



SINGLE-PARENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL LIVED EXPERIENCED

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Abstract

The multifaceted challenges phenomenological lived experienced by single-parent in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Mindanao, Philippines was revisited. The emotional well-being, social dynamics, educational outcomes, and economic circumstances of the single-parent participants were assessed and evaluated. Ten [10] single-parent participants primarily nine [9] mothers and one [1] father was emotionally and financially uncovered. Managing duties, responsibilities, and obligations lead to emotional shipwreck, depressive symptoms caused by these difficulties. Challenges for single-parent prioritizing children's well-being and education, often sacrificed. Social connections are crucial with constraint time and space. Economic worries vary their level as self-employed and juggling multiple jobs. Facing financial strain and difficulties in balancing work and parental duties, responsibilities and obligations was highly affected the well-being and decision-making. The uncover social support and financial stability in improving the well-being of single-parent and children is the immediate social concern. Underscoring the need for targeted policies and interventions through the government social legislation on the single-parent may mitigate and navigates these complex challenges to live quality of life to the fullest.

Keywords: Single-parent

Introduction

Single-parent are classified as married, unwed, widowed or by reason of circumstances had a child or children. Traditionally, by reason of death one become single. In due circumstances single-parent has shared corporate responsibility as a mothers and fathers' primary caregivers providing social and financial support (Karunanayake, 2021). However, evolving family structures, parental roles, including the rise of single-parenting due to separation and other circumstances matters in the recent time (Manengelo et al., 2023). Single-parent, predominantly women, faced challenges to socio-emotional and financial strain, societal judgment, and psycho-emotional stress (Tarar, 2021 and Kim et al., 2023). These challenges affect parental well-being and implications for child development and social health (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

Single-parent households pose socio-psycho-emotional challenges to children, affecting their potential well-being and to become productive citizens (Muindi et al., 2020). Parenting stress

is common issue, affecting both parents and children in influencing the relation dynamics (Fang, 2022). This dynamic happened in the educational ecology of an individual within the family, the community and the society. Economic hardships further complicate matters, affecting parental stress levels and overall family well-being (Bradley, 2020). Socio-psychological stigma and its pressure to meet the social standards of parenting also add the difficulties faced by single-parents (Dwyer, 2020; Cotman, 2022). Meaning, the relationships of the parent and children as single-parent was comprised in the dynamics of love and to be love members in the family. So, it becomes stereotyping.

The absence of one parent in single-parent households has long-term implications for children's well-being and development in living quality life (Lipowicz et al., 2023). These households struggled adequate "time and space;" resources and socio-emotional support necessary for optimal child growth and development "living life to the fullest" (Mokake, 2021). Parental support during this critical stage of socio-psychological developmental of the children is crucial, yet single-parent often encounter challenges in balancing these multiple roles and responsibilities, leading to feelings of overwhelming economic socio-psychological disapproval and shame (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023).

In the Philippine setting particularly in Mindanao, parenting is highly regarded in strong family ties which upheld and imbedded their cultural structure while facing the multifaceted economic socio-psychological role, involving care, guidance, and nurturing of the member in the family (Gomez, et al 2023). It brings forth challenges to parenting stress, which arises from the demands and responsibilities of raising children (Fang, 2022). Single-parent contend lower incomes, limited job opportunities, poorer health outcomes, and strained relationships are exacerbating stress levels that affects ability to provide children needs (Li, 2020). This social well-being of single-parent is particularly crucial to their overall socio- psychological well-being which affects the mental health hygiene and wellness of an individual in pursuing and living the "quality of life" [QoL]. These would affect the father and the mother as they navigate the complexities of single parenthood (Karunanayake et al., 2021).

Single-parent experience profound emotions and sense of isolation due to the demanding nature of sole caregiving (Johnson, 2022). In the culture of the locale this can be extended to all members of the family. Managing these socio-psychological emotions is challenging, underscoring the self-care and social support systems for single-parent in their multifaceted duties, responsibilities and obligations (Dwyer, 2020). In addition, emotional challenges to single-parent frequently encounter socio-psychological stereotypes portraying unhappy, impoverished, deviant, feelings of inadequacy, isolation and overthinking (Cotman, 2022; Gomez, et al 2023).

Beyond economic and socio-psychological storms and stresses, single-parent hurdles the multifaceted distinct challenges in their children's education, particularly in terms of their academic parental involvement (Gort, 2023; Gomez et al, 2023). Economic hardships compound these challenges, affecting single-parent parental stress levels and overall family socio-psychological economic well-being (Bradley, 2020). Single-parent often find themselves shouldering multiple roles in the total development of their children as providers, caregivers, and decision-makers, all a while contending with economic socio-psychological stigma, discrimination and isolation (Kim et al., 2023).

As the author continue to work out in the laboratory of life to a single-parent comprehensive phenomenological lived experienced on the perspective to their socio-economic, psycho-social, and educational challenges. The participatory observation technique was developed

in order to deepened and understand the notable circumstances faced by the single-parent and their phenomenological lived experienced in parenting and child rearing challenges while engaging to the quality of life [QoL]. Ultimately, inform findings will lead to the policy construction, interventions and social-legislation supporting single-parent families while they were navigating and mitigating these complexities economic and socio-psychological circumstances in living quality of life to the fullest.

Methods

Qualitative phenomenological approach was done in the lived experiences of the single-parent. A purposive sample of ten (10) single-parents from Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Mindanao, Philippines was done. The data collection was made through the participatory observation technique aided by the semi-structured interview guide and ethnographic noting augmented the information taken from FGD (Focus Group Discussion). Open-ended questions were also designed to gather the in-depth insight while observing their behavior during the FGD. The protocol on the REB (Research Ethical Board) was carefully and legally observed specially during the recording (mobile phone) and the transcription of the “raw-data” responses during the field work while ensuring the confidentiality.

During the FGD, the researcher also observed nonverbal cues, with each session lasting an average rate of 3-4 hours. Qualitative data taken from the thematic analysis were also used to identify recurring themes and patterns, allowing the researcher to establish relation and correlations on the recognize patterns that provide valuable insights into the research problem. Informed consent and the privacy act of the Philippines were generally observed to the utmost responsibility. Then, go back to the fifth time to the participants for the validation and confirmation of the statement and discussions made during the entire phase of the study. The duration of three semesters [18 months] lifespan of the study by data mining on the information from the participants. The consistently follow-upping, monitoring and observing the environment of the study to contend the intrinsic and extrinsic validity was made.

Results and Discussions

The ten (10) phenomenologically observed single-parent participants living in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Mindanao, Philippines were phenomenologically studied. One (1) of them was a father and nine (9) were a mother. On the average household members of 5 five (5) Participants' on the age-group of late 20s to early 50s, showcasing diverse stages of parenting and life experiences.

Raising children alone due to the reasons of mutually agreed separation, widowhood, unwed and some confidential reason revealed that their socio-economic situations varied, with some struggling income and challenges while others received occasional support from extended family. As single-parent during the participant observation a very high socio-economic challenges were observed. Thus, the common theme mentioned by the single-parent participants during the phenomenological observation said and to wit:

“Kung nasayud palamang ako nga dili diay sayon ang pag minyo dili gyud unta ako mapasubu niining walay hinundan nga kahimtang sa kaminyoon. Ug kini mo balik-balik gayud sa akong huna-huna labi na gyud kong kapuyon na ako sa pag atiman sa mga bata ug ang pag hatag sa ilang panginahanglanun ilabina gayud kay wala ako maka human sa pag eskwela ang trabaho ko nga mahimo pagpakatabang lamang ug ginagmay nga sugu-sugu-on lamang ug pila ra usab ang ilang isuhul

nako. Kay niadtong nag trabaho pa ako sa kumpaniya gamay ra gihapon ang suhulan dili maka hinagbu” sa among panginahanglanun.

[if I know that it's not easy to get married, I will not get into this none- sense status of married life. And, this will always come to my mind when I am in my uneasy moment in the rearing of my child (children) and in the giving of their needs. I do not finish my studies so, the work that I can employed with is to become a helper and the pay that I will be receiving is not enough to the needs of my children. Thus, when I have that work in the company the low salary cannot even meet our basic needs].

Notice the statement mentioned above, the participants had a feeling of repentance and self-withdrawal as tendency of self-stigma. During the participatory observation there are bodily movement that the participants trying to convey as expressed on their ill feeling on the ignominy of their past as carry over on the socio-economic condition that they have in the family. Revisiting the action they've done during their teenage years as pointed out during the recollection of the past “parental care and the meeting of their basic needs is a vicious circle on the sub-themes.”

Reading the mind and heart of these participants through their action is the cry of help in the innermost part of humanity. They've been longing these socio-economic scaffolding as a circus in their immediate family. Thus, mother as a woman playing the awesome role of humanity in responding the socio-economic basic needs of their children and children of their children awakened awareness on their duties, responsibilities and obligations. These circumstances allow the individual participant foreseen their basic needs which leads to stress and depressive symptoms to mental illness which supports the findings of Ramos & Tus (2020). This study found out that the socio-economic issues, especially budgeting, pose major concerns, affecting both parents and children whose findings corroborate the study of Affandy & Ahmad (2023). And, at the end of the day the intense focus on their children's needs, highlights the depth of their commitment which was mentioned also in the study of Muslihat et al. (2020).

Thus, on the socio-economic side of the single-parent low income and poverty are seen as stressors. This highlights the socio-economic challenges faced by single-parent. The financial strain increases their risk of poor mental health as single-parent experiencing higher levels of depressive symptoms due to low income. Thus, the ten [10] single-parent participant states and to wit:

Sukad sa akong pag inusara sa pag buhi sa akong mga anak kong unsa ang inyon nakita hantud karon mao ra gyud kana. Niwang gayud sila tungud kay kabalo ko nga wala gayud silay sustansiya pero wala ako mahimu alang mangawat ako. Usahay mangaon kami sa isa ka adlaw ka isa ra. Maulaw sad kami pirme mangayoan; pasalamat gani mi kong naay pista sa duol o nagpakaon kay mo adtu ko aron mangayo para sa akong mga anak. Usahay mag labada o magsag ub ko o unsa lang nga trabaho aron maka kwarta aron maka palit sa bugas bahalag walay sud-an. Halos ilado na gani mi sa barangay kay mangayoan ko sa ila bisan gamay.

[since I am alone rearing my children in order for them to live life I have seen the malnutrition [undernourished] they don't have the vitamins but I cannot afford to steal for that reason. In fact, I am very happy when there is “fiesta” or “celebration” near to us so that I can ask for food for the family. Sometimes, I do for cash for work so that I can buy rice even without

viand. Everybody in the barangay knows about me asking for a little help for my family].

Having this narrative above, socio-economic circumstances on single-parents vary being self-employed or having multiple task to manage finances as revealed on the study of Gonçalves et al. (2021). But in this study, pondering the phenomenological lived experienced of the single-parent participant life really is miserable. They felt that they were blessed life but it wasn't fear. Sometimes the world is on their side but wasn't that still. But on this participant food expenses are indispensable and stressful of securing basic necessities it affects their well-being and decision-making, potentially leading to detachment from children and affecting their academic success (Asah, 2021). Life for this participants must goes through as feel the best. Effective time management helps balance work and parental duties, but the financial strain remains a constant challenge as detractor which lead individual to mislead the direction or focus to the activity of human endeavor.

Another challenged that the team of researcher uncover during the phenomenological study was on the educational challenges of the single-parent. Children were recorded in absenteeism and drops out. The narrative from the teacher points out on no breakfast and no educational amenities such as books, notebook, ball pen or pencil and others. Coming to school with an empty stomach will bother the mind to think right and correctly. There was an instance that student [pupils] said *"we cannot eat and feed our empty stomach by the paper and pencil."* These are realities that socio-economic interplay as barrier to the educational pursuit of an individual academic dreamer.

Thus, as mentioned above common themes on single-parent phenomenologically lived experienced uncovered also a very high psycho-social shipwreck as a wreckage of their past. The ten (10) single-parent participants revealed their health and wellness maintenance as an evidence on their "storms and stresses" which beseech the height of feeling in the performance of their duties, responsibilities and obligations needed as they saddled the yoke of parenthood. And, they said to wit:

"Aduna ako'y ga inumon nga tambal nga gi hatag sa akong doctor aron sa pag paubos sa akong dugu ug pag pakalma sa akong kasing-kasing. Kay naay higayon nga mawala ko sa akong kaugalingon sa kalibutan tungud kay taas man ang akong dugu ug presyor. Pirme gani higayon nga ako dad-on sa ospital kay ang kalibutan murag mo tuyok ug maayo gani nga gi kaloy-an paako sa Ginoo nga buhi karon. Ug adunay panahon nga mo kurog ako ug mamugnaw and akong kalawasan."

[I have to drink my maintenance medicine given to me by my doctor to subside and lower down the blood and pressure to calm the fast beat of my heart. There was a time that I am lost myself in the world because of having a high blood and pressure. Always, I was brought to the Hospital because of dizziness. Good that God is good to me that here I am still alive and has the time that my body's shiver with coldness.]

The narrative mentioned above by the single-parent participants during the FGD and one-on-one conversation has an alarming scenario. These risky physical behaviors have a long-term consequences affecting the overall well-being and future opportunities of the single-parent and their siblings due to the recurrence incidence which lead life at risk (Gomez, et al, 2023). Immediate support within the family circle and responsible institution can rescue this life from

danger. Although, these scenarios in life extrinsically and intrinsic need the life saver. To feed the hungry stomach as life saver on the body and sustainable and development program for the psycho-social healing as vitamins and medicine for the victim of this psycho-social stigma. The challenged of the single-parent to live the quality of life to the fullest is to live life with others.

Social connections are also crucial for single-parent, experienced in loneliness, limited in social interaction, and often accused in social judgments are challenges they revealed during the FGD. Thus, the ten (10) participants mentioned the common theme, to wit:

“Lisud kaayo mahimong ginikanan mag-inusara nga sa pag padako sa mga bata tungod kay ang tanan nga ilang panginahanglanun ikaw ra isa mag sulbad ug mag baguud. Ug ang ilang pagpakiglambigit kanila sa ilang mga isig ka bata lisud kaayo kay adunay mga pulong nga usahay imong ma dunggan nga maka pasakit kanimo. Sa imong pagka ginikanan usab murag kumuton ang imong kasing-kasing kay murag aduna kay sakit nga mananakud. Wala kapay kwarta, wala pa gyud kay balay, wala pa gyud kay dungug nga nabilin, wala pa gyud kay kalambigit sa pag matutu sa mga bata sa ilang pagpadaku”

[it is difficult to become a single-parent to raise the child/children because their immediate need is difficult to meet at right when you are alone. And, their involvement to other child/children alike it has always a discriminatory word labelled and name tag or name dropped by their playmates which hurten your heart. Very difficult to be with them because there is an instance that you may overheard the words that belittle you which harden and squeezed your heart. As if you’ve the illness or incurable disease that would contaminate them. You don’t have the money, house, pride left to you, you don’t have someone that would become your helping hand in the rearing of children in their growing-up]

The common theme narrative mentioned above by the participants includes discrimination and rejection confirmed in this study as collaboratively mentioned in the findings of Martinez et al. (2022). Family support lessens these difficulties. Single-parent lacks sufficient outside support, leading to feelings of loneliness and self-reliance are also mentioned by the findings of Muslihat et al. (2020). Despite of these challenges, single-parents prioritize their children’s education, even though the socio-economic instability affects their ability to fully support their educational expenses even to the expense of their lives (Nurulafiza et al., 2023 and Magdalene et al., 2023).

On the educational, the socio-economic and the psycho-social challenges to single-parent motivated their children to go to schooling despite of the hardship they encountered. The culture of the geographic regions in Mindanao, Philippines education for them is the portal or searchlight ahead of oneself that soon this will bring them to the liberation of their family members in the quagmire of poverty. It is understood that the no money, house and other basic needs for survival they were not considered as a barrier to education. The distance to travel, school-student learning amenities, educational infrastructure for single-parent optimism will be their cutting edge. Teachers were extending their hand to single-parent in the rearing of their children in order to make teaching learning environment critical and reflective. However, the “big one” of the single-parent is the financial security and psycho-social storm and stresses that destroys the “moral fiber in the community” [kung kinsa pa ang taas ug kahibalo sila pa ang manlupig] to “those who are learned are the one who putting down the dignity of others.”

EXHAUSTIVE DISCUSSIONS

Single-parent may be classified as married, unwed, widowed and by reason of circumstances. It connotes public shame and calls for duties, responsibilities and obligations. These are the challenges that members of the family, community, society, the government and institutions to intervened and preserved the sanctity of marriage in the family life. Thus, as a union of one man and woman must not be in asunder. However, by reason on the act of God that one will carry the loads and yoke in parenthood then, let the GOs [Government Organizations] and the NGOs [Non-governmental Organizations] scaffold the members of the family while they were living the quality of life [QoL] and living life to the fullest.

Intervention through social legislation by breaking the union and communion of the husband and wife will allow the members of the family disintegrate and will destroys the bond of the community. Pointing fingers to the mistakes been done on their own. Let it be a single-parent becomes a little light that shines on the dark and proclaim the compendium of love and humanity to live quality of life to the fullest.

Conclusions

Single-parent, particularly the mother is vulnerable to socio-economic, psycho-social and socio-educational challenges cause by the psychological spiritual shipwreck lead to depressive symptoms stemming from mismanaging duties, responsibilities and obligations with limited “time and space” to individual members of the family. These difficulties create stress very high in meeting the basic needs of the children to live quality of life to the fullest in the school of humanity and the course of love. Let no one be the subject of hatred, greed and power so that this single-parent may thrive in reaching their dreams in life eventhough its covered with scars. And, allows “time and space” to heal the pain.

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