverance and remain strong for the sake of their children's future.

This lived experience of the participants was supported by the study of Donohue (2020) which revealed that parenting experiences significantly changed following the death of a co-parent. Surviving parents reported increased parenting responsibilities and emotional challenges as they assumed full caregiving roles. They adopted new parenting strategies, such as providing reassurance to their children, managing their own grief privately, and attempting to fill the role of the deceased parent.

Theme 3: Sacrificial Parenting

The solo parent prioritizing the needs and well-being of their children before their own. They set aside their own desire and ambitions just to provide the basic needs of the children. They even skipped their meals, postponed personal goals and almost sacrificed rest for the children's welfare.

SP4 recounted: *"An rason ko sa mga tawo, manghagad ako, manlimos ako, okay lang basta may mapakaon ako sa mga aki ko. Herak kan Diyos, nakaraos-raos na man. Mga aki ko darakula na". (*My reason when dealing with other people is that I would ask for help, even beg if necessary, as long as I could provide food for my children. By God's grace, we were able to get through those difficult times. My children have now grown up).

SP6 also shared: *"Alas singko mata na kami, lalo na pag may eskwela an mga aki, antes ako magpaduman sa bulod, makaasikaso na muna sa mga eskwela" (*At five o'clock in the morning, we're already awake, especially when the children have school. Before going to the farm, I would first take care of their needs and make sure they were prepared).

SP7 mentioned: *"Minsan bibili siya ng fried chicken, tapos sasabi sya 'dha ikaw 'di kakain'? masabi na lang ako may gulay dyan okay na yun"* (Sometimes, my child would buy fried chicken and ask, 'Aren't you going to eat?' I would respond, 'I have vegetables here; that is enough for me).

Along the journey of the solo parents, their lived experiences often characterized with sacrificial parenting wherein the solo parents are willing to settle for less for the good of their children. They hardly endured hardship primarily to give comfort, aspirations and better opportunity for the children. Most of the times, the solo parent gives up their personal desire just to send children in school even in a great cost to them. Solo parenting is truly a demanding role which requires sacrifices and endurance.

This experiences of the solo parents were supported by the study of Rasli et al. (2025) on low-income single mothers in Northern Malaysia. The study found out that solo parents often sacrifice foregoing personal needs to meet the children's welfare. The solo parents also practice managing their finances since they have limited resources.

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Figure 1. *Solo Parent's Lived Experiences in Managing Daily Responsibilities*

Problem 2: **What challenges do solo parents encounter in terms of Financial Stability; Emotional and Psychological well-being; parenting and child-rearing responsibilities; and social relationship?**

Financial Stability

There were three major themes emerged under the Financial stability as experienced by solo parents.

Theme 1: Debt and Borrowing

Debt and borrowing is one of the themes emerged along the common struggles experienced by solo parents. Due to limited income and increasing family expenses, participants often encountered difficulties in sustaining their children's daily needs. As a result, some were compelled to borrow money or seek financial assistance in order to provide food, education, and other necessities. These experiences reflect resource scarcity within the family as they resulted of borrowing money just to survive their daily sustenance.

> SP 1 mentioned: "*Tig tipid-tipid ko, pero minsan ngani dae pa nakausto, kaya minsan nakapangutang, ta maynagpa utang man, basta madali ka magbayad, madali ka man makautang" (*I try to budget the money, but sometimes it is still not enough, so I end up borrowing. Since there are people willing to lend, as long as you can pay back quickly, it is easy to borrow again).
>
> SP5 stated: "*Ngunyan sobrang pag-tipid, duman ako nakaranas ki sobrang pag-tios, ta dati talaga laen man arog kaini, ta sympre abroad man. Dae pa ako kaito tatao mangutang, ngunyan tatao na. Mapagalon palan nabayaan ka na wara source of income."* (Now, we experienced extreme frugality and severe hardship. Life was not like this before, especially when he was still working abroad. Before, I did not know how to borrow money, but I eventually adapted. It is really hard to be left alone without a source of income).

The participants have experienced extreme frugality as the family's income is not enough for the daily sustenance. They were trying to save or budget their income however most of the days they rely on informal lending network. They were able to navigate temporary solution to cope up with the insufficient resources or scarcity faced by their family. The participants also expressed constant worry and sacrifice in providing daily allowance and meals for the children despite financial difficulties.

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This experiences were supported by the study of Dagupon and Garin (2022) learned about the real-world experiences of single parents. This study addresses the social, psychological, physical, financial, spiritual, emotional experiences of solo parents. The study utilized a descriptive case study and purposive sampling. The majority of respondents reported having financial difficulties as a result of not having a steady source of income to meet their needs. While respondents employ a variety of coping techniques, most of them deal with solo parenting by using social, spiritual, and physical coping mechanisms.

Theme 2: Financial Pressure

As the solo parent confronting financial pressure, this theme emerged on the participants' shared stories and experiences. The participants have focus on stress and worrying caused by the insufficient income and limited resources.

> SP3 shared: *"mahirap kasi budgetin ang sa pagkain, minsan nahirapan ako kapag di sapat ang kinakain ng mga bata, minsan wala vitamins, kasi wala ako pambili. Tapos lalo na kung magkasakit sila, sobra na akong na stress"* (It is difficult to budget for food. There were times when I struggled because the children did not have enough to eat, and sometimes they had no vitamins because I could not afford to buy them. Then, when they got sick, I became extremely stressed).

> SP2 uttered: "*Pag wara ako budget, maisip naman ako magduman sa bulod para may maipabakal na nyog. Nadiskarte na sana sa kawaraon" (*Whenever I lacked money, I would go to the farm to harvest coconuts that I could sell for income. Over time, I learned to be resourceful and find ways to cope with financial difficulties).

The participants described how financial pressure affect their ability in meeting basic needs and other school expenses of the children. Most of the participants have learned to manage their finances and search for other ways to generate income so that they could cover their expenses. The financial pressure is not only characterized by a lack of resources but also by taking difficult choices to sustain the family's well-being.

This narrative was supported by the literature of Calegari et al. (2024) which discussed how single-parent households are particularly vulnerable to material and social deprivation. Financial hardship among solo parents often becomes persistent over time because low economic resources can restrict access to opportunities that encourage upward mobility. The literature underscores that financial instability among solo parents is frequently associated with broader kinds of social exclusion.

Theme 3: Difficulty Meeting Children's Needs

Participants shared difficulties in securing enough food, daily allowance, vitamins, education, and other necessities for their children due to limited financial resources.

> SP3 mentioned: *"Nung una naisip ko, hindi ko kaya. Alam ko, hindi ko kaya, kasi maliliit pa mga bata, pano ko maibibigay ang pangangailangan nila, vitamins, pagkain, lahat-lahat, madalas kulang. Minsan naiisip ko okay sana ang may partner, kaso ayoko na, may trauma na ako"* (First, I thought I could not do it. I knew I could not. My children were still very young—how could I provide their needs? Vitamins, food, everything was often lacking. Sometimes I thought it would be nice to have a partner, but I do not want that anymore. I'm already traumatized).

> SP4 said: *"Ang matinding pagsubok talaga, ito na di dae kami kaito maski piso. Kaito may tada kaming bahaw, dae ako kaito nagkaon, binarangga ko sa tolo ko na aki" (*This was truly a severe trial—we really have nothing, not even a single peso. When we only had leftover rice, I did not eat anymore and instead gave it to my three children).

Solo parents experienced difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their children due to limited financial resources. Participants shared struggles in securing food, daily allowance, education, vitamins, and

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other necessities, which often caused stress and anxiety. Despite these hardships, they continued to make sacrifices and prioritize their children's welfare, even at the expense of their own needs. They still see to it that at the end of the day they were able to provide solution to their problems.

Cruz et al. (2024) in a qualitative study on single parents in Hagonoy, Bulacan found that single-parent families experience significant financial stress due to insufficient income, lack of support systems, and the pressure of balancing work with childcare responsibilities. These economic challenges affect their ability to meet daily needs and create anxiety, highlighting the financial vulnerability unique to solo parents.

Challenges: Emotional and Psychological well-being

Individuals' emotional and psychological well-being, particularly that of solo parents, is often hindered by the constant burden of juggling various tasks without sufficient support.

Theme 1: Prolonged Emotional Distress

This theme highlights that solo parents navigate daily life within a multifaceted problem they encountered while rearing the children.

> SP2 said: *"Garo magaba an tikab ko, mixed emotion. Mapagalon, ta naghali siya an bunso mi one and a half old pa sana. Pero iyo ito an pangarap mi para sa mga kaakian para sa edukasyon ninda"* (My heart feels heavy, filled with mixed emotions. It has been very painful, especially because my wife left when our youngest was only one and a half years old. Yet this sacrifice is part of our shared dream—to give our children a better future through education).

> SP3 recounted: *"Ako na talaga ang nakipaghiwalay, kasi para akong nakakulong sa hawla, di ko makita ang liwanag, puro dilim, kaya ako nag decide"* (I was the one who finally decided to leave. I felt like I was trapped in a cage—I could not see any light, only darkness. That's why I chose to walk away).

The participants have experienced prolonged emotional distress marked by feelings of sadness, emotional pain, loneliness, insomnia and even inner conflict brought about by the separation and parental responsibility. The pain of raising young children alone created emotional strain. However, the participants found meaning and motivation in aspiring for the good of their children.

Musweweshiri et al. (2025) in their qualitative research on solo parents' reveals that the absence of a partner often leads to heightened emotional and psychological stress. Solo parents frequently report feelings of stress, anxiety, exhaustion, loneliness, and overwhelming responsibility due to managing caregiving, household tasks, and financial needs on their own. These emotional difficulties can diminish parents' capacity to provide nurturing care and negatively affect both their well-being and parenting effectiveness.

Theme 2: Unsafe and Oppressive Home Environment

This kind of experiences of a solo parent significantly affect the social functioning, well-being and overall development of the family members.

> *SP4 mentioned: "Hali ako sa pagpamolino kan paroy, gutumonon ka, pag-abot ko, babarabadon ka, may sundang siya o kaya may pambaod, natatakot na sana ako sa pwede nyang gibuhon" (*When I came from rice mill, I'm starving then he (my husband) was throwing me something, he has knife or beating stick towards me, I was afraid of the things that he might do against me).

> *SP3 then shared: "Noong una, tiniis ko kasi may baby kami, tumiis ako sa sitwasyon na hindi ako gusto ng pamilya niya. May time na inaaway ako. At may time na nabastos ako" (*I endured

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everything because we had a baby. I endured being unwanted by his family. There were times they argued with me, and times when I was disrespected).

The participants described the home as a space marked by fear and emotional tension rather than safety. Daily life was shaped by uncertainty, where the possibility of conflict or harm created a persistent sense of alertness. In this environment, the participant felt powerless, trauma from past experiences and was exposed to domestic abuse. The lack of security fostered feelings of anxiety and helplessness, as they navigated daily routines under the weight of fear.

A literature review of Valiant and Rossa (2021) indicated that mothers who experience domestic violence often endure emotional trauma, fear, and stress. However, many mothers remain deeply committed to their children and attempt to maintain nurturing parenting practices despite abusive environments. Their coping strategies often include protective behaviors, emotional endurance, and prioritizing their children's safety and well-being**.**

Challenges: Parenting and Child-Rearing Responsibilities

Parenting and child-rearing involve the fundamental responsibilities of providing physical safety, emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and moral guidance. Caregivers strike a balance between loving children and instilling responsibility in them, guaranteeing their physical and emotional well-being as they progress from absolute need to independence.

Theme 1: Safety

SP4 said: "Pag may maabot pang bagyo, malipat, maisip na man ako, ano daw kaunon mi duman?. Problema ko ngunyan kun an arong mi iyo na an maruba ki bagyo, talagang problema mi na kun saen makukua". (Whenever a typhoon approaches, I become increasingly anxious and find myself thinking about how my family will secure food and if our house will be destroyed).

SP7 mentioned: *"Kapag bumabagyo kung saan-saan kami lilipat, kasi dito binabaha"* (Whenever there is a storm, we have to move from place to place because this area gets flooded".

The participants described persistent challenge on safety as a central feature of their everyday life, particularly in relation to meeting basic needs such as food. This struggle became more pronounced during times of calamities and sudden emergencies including health related concerns. The experience reflects how parenting and caregiving responsibilities, and physical well-being were deeply interconnected.

Research on social vulnerability to natural hazards in the Philippines shows that family structure significantly influences disaster outcomes, with single-parent families often at a disadvantage. Single-parent households, particularly female-headed ones, tend to have lower access to resources and higher care burdens**,** which exacerbates their vulnerability to environmental hazards like typhoons and floods (Lloyd et al., 2022).

Theme 2: Sustenance

SP4 shared: "*Ma-isip na ako kun sain naman ako mahanap kan ipakaraon sa aki ko, ano naman ipabalon. Bata su aki ko Grade 12 ma immersion"* (I keep thinking about where I can find money to provide for my child and what I can give him for his daily allowance. My child is in Grade 12 and currently undergoing immersion).

SP6 stated: *"Tig-iisip ko an pampaskwela sa mga apo, ta an pagkaon nakukua na man sana. Ta bata gurang naman ako"* (I keep thinking about how I can provide for my grandchildren's schooling because food can somehow be managed. But, I am already getting old).

The statement of the participants reflects on the inability to provide basic necessities particularly for food and education. The participant's narrative also demonstrated concerns and hopes over the children's

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growth and well-being through achieving basic education. The participants also expressed concerns not only on financial constraint but on the ongoing challenges on how to secure better opportunities and future for the children even they are getting old.

This narrative was supported by Chavda and Nisarga (2023) which highlighted that solo parents usually experience obstacles in child-rearing since they must individually accomplish obligations that are traditionally shared by two parents. The authors found that caring duties, supervision, educational support, and emotional nurture may become challenging to handle when a parent is simultaneously responsible for employment and domestic obligations.

Challenges: Social Relationships

Solo parents face a variety of social relationship issues as they handle the obligations of raising their children on their own. The demands of both parenting and financial responsibilities frequently limit their time and ability to maintain social contacts with family, friends, coworkers, and the community.

Theme 1: Social Judgment

This theme reflects the participant's experience of dealing with negative comments, assumptions, and judgment from other people regarding their family situation.

> SP2 recounted: "*Agi-agi sa komento kan mga tawo, ta magayon daa an buhay ta abroad an agom. Pero dae ninda aram, okay lang, ta kun pagparapansinon wara" (*We often hear people's comments, saying that life must be easy because my wife works abroad. But they do not know what we truly go through. Still, I choose to understand and let their words pass without paying them much attention).

> SP4 shared: *"Kan enot nakakadangong ako sa tawo ki maraot tungkol sa agom ko, ta nakulong man sya. Pero ngunyan okay naman napundo na"* (At first, I felt hurt whenever I heard people saying negative things about my spouse because he was arrested. But now, I have already learned to accept it and moved on).

The participants just ignore the public comments about their situations. They convinced themselves that their words have nothing to do with their life and they do not know what they have been through. Nonetheless, the social perceptions and stigma in their community has been one of the challenges they have encountered since they became solo parent.

The study of Maponga (2022) had investigated the psychological stressor of single mothers in Masvingo who were working in the informal economy. A qualitative methodology and in-depth analysis was also employed and the results revealed that the participants have experienced social stigma and discrimination, psychological stressors like extreme loneliness and depression and even economic/financial hardship.

Theme 2: Limited Social Interaction

> SP3 said: *"Magdadalawang taon na ako dito. Ang mga tao dito kilala ko lang sa mukha. Nakikipagkwentuhan naman ako, pero nakikita ko lng yun pag nasa labas ako. Wala naman ako sinalihan na mga organisasyon" (*I have been living here for almost two years. I only know the people here by their faces. I do talk with them occasionally, but I only see them when I am outside. I have not joined any organizations or community groups).

> SP6 also mentioned: *"Yaon lang ako sa balay. Dae man ako nagaluwas-luwas. Maduman na sana ako sa bulod"* (I just stay at home. I rarely go out. The only place I usually go to is the farm).

Participants' narrative means that they often prioritize the welfare of their children over going out for any socialization. This situation resulted on narrowing their social networks and opportunities for social

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engagement. Solo parents, in addition, have fewer access for emotional support, recreation, and community participation.

Joseph et al. (2023) found that many single parents experience limits relating to time, resources, and childcare duties, which might hinder their involvement in community events, support groups, and leisure activities. This lower social participation may weaken access to key emotional and practical tools that could otherwise support them in coping with parenting-related issues. The authors also underline that loneliness, stress, and social isolation are prevalent psychological issues among single parents.



Figure 2. *Challenges faced of the Solo Parents*

Problem 3: **How do solo parents cope with the challenges they experience?**

Participants have incomparable journey in raising alone their children due to various reasons of being solo parent. Four themes emerged as the participants recounted their story.

Theme 1: Self-Preservation

This emerging theme underscore how the participants control their negative thoughts and reframing challenges, stay focused on their children's safety, and avoid unnecessary actions that could worsen their situation.

> SP3 said: *"Ang iniisip ko, matatapos din, may hangganan din ang paghihirap, lalaki din ang mga bata. Malalagpasan ko to. Pilit na pinapasok ko sa isip ko kahit napakahirap" (*I keep telling myself that this will eventually end. Hardship has a limit. My children will grow up. I will overcome this. I force these thoughts into my mind, even when everything feels unbearably heavy).

> *SP5 shared: "Nadadara ko man ang problema, pero di ako nagsisinghal, di ako naga ribok o aburido, nungka. An sabi ko sa mga aki, mangadyi kamo ta iyo yan makatabang satu").* (I still carry problems, but I do not express them through anger. I do not shout, become irritable, or lose my temper. I always tell my children to pray, because prayer is what helps us).

The participants face a variety of problems, but they choose to regulate and compose themselves. Their ideas and acts are the result of deliberate decisions that foster peace and harmony in the family. To maintain their dual roles as caregivers and providers, the participants maintain a good attitude in the face of adversity and look on the bright side.

Jose (2025) in a sociological review of single mothers, emphasizes the necessity of self-care, emotional regulation, and personal resilience practices to manage the psychological stress and high demands of solo parenting. It specifically notes that single parents must develop self-care routines, time management, and self-compassion to sustain caregiving roles and protect emotional well-being. This supports the idea that

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self-preservation is a *purposeful strategy* to remain effective as a caregiver rather than withdrawal or avoidance, and that self-acceptance and self-kindness reduce psychological distress among solo parents.

Theme 2: Maternal Commitment as a Source of Strength

This another emerging theme underscores the sense of maternal commitment which serves as a central source of endurance amidst adversity.

SP2 shared: *"Simple lang, sa gabos na paagi, iagi sa normal. Ta kun paagihon sa barot, mabarot an magiging buhay kan mga aki, basta an sabi ko lang sainda, kaya ta ini"* (We keep things simple and try to make everything feel normal in every way. If we do not do this, our children's lives may become difficult. I always tell them, 'We can get through this).

SP3 stated: *"Ang mga anak ko pinapalakas nila loob ko. Pag nakikita nila na parang susuko nanaman ako"* (My children strengthen my resolve. When they see that I'm about to give up again, they encourage me).

The participants highlight the need of keeping life simple and normal despite hardships in order to shield the children from future difficulty. They also underscore hope, encouragement and emotional strength among the children. This behavior shows positive coping mechanisms which also displays resilience, optimism, and a desire to provide a stable home for the children despite difficult circumstances.

The study of Rago et al. (2024) in their phenomenological study, examined the dual roles of solo parents**.** The study highlighted that many solo parents view their parental role as a source of strength and motivation**,** enabling them to overcome societal stigma and continue supporting their children's development.

Theme 3: Faith-based Coping and Meaning-making

Along the peculiar journey, the participants find solace through increasing their Faith-based Coping and Meaning Making.

> *SP2 uttered: "Dae ini itatao satuya kun laen kaya. Ta kun dae ko ini kaya, gabos maapektuhan sa mga aki, mapapariwara. Kaya tig-sabi ko sainda 'ini tinao sakuya, kakayanon ko, buda yaon man kamo"* (It will not be given to you if you can't do it. If I cannot handle it, everything will be affected, my children may go astray. That is why I always tell them, 'This is my responsibility; I can manage it, and you're there to help).
>
> *SP5 said: "Pirmi ako ada sa pag-apod sa mahal na Diyos. Na maging matatag kaming mag-irina, dae mag hirilang".* (I am always praying to the Almighty God, asking for strength for us as a family, so that we may remain steadfast and free from illness).

Likewise, their story demonstrated that faith-based coping was more than just routine; it was intricately linked to their moral obligation, resolve, and sense of self. Making meaning enabled them to view constraints as challenges to be overcome with patience and trust rather than as final conclusions.

This is supported by the study of Catedral et al. (2025), which revealed that many rely on faith, prayer, and spiritual beliefs to endure the pressures of parenting alone. Participants described prayer as a source of emotional comfort and guidance in decision-making related to their children's upbringing. Spirituality helped them maintain optimism and emotional stability while fulfilling their parental roles.

Theme 4: Maladaptive Coping

This strategy focuses on unhealthy ways to deal with stress or emotional pain. A person experiencing emotional distress developed maladaptive coping.

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SP4 said: *"Dae ako kaiyan nakakaturog, daeng aldaw kaan na dae ako naka-inom, tanganing pagturog ko dae akong maisip. Mamata ako kaiyan aga na".* (I could not sleep because of that. I drink every day to quiet my thoughts so I can sleep. I wake up the next morning still in that state).

SP7 also said*: "Dati lagi ako lasing, pero ngayon hindi na. pinokus ko na ang oras ko sa kanya"* (I used to drink heavily, but now I do not. I have focused my time and attention on him).

The journey of the participants was characterized by persistent stress which resulted to maladaptive ways of coping up with the challenges. The participants usually dealt with problems through unhealthy lifestyle which they believe to reduce the pain quickly but, do not solve the underlying issue or concern.

The participants' narrative was also reinforced by the study of Chaaya et al. (2025) which highlights that maladaptive coping strategies are associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress**,** whereas adaptive strategies correlate with better well-being. This underscores how maladaptive patterns worsen emotional outcomes rather than alleviate them in the long term rather than resolve them.



Figure 3. *Coping of Solo Parents*

Problem 4: **What sources of support do solo parents rely on in managing their daily challenges?**

Theme 1: Children as the Source of Motivation and Hope

This theme highlights the participants' lived experiences which encompasses several scenarios that hampers their daily survival.

SP2 said: *"Saka, tigsasabi ko lang sa mga aki, dae kamo magtapos bahala kamo, saindo man an. Nagdadarangog man sinda. An matua ko aki nag graduate sa college, nasurpresa ako ta may medalya man"* (I also tell my children, 'Whether you finish your studies or not is up to you—it is your life.' Luckily, they would listen to me. In fact, my eldest child graduated from college, and I was surprised because he even received a medal).

SP3 shared: *"Yung anak ko nasa Manila, okay naman. Nagbibigay sya ng saloobin, kasi top1 din sya. Yun na lang ang isang bagay na nagpapalakas sakin kaya mas gagalingan ko pa. Noon nga ng kabataan ko nalampasan ko ano pa ba ngayon?"* (My child in Manila is doing well. He shares his thoughts with me, and he is ranked at the top of his class. That alone gives me strength. That makes me happy and pushes me to try even harder. I tell myself, 'I survived my difficult childhood—what more now?) (SP3, 2026).

The participants described their children as their primary source of motivation and hope in the midst of the difficulties of solo parenting. Despite emotional suffering, financial hardships, and personal difficulties, they stayed resolved to work for their children's well-being and future. Their children provided as a daily reminder to stay strong, endure, and find meaning in life despite the difficulties they faced.

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This is supported by the study of Wolfe (2023) which revealed that supportive communication from family members helped mothers cope with life disruptions, activate resilience processes, and sustain their parenting responsibilities. Family support is crucial in strengthening resilience among the solo parents.

Theme 2: Family Support System

Another theme also highlights that the solo parents drew support from other family members and extended families who provide emotional, financial and practical support.

> SP3 mentioned: *"Actually, hati kami ng kapatid ko, kapag wala ako sya muna. Nagtutulungan kami at pinapalakas nya ang loob ko". (*My sister and I share responsibilities. When I'm not around, she steps in. We help each other. She lifts my spirit).

> SP5 said: *"Sa pag-tios, na dae akong katabang. Naga-asa lang ako kaito sa tabang hali sa tugang ko. Ta kan panahon wara pa mga trabaho an mga aki".* (During hardship, I had no one else to rely on. At that time, I only depended on the help of my sibling because my children still did not have jobs).

The journey of the participants reflects that in the absence of their partner, they have significant other whom they can rely on during difficult times. They consistently provide any form of support that could ease the prolonged burden experienced by the solo parents.

The study of Wolfe (2023) revealed that family social support plays a crucial role in strengthening resilience among single mothers. The findings emphasized that familial support networks serve as an essential resource that fosters resilience and emotional stability among single mothers.

Theme 3: Community-Based Support Systems

This another theme emerged has a vital role in helping solo parents cope with daily challenges by providing emotional, social, and practical assistance.

> SP1 expressed: *"May mga ayuda man, pirmi man igwa arog kan mga relief. Dae man kami nahahali. Sa komunidad, maray man an pakikisalamuha ko. Pero dae man ako mahilig mag harong-harong. Ako ang president sa Solo Parent, sa KALIPI ako naman ang vice".* (We're always included in the assistance. I have a good social skill but I'm not used to have pastime in other house. I am the president of Solo Parent and Vice-President for KALIPI).

> *SP2 recalled: "Pinakamagayon ko na encounter sa kapitbahay naga advise man sa mga aki"* (The best experience I've had is when the neighbors also advise my children).

The support provided by community organizations, organized groups, and neighbors plays a significant role in helping solo parents manage their dual responsibilities as both caregiver and provider. Through emotional encouragement, practical assistance, and social connection, the community helps lessen the burdens and challenges experienced by solo parents. Their continuous support, understanding, and active involvement contribute greatly to the resilience, well-being, and sense of belonging of solo parents, enabling them to cope more effectively with daily struggles and responsibilities.

This is supported by the qualitative study of Terrell (2025) on the lived experiences of single Black mothers examined how social capital influences their parenting experiences and family well-being**.** Despite difficulties**,** support from family, friends, community organizations, and faith-based networks played a crucial role in helping them cope and thrive.

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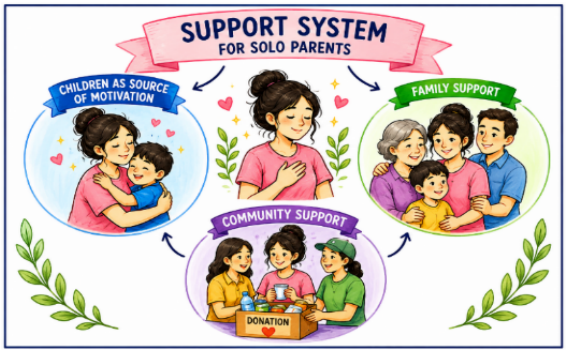


Figure 4. *Support System*

Problem 5: **How do solo parents demonstrate resilience in responding to challenges and fulfilling their responsibilities to themselves and their children?**

Parenting is more than just a daily responsibility in the lives of single parents; it is a deeply embedded source of purpose and direction. The participants were able to raise their child alone and adapt positively, recovers from stress, and sustain caregiving responsibilities amid various challenges in life.

Theme 1: Purpose-Driven and Future-Oriented

This theme emerged is a manifestation of resilience among solo parents and their children.

SP2 mentioned: *"Kaming mag-agom an gusto mi, makatapos sinda sa pag eskwela. Ta pag nakatapos ka, tabang mo man an sa komunidad. Ta Kun pag-abot ki oras kun ano muya nyo makukua nyo, ta igwa kamo trabaho.* (As parents, what we want is for them to finish their studies. Because when they graduate, they can also help the community. When the time comes, they will receive what they deserve as long as they have a job).

SP5 shared: *"Mawara man ako sa kinaban, mahiling ko lang na makagraduate an bunso ko, igwa na sya trabaho mag-aragom man sinda, na sana, an pagtios na naranasan ngunyan dae na maranasan"* (I may no longer be in this world, but I want to see my youngest child graduate, have a job, get married, and hopefully not experience the same hardships and struggles I am going through now).

The participant's resilience reflects on their drive and desire to provide better future for the children despite of various obstacles that they have been through. Their ultimate goal for the children is to have a greener pasture which offers success, growth and better opportunity ahead. The participants also demonstrate resilience through adaptive coping and resilience which they maintain hope and direction despite of the peculiar situation that they are in.

Li et al. (2026) in *Frontiers in Psychology* found that parental autonomy support significantly fosters adolescents' *future orientation* through mechanisms such as growth mindset and hope. This research highlights how supportive parenting practices build internal motivation and future planning capacity in children. The study also notes that supportive parenting promotes future-oriented behaviors like proactive planning and goal setting.

Theme 2: Values-Driven and Emphatic Parenting

The theme emphasizes that solo parents intentionally try to understand, validate, and respond to their child's emotion with compassion and sensitivity.

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SP2 said: *"Sabi ko 'di man ako naghahagad na suklian nyo an naging sakripisyo mi', ta tungkulin mi iyan bilang magurang'. Kun makatapos kamo, kun makarumdom kamo, basta an sabi ko saindu, kun may tugang kamo medyo dae nakaabot sa finish line, tabangan nyo".* (I tell them that I am not asking for anything in return for the sacrifices we have made, because it is our duty as parents. If you finish your studies, if you remember what we taught you, that is enough. I also tell them that if your younger siblings cannot reach the finish line, help them along the way).

SP5 shared: *"sabi ko sainda, kun sisay nailing nyong tios na tugang nyo, tabangan nyo. Pero sa ugali ninda nailing ko man na dae man ninda pabayaan. Pero tgsasabi ko man gilayon sainda*". (I tell my children that if they see their siblings struggling, they should help one another. From their behavior, I can already see that they will not abandon each other, but I still remind them).

The participants statement reflects values-oriented parenting, sibling responsibility and even family solidarity. It means that parents are instilling desirable values to their children on the importance of helping, supporting and empathizing each other. They reiterated that staying connected with each other during difficult times is a manifestation of harmonious relationship among siblings. This would also promote cooperation, care and close relationship among family members.

Pandya (2023) revealed that many solo parents emphasize values formation and moral guidance as a central part of parenting. It was highlighted that adolescents raised by single parents, spiritual education and values-oriented lessons were found to improve children's well-being, resilience, and school connectedness. The study suggests that when single parents intentionally teach moral and spiritual values, children develop stronger emotional stability and social adjustment despite family structure challenges.



Figure 5. *Resilience of Solo Parent*

Problem 6. **What intervention plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?**

TITTLE: **"S.O.L. O PROGRAM Para Sa Pamilyang Matatag"**
S*upporting* ***O****pportunities,* ***L****ivelihood, and* ***O****verall Well-being"*

I. RATIONALE

Solo parents face various challenges that affect their financial stability, emotional and psychological well-being, parenting and child-rearing responsibilities, and social relationships. They experienced financial pressure, debt and borrowing, difficulty providing for their children's needs, prolonged emotional distress, concerns regarding their children's safety and sustenance, social judgment, and limited social interaction. Despite these challenges, solo parents demonstrated resilience through self-preservation, strong parental commitment, faith-based coping, and reliance on support from their children, families, and communities.

In response to these findings, the S.O.L.O. Program (Supporting Opportunities, Livelihood, and Overall Well-being) is proposed to provide a holistic and sustainable support mechanism for solo parents. The program aims to strengthen their capacity to cope with life challenges by enhancing access to livelihood

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opportunities, psychosocial support, parenting education, and community engagement activities. Through this program, solo parents may improve their financial condition, emotional well-being, parenting competence, and social connectedness.

II. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

To improve the quality of life of solo parents by strengthening their financial stability, emotional and psychological well-being, parenting capacity, social relationships, and resilience through holistic support interventions.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

This initiative includes a series of activities to address the current challenges faced by solo parents. The activity includes psychosocial support and stress management; a self-care workshop; a financial literacy class; a caregiving-work balance workshop; livelihood skills training; and an educational subsidy for the children. These activities will be implemented with assistance from the Local Government Unit (LGU) Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer (MSWDO), Mental Health Practitioner, and other partner welfare agencies that provide services to vulnerable sectors of the community.

The solo parents, as the target beneficiaries of this program, will be encouraged to participate in this intervention program. Their socio-economic condition will be assessed by the social worker of the Local Government Unit (LGU), and their eligibility shall be determined accordingly. The LGU and MSWDO as the lead agency in providing assistance for the solo parents at the municipal level will also conduct referral to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under the Sustainable Livelihood Program.

The activity will be implemented from year 1 to year 3. Each year will have specific activity to be implemented with the assistance coming from various agencies or institutions that provide support to the vulnerable sectors of the community. Still, for the long-term sustainability of the program, the Local Government Unit, through the Sangguniang Bayan, could pass an ordinance for its institutionalization. The budget allocation is deemed necessary to attain the overall goal of the program.

A series of monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to measure the impacts of the program. The MSWDO staff will spearhead the assessment using a monitoring and evaluation tool. This mechanism would be a venue to know the effectiveness of the program.

IV. WORK PLAN

Challenges Encountered	Specific Objectives	Title of Activity	Responsible Person	Time frame	Resources Needed	Expected Outcome
Emotional distress and psychological exhaustion of the solo parents	To reduce emotional distress and enhance the psychological resilience among solo parents	*Psychosocial support and stress management sessions *self-care workshops, and group sharing sessions	Participants/ MSWDO/ Mental health practitioner	Year 1 (Monthly) July-December 2026)	Venue, session guide, or module, attendance sheet, and evaluation form	Solo parents gain strategies for managing stress and exhaustion

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Financial Stability of the solo parents	To improve or strengthen the financial stability of the solo parents	Financial Literacy Training	Participants/ Department of Trade and Industry/ Financial Experts	Year 1 One-time training October, 2026	Venue, Session guide or module, attendance sheet, evaluation form	Solo parents have increased their knowledge of financial management and how to budget their income wisely.
Lack of a source of income and limited resources to improve the level of well-being among solo parents	To strengthen economic empowerment and freedom among solo parents. Also, to facilitate referral to access other services.	Livelihood skills training and entrepreneurship orientation *Referral and linkage to social protection programs	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade (DTI) and Industry, DSWD SLP Staff	Year 1 (whole year round) January-December 2027	*Training kit/starter kit/ attendance sheet *Referral letter/ endorsement letter/ participant's profile	Participants were equipped with livelihood skills to start new income-generating activities. The well-being of solo parents was also improved.
Educational subsidy for the children	To provide children with available assistance to continue their educational goals and aspirations	Educational subsidy to children in elementary, junior high school, and college students	MSWDO/LGU /Solo Parents	Year 1 to Year 3 Semestral) (C.Y 2026-2028)	Approved budget for the allocation of educational subsidy or scholarship	The children were given opportunities to continue their studies through the educational subsidy provided.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the "S.O.L.O PROGRAM in achieving its intended objectives. It will help determine the extent to which the activities contribute to enhancing the resilience, well-being, social support, and economic empowerment of solo parents. A means of verification, such as an attendance sheet, pre- and post-tests, and evaluation forms, will be used to assess the improvement of the participants. The results of the evaluation will serve as a basis for future planning, program enhancement, and sustainability efforts. This monitoring mechanism will serve as a means to measure the success of the interventions provided to solo parents.

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Conclusions

The study concludes that the lived experiences of solo parents in Magallanes, Sorsogon are characterized by interconnected financial, emotional and psychological, parenting, and social challenges. Participants described the demands of simultaneously fulfilling caregiving, providing, and household-management responsibilities, with these demands contributing to experiences of exhaustion, financial pressure, emotional distress, difficulties in meeting children's needs, and social challenges.

Despite these difficulties, the participants demonstrated resilience through self-preservation, faith-based coping, commitment to their children, a strong sense of purpose, and support from family members and the community. The findings also indicate that children served as an important source of motivation and hope for the participants as they continued to fulfill their parental responsibilities.

From a social science and policy perspective, the findings provide context-specific evidence on the lived realities, coping practices, support needs, and resilience of solo parents in a local Philippine setting. The findings may provide a basis for social welfare practitioners, local government institutions, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to consider more responsive and context-sensitive support programs for solo parents. The study does not seek to generalize the experiences of the seven participants to all solo parents; rather, it contributes qualitative evidence that may inform further research, social interventions, and policy discussions concerning the welfare of solo-parent families.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Local Government Unit (LGU), Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), Sangguniang Bayan, and other relevant social welfare agencies may consider strengthening financial and livelihood assistance for qualified solo parents experiencing difficulties in meeting the basic needs of their children. Such programs may include information and referral mechanisms for existing social protection, livelihood, employment, and educational assistance available to eligible solo-parent households.
2. The Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) and other appropriate community-based service providers may consider providing accessible psychosocial support for solo parents experiencing emotional stress and role-related burdens. Counseling, peer-support groups, stress-management sessions, and wellness activities may be offered according to assessed needs and available resources.
3. The Local Government Unit (LGU) and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office MSWDO may consider developing or strengthening parenting and family-support programs that address child-rearing, decision-making, household management, and strategies for balancing caregiving and economic responsibilities.
4. Community organizations and local government institutions may consider strengthening community-based support networks for solo parents. Such networks may facilitate peer support, information sharing, referrals to social services, and practical assistance for parents who experience difficulties managing their responsibilities.
5. Relevant government agencies and community stakeholders may consider ensuring that information about programs, benefits, and services available to qualified solo parents is accessible and understandable. Clear referral mechanisms may help solo parents identify and access appropriate assistance.
6. Future researchers may conduct qualitative and mixed-method studies involving solo parents in other municipalities and provinces to examine similarities and differences in their experiences, coping strategies, support systems, and resilience and to generate additional evidence that may inform social programs and policy development.

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