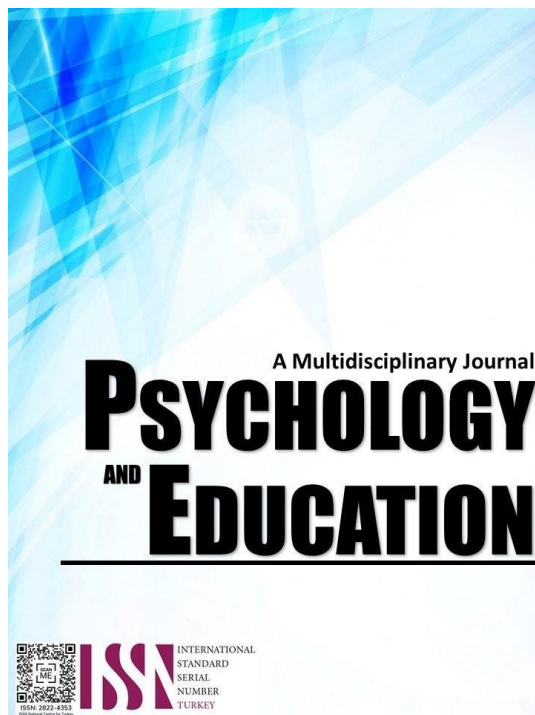


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Panganay Lahat: A Multiple Case Study of Single Mother with Multiple Partner Fertility

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Abstract

Single mothers with multiple partners (MPF) represent a growing demographic, driven by factors like divorce, cohabitation, and economic pressures. While research exploring reasons for multiple partnerships exists, it often focuses on men or lacks specific analysis of single mothers. This research examines the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of MPF among single mothers. It seeks to understand the motivations behind their choices, the diverse experiences they face, and the factors shaping their family structures. Employing multiple case study and thematic analysis, this research will gather data through in-depth interviews with single mothers with MPF, alongside relevant statistics and existing literature. The research finds that single mothers with multiple partners face a variety of challenges, including poverty, abuse, and difficulty juggling responsibilities. They also experience a lack of familial love and support. However, they also develop coping mechanisms such as independence, resilience, and faith. The research suggests that single mothers with multiple partners are a diverse group with complex needs, and that more research is needed to understand their experiences and develop effective support systems. Every participant's path is distinguished by distinct encounters that mirror the complex interaction of individual, societal, and financial elements within the domain of single motherhood. All of their stories highlight how parenting has a profoundly transformational effect on priorities and personal development. Moreover, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of MPF in single mothers, offering valuable insights for policymakers, social workers, and families navigating these complex family dynamics.

Keywords: *multiple partner fertility, family dynamics, childhood trauma, familial love, juggling responsibilities*

Introduction

Multiple Partner Fertility (MPF) alludes to someone who has had children from multiple partners (Monte, 2018). Thus, single mothers with multiple partners are a growing demographic group, with estimates suggesting that up to 20% of single mothers have two or more partners in a given year (Miller, 2012). In a recent survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, about 1 in 10 adults in the US have multiple partner fertility. This trend has been attributed to a number of factors, including increased rates of divorce and cohabitation, as well as economic pressures that make it difficult for single mothers to make ends meet.

The research of Golombok et al. (2021), explores some of the reasons why people have multiple sexual partnerships. It notes that there are a variety of reasons, including economic factors, cultural norms, and personal preferences. For example, some people may have multiple sexual partners because they are unable to afford to support a family. Others may have multiple sexual partners because of cultural norms that promote promiscuity. However, others may have multiple sexual partners simply because they enjoy having sex with different people. This notion has been echoed by numerous researchers and studies. In line with the finding said above, research by Garcia and Wellings (2012) highlights the influence of economic factors, particularly among men, who may perceive multiple partnerships as a means to enhance their social status and reproductive success. Similarly, studies by Brouard et al (2016) and Fessler (2017) emphasize the role of cultural norms and traditions in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards multiple partnerships. However, beyond these external factors, personal preferences and motivations also play a significant role in driving individuals' decisions regarding multiple partnerships. As suggested by Wiederman (2010), some individuals may engage in multiple partnerships out of a desire for increased sexual variety, curiosity, or a pursuit of emotional fulfillment beyond what a single partner can provide.

According to Chen and Miller (2018), individuals engage in multiple partnerships for a variety of reasons, including exploration and self-discovery. MPF can provide individuals with opportunities to explore different relationship dynamics, expand their social circles, and gain a deeper understanding of their own needs and desires in a romantic partner. In some cases, individuals may also engage in multiple partnerships to seek additional emotional support, companionship, and intimacy beyond what a single partner can provide. Furthermore, the fear of emotional dependency or relying too heavily on one person can lead some individuals to seek out multiple partnerships, spreading their emotional investment and reducing the potential for vulnerability (Athl, 2023). In certain cultures, multiple partnerships may be considered socially acceptable or even encouraged, influencing individuals' decisions and perceptions of non-monogamous relationships. Ultimately, the decision to engage in multiple partnerships is a personal one, driven by individual preferences, values, and beliefs about the nature of relationships and intimacy.

Also, one of the main reasons why single parenting is a current issue is unintended pregnancy. Unintended pregnancy is a prevalent issue that significantly contributes to the rising rates of single-parent households. According to research by the Guttmacher Institute (2022), approximately 45% of pregnancies in the United States are unintended. This means that nearly half of all pregnancies occur unplanned or unwanted, often leading to single parenthood. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of unintended pregnancy,

including limited access to comprehensive sex education, lack of reliable contraception, and societal pressures that discourage open communication about sexual health. These factors can result in individuals engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse, increasing the risk of unplanned pregnancies.

Moreover, unintended pregnancies often lead to early marriages, which may not be based on strong foundations or long-term compatibility. Research by the Pew Research Center (2013) indicates that marriages initiated due to unplanned pregnancies are more likely to end in divorce than marriages that occur without the pressure of an unplanned pregnancy. Additionally, according to Soomar (2019), every year, there are 7.3 million teenage girls who become pregnant, which leads to abortion and forced marriages.

While non-monogamous relationships like polyandry, polygamy, and polygyny have existed throughout history and across cultures, their prevalence and acceptance vary widely. Polygamy, often referring to polygyny (one man, multiple wives), is driven by factors like economic benefits, social status, and cultural norms, but also presents challenges like managing complex family dynamics and legal hurdles. Its evolving practice continues to spark debate about its potential benefits and drawbacks, particularly for men. According to the research of Bingenheimer (2010), the likelihood of men having multiple sex partners is influenced by factors like urban residence, living alone, frequent travel, and control over financial resources. Wealthier, more educated, and employed men are more likely to report multiple partnerships. The research challenges the notion that men's authority over their wives is the primary factor, showing that monogamously married men are less likely to have multiple partners.

Proponents of men having multiple partners tout increased sexual and emotional fulfillment, with greater freedom and flexibility in relationships. Opponents warn of emotional stress, jealousy, and resource allocation conflicts, citing potential harm to gender equality and children's well-being. Research suggests socioeconomic factors influence MPF choices, and promoting stable unions, particularly among less advantaged groups, could reduce MPF-related challenges for men and families. While research on its impact on men remains mixed, further study is crucial to understand its long-term effects on their well-being and relationships.

Research on single mothers with multiple partners is relatively limited, but there are some emerging trends that suggest that this demographic group is becoming more diverse. For example, there is evidence that single mothers of color are more likely to have multiple partners than white single mothers. Additionally, there is evidence that single mothers with multiple partner fertility are more likely to be young and unmarried (Tucker et al., 2013).

Furthermore, this research looks into the experiences and problems single mothers with multiple partner fertility are facing. Additionally, it also examines the factors and determinants why single mothers end up having multiple partners. The findings of this research will offer new perspectives and a deeper comprehension of the complicated relationships of single mothers. This research addresses the different aspects of this kind of family structure and can help lessen prejudices and judgments about non-traditional family forms.

Research Questions

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of single mothers with multiple partner fertility. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of single mothers with multiple partners?
2. What are the challenges faced by a single mothers with multiple partners?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of being a single mothers with multiple partners?

Literature Review

Experiences of Single Mothers

The link between adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse, witnessing domestic violence, and insecure attachment styles, and subsequent involvement in abusive relationships among women has been consistently demonstrated in various studies. For instance, a research by Alexander (2009) found that women who reported a history of childhood abuse were six times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than those without such a history. Similarly, research by Yan and Karatzias, (2020) indicated that women with insecure attachment styles, particularly anxious attachment, were more likely to engage in unstable and conflictual relationships, increasing their vulnerability to abuse. These findings support the notion that adverse childhood experiences and insecure attachment styles can have a lasting impact on women's emotional well-being and relationship patterns, making them more susceptible to abuse in adulthood. The underlying reasons for this connection are likely due to a variety of factors, such as impaired emotional regulation, distorted perceptions of relationships, and challenges in establishing healthy boundaries.

Single mothers' childhood experiences with family dynamics can influence their parenting practices and child well-being. Härkönen et al. (2017), suggests that mothers who experienced conflict or abuse in their own families may be more likely to struggle with parenting behaviors, such as harsh discipline or inconsistent caregiving. The research found that children who experience parental separation are more likely to have problems than children who grow up with both biological parents. However, the effects of parental separation vary

depending on the child's individual circumstances. These include the child's age at the time of separation, the quality of their relationship with each parent, and the level of conflict between the parents. Additionally, the authors highlight that positive influences such as strong social support and access to mental health services can mitigate the detrimental effects of parental separation.

Single mothers often experience lack of support from family and friends, isolation, financial difficulties, and educational barriers. These challenges can have a significant impact on their well-being and the well-being of their children. A research by the National Center for Education Statistics (2019) found that only 25% of single mothers had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 49% of married mothers. This educational gap is a major contributor to the economic struggles of single-parent families. Single mothers also lack support, mothers feel isolated and unsupported by their families and communities and educational challenges. Meanwhile, Hattery and Boo (2019) found that single mothers are more likely to report feelings of loneliness, social isolation, and depression compared to married mothers. This lack of social support can be detrimental to their mental and emotional well-being, making it difficult to cope with the demands of single parenthood. Moreover, single mothers often lack access to reliable and affordable childcare, making it difficult to maintain employment or pursue educational opportunities. Many of the mothers had dropped out of school before becoming pregnant, and they found it difficult to return to school after having children. A research by Sayer et al. (2004) found that childcare costs can be a significant barrier to employment for single mothers, limiting their financial independence and opportunities for personal growth. This made it difficult for them to improve their job prospects and break the cycle of poverty.

According to Hertz (2008), because of cultural ideologies that place a strong emphasis on marriage and fatherhood, mothers frequently blame imaginary dads for the incomprehensible traits of their children. Nevertheless, some women defend the limits between social and genetic kinship, thinking that only one man can be a child's father, even though new reproductive technology enables multiple types of fathers. This is a further development of patriarchal ideologies that deny the possibility of multiple fathers. In the ultimate ideal, the women maintain these boundaries in the hopes that another man—a social dad—will come along, marry them, and adopt their children. The child will then have a second legal parent through adoption.

Middle-class women may be more willing to accept having more than one father for their children in the uncertain future, recognizing social and genetic links as separate dimensions of family life. However, mothers believe that marriage will likely make their lives worse than they are now, according to a research by Edin (2000). They are generally not driven to marry because they believe that being single carries no particular stigma. They hope to gain something from getting married. They do not see much use in risking the loss of control and other expenses they believe marriage could impose on them if they are not able to experience economic stability and upward mobility through marriage. Most low-income women will probably never marry, even in the welfare reform era, unless low-skilled men's economic circumstances improve and they begin to behave differently toward women.

Couture presents the concern that "women will continue to carry the burdens not only for 'deadbeat dads,' but also for a 'deadbeat society,'" as stated by Bock (2000) (1991, 66). Undoubtedly, this is the direction in which the participants themselves incline. They say that while they would prefer to be in committed relationships and that they believe in the institution of marriage (but with reforms to ensure gender equality), they find it hard to find men who are willing to give up their individuality in favor of commitment.

Challenges Faced by Single Mothers

Navigating the complexities of multiple partnerships while also managing the responsibilities of single parenthood can be an undeniably daunting task. Furthermore, providing a stable and consistent environment for their children amidst the intricacies of multiple relationships can be a challenge for single mothers. Children may experience confusion, insecurity, and even resentment in response to their mothers' changing relationship dynamics. Additionally, facing stigma and judgment from others can add to the emotional burden of single mothers with multiple partners, potentially affecting their self-esteem and social support networks (Reeder & Goebel, 2013).

Based on the research by Liang et al. (2019), it is evident that despite the growing awareness about mental health issues, single mothers with young children face more disadvantages in the initial stages of parenthood when compared to coupled mothers. The research findings suggest that various risk factors for mental health disorders and stress are worsened by perceived social isolation, a history of abuse, and financial hardships, all of which are either made worse by the demands of raising a child alone or it has already existed before. This was supported by Dey and Cebulla (2023). It is said that single mothers were more prone to mental illness than other women. One of the biggest contributing factors is their financial stress.

Single mothers with multiple partners also face juggling the demands of work, family, and multiple relationships, managing the emotional and logistical complexities of multiple relationships, providing a stable and consistent environment for their children, and facing stigma and judgment from others. Juggling all of this can be overwhelming for single mothers. They must balance the responsibilities of raising children, maintaining their careers, and nurturing multiple romantic partnerships. Single parents often find themselves making the most of small pockets of time to accomplish tasks. They may utilize early mornings, late evenings, or even lunch breaks to catch up on work, prepare meals, or spend quality time with their children (Lindholm, 2021). This can lead to time constraints, emotional strain, and difficulties prioritizing different aspects of their lives.

According to the research of Lohman et al. (2013), financial hardship is also a contributing factor of their challenges. Many of the mothers were struggling to make ends meet, and some were living below the poverty line. This made it difficult for them to provide for their basic needs and the needs of their children. The association between employment and emotional well-being among single mothers aligns with research by Yeung et al. (2009), who found that employed single mothers reported higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction compared to non-employed single mothers. It suggests that employment can provide single mothers with a sense of purpose, autonomy, and financial security, potentially buffering against negative emotions such as sadness and stress. However, it is important to note that employment can also present challenges for single mothers, particularly in terms of managing work-family balance and experiencing fatigue.

According to Meier, Musick, Flood, and Dunifon (2016), the researchers discussed that mothers generally report high levels of emotional well-being while parenting. However, single mothers report less happiness and more sadness, stress, and fatigue than partnered mothers. This is especially true for single mothers who are not employed. Employed single mothers report higher levels of happiness and lower levels of sadness and stress than single mothers who are not employed. Contrary to popular belief, the research finds that employment is not generally associated with negative feelings while parenting. However, employed mothers do report more fatigue than non-employed mothers.

In line with this, research by Kalil et al. (2014) indicated that employed single mothers reported significantly higher levels of fatigue compared to non-employed single mothers. This highlights the need for supportive policies and resources that can help employed single mothers manage their demanding workloads and achieve a healthy work-life balance. Low-income single mothers have less resources (Urban and Olson 2005), but they also have to deal with a lot of demands from their jobs and families, including irregular work schedules, raising children, and unstable employment. The number of hours that low-income single mothers may have to work is another factor that contributes to work-family conflict. Work-family conflict and irregular work hours are more common among single mothers compared to married mothers, when they work irregular hours (Presser, 2003). But it is also evident that higher-income single-mother families also suffer difficulties and may feel pressure from the economy, even though the majority of research on single mothers has been on children in low-income or poor families. Ryan, Claessens, and Markowitz (2015), for instance, discovered that young children from higher-income households suffered more than their counterparts from lower-income families when they moved into a single-parent household.

Single mothers frequently feel depressing emotions like sadness, loneliness, hopelessness, and low self-esteem (Sumari, Fenner and Noor, 2020). They could think their existence is pointless. These feelings may be brought on by a number of reasons, including the difficulties of raising children alone, financial strain, and social stigma. Based on Rusyda et al. (2011), single mothers who have less education and income face psychological and physical strain in addition to being stigmatized by society. According to the study, low-income single mothers have been stigmatized because of what other people perceive to be societal inequality. Furthermore, the stigmatization was reinforced by the social standards that later classified single mothers. Their poor income made them the target of discrimination and frequent neglect. They had little options to better themselves, either financially or socially. Their self-esteem and general health suffered greatly as a result of the sudden transition from married woman to single mother. Additionally, the research of Kim and Kim (2020), compares the quality of life for single mothers versus mothers who are married. Compared to married mothers, single mothers typically have poorer norms for living. Financial challenges, a lack of social support, and the stigma attached to being a single parent are likely contributing factors in this.

Furthermore, according to the research of Dong et al. (2022), the relationship between women' parental stress and marital pleasure is essential. The researchers examine how marital conflict and depression may serve as a factor. Mothers who expressed more parenting stress also expressed less marital happiness. The research also discovered that the association between parenting stress and marriage happiness was mediated by depression and marital conflict. According to this, parenting stress can cause loneliness and marital conflict, both of which can impair marital satisfaction. Meanwhile According to Agnafors et al. (2019), young women are more likely to experience postpartum depressive symptoms, which highlights the importance of pre- and postnatal health care programs. There was no evidence of a higher risk of unfavorable outcomes for single mothers and their children. The value of education was illustrated, showing that society support is necessary to motivate adolescents to finish their education.

In addition to the financial challenges, single mothers also face emotional and social challenges. A research by the American Psychological Association (2017) found that single mothers are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and stress than married mothers. They are also more likely to feel isolated and unsupported. These challenges can have a negative impact on the children of single mothers. A research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) found that children of single mothers are more likely to experience emotional and behavioral problems, and they are also more likely to drop out of school.

Coping Mechanism of Single Mothers

Single working mothers face a unique set of challenges, and they have developed a variety of creative coping mechanisms to help them manage. One common coping mechanism is to turn to family and friends for support. This can provide a sense of belonging, love, and appreciation, which can be essential during difficult times. Other creative coping mechanisms adopted by single working mothers

include building a strong support network, making time for themselves, and finding healthy ways to manage stress, as cited by Hamid (2013).

Single mothers who have to manage the financial burden of caring for their child's health including the doctor's visit expenses, medications, and treatments. Among others it may have an impact on their psychological well-being. In addition to the financial burden they also had to deal with the social pressure and stigma of being a single mother. The most common coping mechanisms or strategies include the support of family members and friends, faith, and self-coping (Bashir et al., 2023).

Even though single mothers face a lot of difficulties, they find strength in their children, the people they care about, and their faith. They believe that their children's good health, genuine people, and God are the only sources of true strength. A research by Collins and Huston (2009) found that single mothers who derive strength from their children report higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. The authors suggest that the love and bond between single mothers and their children serve as a powerful source of motivation and resilience. Similarly, a research by Cochran and Chen (2008) found that single mothers who rely on their faith for strength experience reduced levels of stress and anxiety. The authors suggest that faith provides single mothers with a sense of purpose, hope, and comfort in the face of challenges.

Single mothers often face a multitude of stressors, including financial hardship, emotional challenges, and limited social support. To cope with these stressors, single mothers frequently employ emotion-focused coping mechanisms, such as escape-avoidance and seeking social support. A research by Atkins (2016) found that escape-avoidance, which involves using distractions or disengagement to avoid facing stressful thoughts or emotions, was a common coping strategy among single mothers. The author suggests that escape-avoidance may provide temporary relief from stress, but it can also lead to problems in the long run, such as substance abuse or social isolation.

Seeking social support, which involves seeking emotional support and assistance from others, is another prevalent coping mechanism among single mothers. A research by Ben-Zur (2020) found that single mothers who have strong social support networks are more likely to experience positive emotional well-being and resilience. The author suggests that social support provides single mothers with a sense of belonging, validation, and practical assistance, which can help them cope with stress and adversity.

Despite the challenges of early parenting, many young women found motherhood to be a source of happiness and increased meaning in their lives. They also experienced a sense of maturity, responsibility, stability, identity, and purpose (Ngum Chi Watts, Liamputtong, & Mcmichael, 2015). Teenage mothers who had good social support were more likely to have positive experiences of motherhood. They felt accepted and optimistic, which helped them to cope with the challenges of early parenting.

In the research of Petts (2012) cited that religious participation can help single mothers deal with parenting stress by providing a support network and a broader perspective on life's stresses. Single mothers believe that religion can help them understand life's difficulties.

Synthesis of Related Literature

This research provides a nuanced exploration into the multifaceted dynamics shaped by cultural, historical, and socio-economic factors (Godfrey et al., 2021; Logan et al., 2006). The examination of non-monogamous relationships, encompassing polygyny, polyandry, and polygamy, goes beyond a surface-level understanding, shedding light on the challenges these arrangements pose in household management and legal complexities. This in-depth exploration emphasizes the intricate interplay between societal norms and personal choices, illustrating how individuals navigate complex relationship structures in the context of broader cultural and historical influences (Godfrey et al., 2021; Logan et al., 2006).

The varying impact on men, as revealed by studies such as those conducted by Yan and Karatzias (2020) and Härkönen et al. (2017), provides a comprehensive view of the complexity inherent in such relationships. The recognition of potential benefits, such as increased satisfaction, juxtaposed with drawbacks, including heightened emotional stress, underscores the intricate emotional landscape these men navigate within non-monogamous partnerships. This nuanced understanding contributes to a more holistic comprehension of the emotional well-being implications for individuals engaging in multiple partner relationships.

This also highlights socioeconomic disparities as a critical factor influencing partnership stability and family well-being, drawing attention to the broader societal context that shapes the experiences of single mothers with multiple partners (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The identification of the absence of familial support, coupled with adverse experiences and economic hardships, further enriches our understanding of the challenges faced by single mothers in these complex relationship structures. This insight emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to support, recognizing that external factors beyond individual choices significantly impact the well-being and opportunities for personal growth among single mothers with multiple partners (Godfrey et al., 2021; Härkönen et al., 2017).

This research enhances our understanding of the lived experiences of single mothers with multiple partners by delving into the intricate dynamics of non-monogamous relationships, recognizing the varying impact on men, and highlighting the critical influence of socioeconomic factors on partnership stability and family well-being. This nuanced exploration contributes to a more comprehensive

and informed approach to supporting individuals in navigating these complex relationship structures, addressing both individual and societal dimensions.

Recent studies emphasize the urgency of targeted interventions, stressing the importance of considering cultural context, socio-economic factors, and mental health support to enhance the well-being of single mothers with multiple partners (Yan & Karatzias, 2020; Logan et al., 2006). This highlights the need for holistic approaches that address the multifaceted challenges faced by these mothers.

The exploration of coping mechanisms provides insight into the resilience of single mothers. Traditional strategies, such as seeking support from family and friends, relying on faith, and utilizing emotion-focused coping, play a vital role in navigating the challenges of single parenthood (Hamid, 2013; Bashir et al., 2023; Collins & Huston, 2009). The impact of deriving strength from children, the positive outcomes of strong social support networks, and the role of social support in fostering resilience among teenage mothers further underscore the importance of supportive networks in mitigating the challenges faced by single mothers (Collins & Huston, 2009; Ben-Zur, 2020; Ngum Chi Watts et al., 2015).

On the other hand, recent findings by Johnson et al. (2022) bring attention to the evolving landscape of coping mechanisms in the digital age. The increasing reliance on technology and online communities for emotional support showcases a shift from traditional coping methods, necessitating a nuanced approach to interventions for single mothers with multiple partners. This comparative analysis highlights the dynamic nature of coping strategies, necessitating an awareness of contemporary factors to ensure comprehensive support that integrates both traditional and modern approaches. This emphasizes the need for a holistic understanding of single mothers' experiences, incorporating cultural, socio-economic, and technological dimensions to inform effective interventions and support systems.

Methodology

Research Design

In the qualitative research "Panganay Lahat: A Multiple Case research of Single Mothers with Multiple Partners" a multiple case research approach was utilized to examine the experiences of single mothers who had multiple partner fertility. A case study, according to Creswell (2016), is a comprehensive investigation of a limited system based on extensive data collection. Using information from multiple sources, the research concentrates on a single constrained system, such as a person, group, community, or event. Acquiring a thorough grasp of the system is the objective. This will enable the researcher to thoroughly comprehend the experiences of the participants, particularly single mothers who have several relationships, and to identify patterns and common threads in the cases. The research design, which adopts a qualitative case research approach, focuses on in-depth exploration within the natural context of the participants, which allows a holistic understanding of these women's experiences, including relationships, parenting difficulties, societal perceptions, and coping mechanisms.

Participants

The participants of this research were composed of 3 single mothers with three children and above in which the fathers are different from each. The participants' ages ranged from 30–64 years old.

Mi Ru is a 40 year old married individual with an annual income of around 384 thousand pesos. They belong to the middle class and have attained the college level. The participant grew up in a family of six siblings, with the parents now deceased. She describes her experience as a single mother as challenging, especially juggling the responsibilities of parenting and providing for her children's needs. Despite facing challenges, the participant remains dedicated to her role in raising her children and navigates financial responsibilities independently. She attributes her strength to her role as a parent and finds solace in her connection with her children. She views past relationships, abandonment, and verbal abuse as part of life and believes in the positive influence of her parenthood journey on her mental well-being.

Ju Cor is a single, 30-year-old woman who has five children with a lot of challenges facing. Her experience during her teenage years affected her entire life that caused her to stop going to school and chose to work. Social problems and family problems push her to do things that she did not expect that she can do. As times go by she loves being a mother despite not having a partner to lean on. She always wanted to feel the love and support of a guy that is why she is not content with her past relationships and still longing and longing for the love that she has always wanted. Ju Cor is a mother that is willing to do anything even if sacrificing her own life just to provide the needs of her children. Additionally, despite her juggling responsibilities and mental problems she chooses being positive amidst all the chaos in her life. Her faith makes her stronger despite everything that she is going through.

Mal Sho, a 55-year-old woman, has been a pillar of strength for her six children despite facing numerous challenges throughout her life. With a limited education, having completed only three years of high school, she has faced financial hardship and instability, living below the poverty line and lacking a permanent home. Additionally, she has had to navigate complex family dynamics, growing up with her paternal grandparents and maintaining strained relationships with her maternal relatives. Through it all, she has remained a

steadfast presence in the lives of her children, providing unwavering support despite their own struggles with irresponsibility. Mal Sho's unwavering hope for her children, even in the face of adversity, is a testament to her resilience and unwavering love as a mother.

Instruments of the Study

To effectively gather data on the lived experiences of single mothers with multiple partner fertility, the research team meticulously developed a comprehensive interview guide. This guide served as a framework for conducting semi-structured interviews, ensuring focused discussions that delve into the three primary themes of the study: experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms. The interview guide has been carefully reviewed by experts to make sure it is reliable and relevant.

A semi-structured interview guide is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework (George, 2022). The questions are not set in order or in phrasing, but they are designed to cover specific topics or themes. Semi-structured interviews are often qualitative in nature and are generally used as an exploratory tool in marketing, social science, survey methodology, and other research fields. Semi-structured interviews are a blend of structured and unstructured types of interviews. Unlike in an unstructured interview, the interviewer has an idea of what questions they will ask (Adams, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are often open-ended, allowing for flexibility. Asking set questions in a set order allows for easy comparison between respondents, but it can be limiting. Having less structure can help you see patterns, while still allowing for comparisons between respondents. Semi-structured interviews are best used when you have prior interview experience and your research question is exploratory in nature. Participant answers can guide future research questions and help you develop a more robust knowledge base for future research (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Throughout the interview process, the researchers will maintain a respectful and empathetic demeanor, ensuring that participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions for clarification and provide additional details whenever necessary. This open and flexible approach will foster a trusting environment, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences..

Procedure

First and foremost, the researchers choose a topic relevant to the trends and issues. Once defined, the researchers choose the most suitable method to gather relevant and accurate data, this involves interviews. Questionnaires, interview guides, and observation protocols that aligned with research questions and target population were the designed instruments of the research which ensured clarity, unbiased language, and logical flow. The research paper was approved and examined by the panelists through an online research proposal last October 16, 2023.

To get the information, the researchers will conduct a one-on-one interview with single mothers who have had children with multiple partner fertility. The researchers' decision to conduct one-on-one interviews is a sound approach for gathering in-depth and personal information from the participants. This method allows for a focused and personalized conversation, enabling the researchers to delve into the participants' experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms in greater detail.

The researchers offer participants the option of conducting the interviews online or in person, providing flexibility and convenience for the participants. Online interviews through video conferencing platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, or Messenger offer accessibility and comfort for participants who may prefer to remain in their homes. In-person interviews provide a more personal and interactive setting, allowing for non-verbal cues and deeper engagement.

The researchers emphasize the importance of confidentiality and data security. They will assure participants that their identities and personal information will remain confidential throughout the research process. Additionally, they will obtain informed consent from participants before recording the interviews for transcription purposes.

The researchers' approach demonstrates careful consideration of ethical principles in conducting research with single mothers. They prioritize informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being, ensuring that the research process is conducted in a respectful and ethical manner.

Data Analysis Procedure

This research used a qualitative approach, Thematic Analysis (TA) to be exact. TA requires thematizing, coding, and even evaluating the structures of the themes. This analysis is suited to investigate the experiences of the participants. It is a method that can be applied within theories and is used to explain a wide range of qualitative data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006; Herzog, Handke, and Hitters 2019) Thematic data analysis has six phases that involve data familiarization that includes data reading and execution, interview transcript reproduction and looking for the pattern of significance. The purpose of a thematic analysis is to find themes that are significant or intriguing patterns in the data and then utilize those themes to discuss the research or make a point. A strong thematic analysis explains and makes sense of the information, more than just summarizing it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Meanwhile, cross-case analysis is a research analysis technique that compares and contrasts several cases—usually individual instances

or examples—to find trends, similarities, and differences. This methodology entails the analysis of data from individual examples, followed by cross-case comparisons to extract more general insights, patterns, or themes. By investigating how various cases relate to and interact with one another, it seeks to obtain a deeper knowledge of a phenomenon and enable academics to make more broadly applicable conclusions. In qualitative research and case research approaches, cross-case analysis is frequently used..

Ethical Consideration

The research professor has approved the data collection process and instrument, ensuring that permission has been secured and ethical standards have been strictly followed. With the professor's assistance, participants who met the established criteria were invited to participate and provided explicit consent through an informed consent form.

The informed consent form was discussed in accordance with the protocol standard for data collection. The study's purpose and objectives were explained, and the participants' rights regarding their voluntary participation were clarified. They were also assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time. Confidentiality was also discussed, and participants were assured that all data collected during the research would be used solely for academic and research purposes. Their identities would be protected by using code names, and their personal information would not be disclosed to anyone else. This is required by Republic Act 10173 and the Data Privacy Act.

Result and Discussion

Case 1: Mi Ru

Mi Ru, a 40 year old OFW single mother living under the socioeconomic class in the middle. She said that she was rebellious when she was in her teenage years. She always disobeys her parents but she is kind as a person but not as a daughter. Her mother always scolded her. That is why she is not close to her, she is close to her father because she is spoiled by him. Later on, Mi Ru is forced to stop college because of lack of financial support and her other siblings will go to school. And with that she decided to work and help her family. That time, Mi Ru gets pregnant, which results in a wedding despite the unintended pregnancy. This interview was conducted on November 4, 2023.

The table shows the themes emerging from the statements of Mi Ru, about her experiences, challenges and coping mechanisms as a single mother.

Mi Ru's experiences focused on Education Deprivation and Rebellion. It shows that she is nearly neglected and always scolded by her mother that results in her to be a rebellious daughter and the education that is deprived from her was the reason why she started working that leads to being a mother.

Table 1. *Thematic analysis of Mi Ru's Lived Experiences*

Theme	Subthemes
	Rebellion
	Not My Mother's Favorite (Unfavorable)
The Family Dynamics	Unplanned Situations (Uncertainty)
	Educational Deprivation (Sacrifice)

Mi Ru talked about how she is and what her experiences during her childhood and teenage years that somehow manifested her into engaging in relationships wherein, she stated that: “*Noong kabataan ko medyo rebelde ako kasi palagi ako napapagalitan. Lagi ako naka suway sa magulang ko pero ayos naman, kahit nagrerebelde ako maayos naman ako makisama sa ibang tao kasi ganun ako pinalaki ng magulang ko kahit na matigas talaga ulo ko as anak.*” (When I was young I was a bit of a rebel because I was always scolded. I've always disobeyed my parents but that's okay, even though I'm rebelling I can get along well with other people because that's how my parents raised me even though I'm really stubborn as a child.)

And she added that:

“*Ako kasi ang madalas na napapalo kasi nga rebelde ako, ang favorite kasi ay yung bunso namin hindi siya napapalo pero yung pagdidisiplina sa amin talaga lahat.*” (I'm the one who gets beaten up often because I'm a rebel, the favorite is our youngest, he/she doesn't get beaten up but disciplining is for us all, really.)

In this statement it shows that having a maltreatment can also be a reason to be rebellious that may cause teenage pregnancy. According to Garwood et al. (2015) poverty in the community, as well as childhood periods of family income maintenance and a history of

maltreatment, were linked to an increased risk of later early pregnancy. Females with a history of at least one report of maltreatment were 66% more likely to be in the early pregnancy group.

She also stated that

“ Yung pinahinto nila ako ng pag aaral noong college, kasi ayaw ko talaga huminto pero kasi mag aaral yung dalawang kapatid ko na sumunod sa akin sa private school. Kaya wala ako nagawa kasi hindi kakayanin ng magulang namin, pumayag ako pero masama ang loob ko.” (They made me stop studying in college, because I really didn't want to stop but because my two brothers who followed me were going to research in private school. So I cannot do anything because our parents couldn't handle it, I agreed but I have a heavy heart.)

According to Were (2007) Girls are prone to teenage pregnancy due to a lack of access to education, sex education, and contraceptive information, as well as widespread poverty. The issue of adolescent pregnancy should be viewed in perspective of the broader socioeconomic and sociocultural environment in which the adolescents operate. For example, stereotypes that prevent such discussions reiterated a lack of parental guidance on issues of sexuality and sex education.

A growing body of evidence suggests that girls who become pregnant or marry young may have already been performing poorly in school, have started school late, or have faced academic challenges that increase the likelihood of an early marriage or pregnancy (Stobenau et al., 2015).

Mi Ru also added in her statements:

“Actually kaya ako naikasal dahil nag buntis ako. Ang mga nanay kasi noon kailangan pag nag buntis ka ikasal ka.” (Actually I got married because I was pregnant. Mothers used to have to get married when you got pregnant.)

According to Lindberg (2016) Women who had an unintended pregnancy were 2.5 times more likely than women who did not have an unintended pregnancy to marry within two years. The research also discovered that the risk of marriage was even higher for women who were already living with the child's father.

Table 2. Thematic analysis of Mi Ru's Challenges

Theme	Subthemes
A Ladder to Comfort	Mother's Duty (Physical Exhaustion)
	Mother as a Provider (Financial Constraints)

Ladder to comfort is major theme that arise in Mi Ru's response. It is indeed challenging to all of those single mothers who are still striving. In responsibility came across the sea, Mi Ru stated that:

“Hindi naman, nag stay naman ako ng matagal sa pilipinas, pag umaalis ako bumabalik rin naman ako. Pero nagtagal rin naman ako sa pilipinas.” (Not really, I stayed long in the Philippines, when I leave I also come back. But I also spent a long time in the Philippines.)

According to Agonos et al. (2015) overseas employment influences more than 10% of the total Filipino population. In order to provide a better future for their families. While the goal of parental migration is financial stability, the compositional change in the family can have negative consequences for the children who are left behind. This explains that despite the homesicks, feeling of being alone and struggles; Mi Ru chooses to go overseas to fulfill her responsibilities to provide for the needs of her child.

Being not able to provide for the needs of their children has a negative effect on single mothers. Mi Ru said that:

“Oo, siguro yung mga panahon na hirap na hirap ako financially na iprovide yung mga pangangailangan ng anak ko.” (Yes, maybe the time that I am struggling to provide for the needs of my children financially.)

Mi Ru feels that she is worthless when she cannot fulfill her duty as a mother not only being physically available but also in financial fulfillment. Single mothers face not only financial difficulties, but also emotional difficulties as a result of their situation. Some single mothers, mostly widows, felt helpless and hopeless in their situation (Ramos & Tus, 2020).

She also added that:

“Yung mga gastusin kasi kahit hindi pa ako sumasahod at nakakapag padala kwentado na. Sapat naman siya, hindi umabot sa point na zero sila kahit wala ako.” (Even though I did not have my salary and send money yet the expenses are always counted. It is enough, it never comes to the point that they are zero despite my absence.)

Working single mothers who need to manage their lives can benefit from life management skills such as organizational, time management, and budgeting (Debord, 2000). Budgeting is such a skill that a working single mother should possess. This helps to

provide all the needs for their children and not end up neglecting other needs.

Table 3. *Thematic analysis of Mi Ru's Coping Mechanisms*

Theme	Subthemes
Peace Over Chaos	Independence
	Motherhood
	Resiliency
	Faith
	Controlling Emotions

Single-parent households, the majority of which are led by single mothers, face even greater risks, requiring them to be independent (Fortier, 2020). Independent mothers display incredible resilience and strength in overcoming challenges. They develop resourceful problem-solving skills, learn to advocate for themselves and their children, and discover inner reserves of courage and determination.

"Hindi, hingi-hingi lang ng barya barya pero ako talaga lahat pagkain, pambaon, pang milktea, pang coffee shop ako talaga." (No, it is just coins but food, allowance, milk teas and coffee shops are all in me.) Mi Ru said.

"Hindi, talagang feelings lang pero yung sabihin mo "ay kailangan ko mag asawa para may makatulong ako sa buhay" hindi talaga kasi ako pag sinabi ko anak ko yan responsibilidad ko yan hindi ko ipapaako sa iba." (No, it's really just feelings, but when you say "I need to get married so that I have helped someone in my life" not really me because when I say it's my child, that's my responsibility, I won't leave it to others.)

This reflects that single mothers are independent and they are not always dependent on their partners to fulfill their responsibility to her children.

Guidance is one of the responsibilities of a mother when taking care of their children. Mi Ru stated that:

"Mabunganga ako sobra at hindi ako tumigil hanggang hindi ako nasusunod, kasi gusto ko masunod kung ano yung gusto ko para sa kanila." (I am very noisy and I don't stop until I'm not obeyed, because I want to obey what I want for them.)

She also added that: *"Para sa akin hindi naman sila magrebelde dahil hindi naman sila lumaking bastos, atsaka lumaki silang marunong umintindi."* (For me, they won't rebel because they didn't grow up rude, in fact they grew up understanding.)

Women believe that good mothers sacrifice for their children, that they are self-sufficient and teach their children to be so, and that they protect their children (Elliot, 2013). Rebellion can be a sign of growth, a chance to navigate their own path. By cultivating a supportive environment where respect and open dialogue thrive, you can guide children towards responsible self-expression and foster a healthy parent-child bond that weathers inevitable challenges.

Having someone to hold on and to believe in is one of the best ways to cope up with every challenge and experience. And that is why Mi Ru overcomes challenges in her life. She stated that:

"Yung mga panahon ngayon mahilig ako mag dasal diba catholic pa ako noon, although hindi ako palasimba pero mahilig ako mag dasal na kung meant ito na mangyari sa akin bigyan mo ako ng lakas ng loob." (These days I love to pray, right? I was still a Catholic, although I'm not a churchgoer, but I love to pray that if this is meant to happen to me, give me courage.)

She also stated that:

"Oo naman masaya naman ako, hindi naman kasi pag nagkaroon ako ng partner tapos nagkaanak ako "ay ayoko nito kasi pagkakasala ito" no. Sabi ko nga sayo dati mapag dasal ako, malakas ang paniniwala ko sa diyos kaya para sa akin blessing yon." (Yes, I'm happy, it's not because I had a partner and then I had a child "I don't want it because it's a sin" no. I told you before that I pray, I have a strong belief in God, so for me it is a blessing.)

Whether or not single parenting was a choice, or the result of life's ups and downs, raising a child without sharing the burden with the partner is sometimes accompanied by having to deal with social criticism (Dor, 2021). It reflects what Mi Ru said that:

"Normal lang naman yon, sa mga kapitbahay, ibang tao normal lang yun pero hindi naman harap harapan naririnig ko lang." (It is normal in the neighborhood, other people that is normal but I just heard it not face to face).

In this case, truly that social criticism and judgment are everywhere. Every situation that people are facing, there is always something that people can tell about and it cannot be controlled.

Aside from social criticism and judgment, Single mothers also experience abuse. The majority of the 26.6% of women who experienced domestic violence experienced verbal and emotional abuse. The majority of abused women stated that the violence was caused by their partners' anger (Duran, 2019).

"Physical hindi, pero verbal oo kasi noon bantay ako ng tatay ko kaya hindi ako kayang saktan." (Physically no, but verbally yes

because my father used to watch over me so he cannot hurt me.)

Verbal abuse by a husband towards his wife is a serious form of domestic violence, inflicting profound emotional and psychological harm even in the absence of physical injury.

Case 2: Ju Cor

Ju Cor, a 30-year-old single mother of five, living under the poverty line. She says that she experienced a history of rape which altered her perspective in friendship, love and life. She openly says that her relationship with her parents is not as easy as it seems. Her father is the only provider in the family which opted her to assist her family financially rather than pursue personal aspirations, choosing sacrifice over personal growth. She worked as a prostitute in a bar and there she met multiple guys having no emotional attachment at all. Unfortunately, upon doing the sexual intercourse, it leads her having multiple children into different partners. Despite this, Ju Cor was able to cope with her problems through her faith —that God is within her, she shall not fall. This interview was conducted on November 6, 2023.

The table shows the themes emerging from the statements of Ju Cor, about her experiences as a single mother.

Ju Cor's experiences focused on lack of familial love and support. It shows that she was experiencing emotional neglect during her childhood which prompted her to work at an early age. It is also shown in the table that she was just doing the sexual intercourse because of money. The traumas echoing in her soul resonate in every part of her being, casting a long shadow over her life, a constant reminder of the love that was missing and the warmth she craved. She continues to search, driven by a flicker of hope that somewhere, beyond the darkness, lies a love that can mend the shattered pieces of her life.

Table 4. *Thematic analysis of Ju Cor's Lived Experiences*

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>
Making Ends Meet	Poverty Runs in the Family (Financial Constraints)
	Having No Emotional Attachment on Guys (Lack of Emotional Connection or Attachment)
	Experiencing Abuse (Abuse)
	Active Sex Life (Sexual Satisfaction)
	The desire for relationships (Affiliation Motivation)
	Broken Relationship with the Fam (Identity and Belonging)
	Lack of Familial Love and Support (Neglect)
	Experiencing Stress in Motherhood (Stress)
	Violence Under Pressure (Violence)

Ju Cor started to share her experience in the family with her relationship with her parents. She said that her parents were emotionally and physically absent — never gave their full support. As stated:

“Madalas naman nagtatalo sa harapan namin habang lumalaki kami. Hindi (kami) okay kasi ...mahilig kasi nanay ko sa bisyo, sugal.” (Often, they used to argue in front of us as we were growing up. It wasn't okay because... my mom was fond of vices, gambling.)

“Pamalo. Ganon, yung disiplina niya sa amin. Tumigil ka diyan, papaluin kita. Pag hindi ka na tumigil sa isa, dalawang saway na yun, papaluin ka talaga ng tatay ko. Meron time na naglalaro kami, papaluin talaga kami. (She used to hit us. That's how she disciplined us. 'Stop it, or I'll hit you.' If you didn't stop after one warning, my dad would really hit you. There were times when we were playing, and we'd really get hit.)

Economic struggles can lead to increased stress and strain within relationships, increasing the risk of domestic violence, separation,



and single parenthood (Edin & Kefalas, 2011). In some cases, individuals may form multiple partnerships in search of financial support or resources.

Lower-class families frequently struggle with poverty, limited access to education and employment opportunities, and inadequate healthcare. This can significantly impact a single mother's ability to provide for her children's basic needs, secure stable housing, and access quality child care (Seccombe, 2019). Ju Cor once said:

“May bahay nga ako. Gutom naman kami. Hanggang sa nanglilimos na nga sa mga kasamahan ko dati, para lang makakain yung mga anak ko” (Even though I have a house, we still go hungry. There were times when I had to beg from my former companions just so my children could eat.)

“Minsan talaga hindi na sila nakakapasok dahil mas pipiliin ko yung pagkain.” (Sometimes, they really can't go to school because I'd rather choose food.)

Poverty and limited resources can perpetuate cycles of disadvantage, restricting access to social networks, support systems, and opportunities for upward mobility. Single mothers from lower-class families may face social stigma, discrimination, and limited access to essential services, further hindering their ability to break free from the cycle (Rankin, 2014).

For some women, poverty acts as a direct trigger, pushing them towards sex work as a means of immediate survival, meeting basic needs for themselves or their families. All of this can be explained when Ju Cor has been in a cycle of abuse. She said that she nearly experienced being raped.

“Kaya lang naman kasi nasira yung ulo ko dahil nung muntik na akong ma-rape.” (It's just that my mind was damaged because I almost got raped)

Individuals who have experienced abuse might inadvertently gravitate toward similar patterns of unhealthy relationships. This cycle can take various forms, from entering romantic relationships with partners who display controlling or manipulative behaviors to seeking intimacy within the transactional realm of sex work. In both cases, the underlying desire for connection can lead to unhealthy relationships and a persistent pursuit of stability or safety that remains inaccessible.

The attraction of instant relationships, even in situations that might be harmful, can overshadow the future dangers and continue a cycle of susceptibility. As Campbell and Wishtart (2014) highlight, individuals fleeing abuse who enter sex work may find a semblance of acceptance and emotional validation, even if it's fleeting and comes at the cost of power imbalances and exploitation.

In the case of Ju Cor, she stated that she didn't want any emotional attachment after all. Yet, she still hopes to find genuine love and care for her children.

“Parang wala nga akong first love. Kasi yung pagkababae ko, nakuha lang ng sino, binayaran lang ako” (It's like I never had a first love. Because my femininity, someone just took it, I was just paid for it)

“May kulang na parang gusto ko may kasama naman ako sa buhay. Kung gano'n, yung pinapadalan ka lang, sa cellphone lang kayo nag-uusap, hindi mo na makikita. Siyempre may parang may pangangailangan ka na ewan ko kung makati ba talaga o napapano. Yung kung gano'n talaga, e, parang kanalandan naman” (There's something missing, like I want someone to be with in life. But in that situation, where you're just sending messages, just talking on the phone, you won't even see each other. Of course, there's a kind of need, I don't know if it's really longing or what. If it's really like that, it's like a virtual reality.)

Because of managing numerous responsibilities, Ju Cor was evidently under significant stress as a mother. Nevertheless, her situation was severe and required urgent attention. She said here:

“Meron time na pumapasok na sa utak ko na baka gusto ko na kailangan sana kitang patayin kasi naiinis na ako pati kailangan mo kong ganyanin” (There were times when it crossed my mind that maybe I wanted to, I felt like I needed to kill you because I was getting irritated, and you didn't need to treat me like that.)

Research by the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (2015) highlights that chronic parental stress can lead to feelings of overwhelm and negatively impact mental and emotional well-being. When faced with significant pressures like managing multiple responsibilities, parents, particularly single mothers, may resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms like anger outbursts or withdrawal.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2023) on the other hand, suggested the crucial role of support and intervention in such situations. Recognizing and addressing the source of stress, whether through individual therapy, support groups, or family counseling, can be critical in preventing escalation and promoting healthy coping strategies.

Table 5. Thematic analysis of Ju Cor's Challenges

Themes	Subthemes
Emotional Crossroads	The Feeling of Guilt (Guilt)

Not Contented With What She Has
(Discontentment)

Childrens' Biological Fathers' Failure
(Financial Constraints)

Facing Judgements and Persecutions
(Social Rejection)

Illness while Parenting (Stress & Illness)

Working Everytime, Anywhere
(Workaholism)

Being a single mother with multiple partner fertility is indeed prone to judgment and criticisms, often stemming from a complex interplay of societal expectations, gender biases, and cultural norms. In one statement, Ju Cor says: *“Panghuhusga, oo. Nakaranasan ko yun nung dalaga ako kesyo ganyan ako, ganyan. Bakit daw ginagawa ko yun? Bakit daw di ka na lang magtino, magbago?”* (Judgment, yes. I experienced that when I was young, being criticized for being this way or that. They asked why I was doing that? Why didn't I just behave better, change?)

Research shows that single mothers, already burdened by societal perceptions of inadequacy, face an additional layer of judgment when their family structure deviates from the traditional. From subtle prejudices in everyday interactions to outright discrimination in crucial areas like employment, housing, and even child custody battles (Schaefer & Edin, 2016), the weight of societal expectations can be overwhelming. Furthermore, traditional gender roles often paint mothers as the sole caregivers, with fathers as secondary figures. When this dynamic shifts in families with multiple partners, single mothers can face accusations of promiscuity or neglecting their children's needs (Gerson & Morris, 2013). Adding another layer of complexity, cultural values around family structure can further fuel disapproval, with some cultures viewing multiple partners as morally wrong or detrimental to the children's upbringing (Collins & Russell, 2011). This complex interplay of societal pressures can significantly impact the well-being of single mothers and their families, highlighting the need for greater understanding, acceptance, and support for diverse family structures.

Ju Cor faces an additional burden: she's battling kidney disease. Juggling the demands of single motherhood for five children is a challenge enough for Ju Cor. Now, a kidney disease diagnosis adds another layer of difficulty to her life, hindering her ability to fully support her children.

“Sa ngayon kasi may sakit ako, kung magkakakomplikasyon pa ako sa ibang komplikasyon.” (At the moment, I'm sick, and if I develop other complications, it will be more challenging.)

“Yung magkakaroon ng sakit nang sabay-sabay. Yung ang sakit pa naman eh, ikaw lang mag-isa tapos may sakit sila lahat sa loob ng bahay.” (Having everyone get sick all at once. It's painful when you're the only one well, and they're all sick inside the house.)

Studies show that chronic illness, particularly kidney disease, can significantly impact single mothers' ability to fulfill their childcare responsibilities (Finch et al., 2013). The physical and emotional demands of managing their own health, coupled with the constant needs of their children, can create an overwhelming burden. This can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety (Coyne et al., 2012). Additionally, financial strain due to medical expenses can further exacerbate these challenges, creating a vicious cycle of stress and hardship.

Managing multiple simultaneous payments while renting can be a significant financial strain. Research suggests that renters often face "stacked debt," where overlapping bills and limited income create a cycle of financial difficulty (Shapir et al., 2020). Ju cor says:

“Medyo nahihirapan lang dahil sa pagsabay-sabay na yung mga gastos, bayarin kasi nangungupahan lang kami. (I'm having a bit of a hard time because the expenses are piling up due to simultaneous payments; we're just renting.)

She added: *“Yung trabaho ko sa gabi tas uuwi ako sa kanila ng umaga para asikasuhin sila. Minsan, nung gabing trabaho ko na yun, ganoon pa rin yung trabaho ko. Sa bar pa rin. Yung gabi na uuwi ako, asikasuhin ko pa rin sila ng umaga. Halos wala akong tulog minsan iniwan ko nalang sa kapatid kong kay Gris yung pera. Asikasuhin mga kapatid mo.”* (I work the night shift, and I go home to take care of them in the morning. Sometimes, after that night shift, I still have work at a bar. Even when I come home at night, I still have to attend to them in the morning. Sometimes, I barely get any sleep, and I leave the money with my sister Gris. Take care of your siblings.)

Ju Cor also shares how the father of her children fails to support him financially. She says: *“Umuwi ako doon. Yung nagtagal-tagal na parang nawala na yung sustento, nawala na yung ano. Nung nanganak na lang ako doon na nagbigay ng sustento tapos hanggang*

isang taon lang yun.” (I went back there. The support that had been there for a while seemed to have disappeared, it was gone. It was only when I gave birth there that support was provided, but it only lasted for about a year.)

Unfortunately, Ju Cor's experience of her partner's disappearing financial support after childbirth is unfortunately not uncommon. Research suggests that fatherhood can lead to a decline in men's financial contributions to their families, particularly in unmarried couples (Sweeney & Marks, 2001). This phenomenon can be attributed to various factors, including: shifting priorities, reduced work hours, social stigma surrounding single mothers receiving support, and the lack of legal obligation in informal arrangements. The consequences for mothers and children can be severe.

Single parents, often juggling work, childcare, and financial hardship, are particularly vulnerable to role overload.

“Naisip ko na din magbigte. Naisip ko na rin kung ano-ano sa sarili ko pero inisip ko, gagawin ko to? kung ngayon nga kawawa yung mga anak ko na nabubuhay ako eh, tas gagawin ko pang magpakamatay, para naman ako nasisiraan talaga.” (I've also considered hanging myself. I've thought about many things for myself, but I thought, "Will I do this?" If my children are already pitiful with me being alive, and then I'll consider committing suicide, that would truly ruin me.)

Research conducted by scholars like Leahy et al. emphasizes the link between excessive stress and mental health, highlighting how prolonged stress can lead to feelings of hopelessness and, in severe cases, suicidal ideation. The burden of juggling work, caretaking, and financial pressures, as depicted in the account, may significantly contribute to this overwhelming mental strain.

Furthermore, a research by Han et al. (2022) found that single mothers experiencing financial stress were significantly more likely to report symptoms of depression and anxiety compared to mothers with stable finances. The research suggests that the constant pressure to meet basic needs while managing childcare and other responsibilities can lead to a depletion of coping resources and an increased risk of mental health problems. Similar to the research of Miller et al. (2015), they found that mothers experiencing high levels of role overload, defined as the combination of work demands, childcare responsibilities, and financial strain, were significantly more likely to report symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress compared to mothers with lower levels of role overload. The research also identified a positive correlation between these symptoms and suicidal ideation.

Table 6. *Thematic analysis of Ju Cor's Coping Mechanisms*

Themes	Subthemes
Faith Over Fear	Being Positive Amidst the Chaos (Resiliency)
	Getting Support from Close Friends (Social Support)
	Single Mothers Surrendering their Struggles to God (Faith)
The Path to Independence	

One step of coping mechanisms for Ju Cor is independence. She says,

“Gusto ko kasing mas nakabukod na walang nangingialam kesa yung magkakasama kami na lahat ng bagay tungkol sa mga anak ko, ipapakilaman.” (I prefer to be more independent without anyone interfering, rather than being together where everything about my children is meddled with.)

According to the Family Theory of Bowen (1966), the theory emphasizes the importance of healthy boundaries within the family, allowing individual autonomy while fostering a supportive environment. This creates a dynamic system where communication, respect for differences, and individual well-being are prioritized over enmeshment and control. When these boundaries are weak or blurred, problems like conflict, codependency, and abuse can arise.

She also added that without God, she won't be able to cope up with all of her struggles and challenges. As she mentioned:

“Ay, oo naniniwala ko sa Diyos kasi kung hindi ako naniniwala sa Diyos, hindi ako magiging matatag at hinding hindi ko ito kakayanin dahil kung hindi ako naniniwala sa Diyos, mas marami nang nasira ang ulo sa naging problema ko at marami pang masisira at baka nagpakamatay na.” (Oh, yes, I believe in God because if I didn't believe in God, I wouldn't be strong, and I wouldn't be able to handle this because if I didn't believe in God, many more things would have gone wrong due to my problems, and more things might have been ruined, and I might have even committed suicide.)

She also says that:

“Lagi naman ako nagpapasalamat sa kanya. Yung mga kung ano man yung kako yung binigay niya sa akin problema, pagsubok na dumadating sa akin, lagi ako nagpapasalamat” (I always give thanks to Him. Whatever difficulties or trials He gives me, I am always thankful.)

Ju Cor’s belief in God and reliance on faith as a coping mechanism is supported by numerous studies on the role of religion and spirituality in mental health. A 2013 research published by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that religious beliefs and practices can offer a sense of comfort, hope, and meaning in times of hardship, helping individuals to reframe stressful situations and cope with adversity. Studies have further linked religious engagement to lower levels of depression and anxiety, with individuals finding solace in prayer, spiritual rituals, and community support.

Similar findings are echoed in a 2019 research by the Pew Research Center, which highlights the positive association between religion and well-being. The research found that individuals who engage in religious activities tend to report higher levels of happiness, life satisfaction, and social support, further supporting the woman’s statement about her reliance on faith for strength and gratitude.

Lastly, she says that difficult times are inevitable but so is the strength to overcome them. Throughout our lives, we encounter both difficulties and moments of joy, periods of abundance and scarcity. Ju Cor stated;

“Yung mahirap, dumadating talaga sa buhay yung taong nahihirapan. Hindi naman lagi tayo meron, hindi naman lagi tayo wala. So kung sa ngayon, ay mababa ka, aangat at aangat ka pa rin kasi lalong lumalaki yung mga anak mo eh.” (The difficult times really come into the lives of those who are struggling. We don’t always have everything, nor are we always without. So, if at present, you’re at a low point, you will rise and continue to rise because your children are growing up.)

One key factor contributing to resilience is the growth mindset, a belief that abilities can be developed and improved through effort and perseverance. Individuals with a growth mindset view challenges as opportunities for learning and growth, rather than setbacks. This helps them maintain a sense of optimism and motivates them to keep moving forward. A research published by Morris et al. (2021) supports this idea. The research found that individuals who had a strong sense of purpose were more likely to experience positive emotions and less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety, even in the face of stress. Furthermore, a 2018 research published in the Journal Child Development found that parents who experienced adversity in their own lives tended to be more nurturing and supportive towards their children. This suggests that challenges, while difficult to endure, can also lead to personal growth and positive change, ultimately benefiting the individual and those around them.

Case 3: Mal Sho

Mal Sho, a 55-year-old participant, gave a brief overview of her life. She talked about the difficulties she had managing complicated family dynamics, doing odd jobs, and raising six children as a single mother. Mal Sho shared heartbreaking times of giving up things for her children’s needs while working hard to fund their education in spite of financial difficulties. Having experienced difficult upbringing, she stressed the value of parental support and guidance—something she herself lacked. Mal Sho thought back on her relationships, admitting her mistakes and expressing her displeasure with her kids’ decisions.

Mal Sho shared her lived experiences where she tells us about the challenging upbringing, having been raised by her grandmother due to family conflicts. She explained the strained relationships between her parents, with her mother’s family disapproving of her father. Mal Sho described her childhood, where her grandmother’s discipline was enforced, occasionally by her uncle’s orders. She elaborated on the complexities of family dynamics, including conflicts with her siblings, who she grew distant from due to living on her father’s side. Mal Sho also touched on societal expectations in the province, restrictions on visiting men’s houses, and her cautious approach to relationships. The interview touched on Mal Sho’s use of contraception, the decision to discontinue, and the struggles of motherhood without initial planning. She candidly shared early experiences of romantic interest, including her first crush at 14 and having a boyfriend in the third year of high school.

Table 7. *Thematic analysis of Mal Sho’s Lived Experiences*

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>
	Lack of Familial Love and Support (Neglect)
	Navigating both support and conflicts (Interpersonal Conflict)
Against Societal Norms	Secret Rendezvous (Secrecy)
	Hatred from previous relationships (Hatred)

Wedding Paradox
(Reproductive Decision-Making)

Innocence and Passion of Young Love
(Innocence)

Based on the topics that fall under the lived experiences, Mal sho talked about the significance and experiences she had in her life as a single mother. These are the; Hot and cold relationship, Forbidden Romance in a Restrictive Environment, Past is Past, Against Societal Norms and Ephemeral Bliss.

Mal sho stated here:

"Hindi talaga maayos. Lumaki kase ako sa lola ko, kaya di ko na experience mahalin ng mga magulang ko. Galit kase si mama ko sa lola ko, may lahing chinese kase papa ko e. Eh Ayaw ng pamilya ni papa kay mama. Kaya ayun." (It wasn't really good. I grew up with my grandmother, so I didn't experience being loved by my parents. My mother was angry at my grandmother because my father is of Chinese descent. My father's family didn't approve of my mother. That's why.)

"Nung kabataan ko kase, mapusok ako, pero syempre iniisip ko rin bakit naging ganito kalagayan ko kasi hindi ako kinupkop ng magulang ko nung nadapa ako ng isang beses. Kinupkop nya lang ako isang beses para lang alilain kaya lumayas ako samin, nakapag-try ng bagong buhay at eto. Taga-Tondo pa nga kami. Pero dito nako tumira. Kaya pag nadadapa ka, dapat nandyan yung magulang mo. Buti nga yung iba, nandyan yung magulang, ginagabayan sila. Kinupkop lang ako para alilain, ultimo piso wala kang maibigay. Tas pag nag aaway yung anak at pamangkin nyo wala kang magawa" (When I was young, I was rebellious, but of course, I also think about why I ended up in this situation because my parents didn't nurture me when I stumbled once. They only nurtured me once just to make me serve, so I left home, tried a new life, and ended up here. We're even from Tondo, but I live here now. That's why when you stumble, your parents should be there. Some are fortunate to have their parents guiding them. I was only nurtured to serve; I couldn't even give a single cent. And when your child and nieces or nephews quarrel, you can't do anything.)

The individuals underscore intricate family dynamics and the influence of early-life experiences on their outlook and present circumstances. Mal Sho recounts a difficult upbringing, citing conflicts between their mother and grandmother rooted in cultural disparities.

The presence of Chinese heritage on their father's side further compounds tension within the family. This situation aligns with research on how family dynamics shape an individual's emotional well-being (Chen et al., 2017), emphasizing that cultural clashes within families can strain relationships and impact overall personal development (Chirkov et al., 2018).

Additionally, Mal Sho discusses a sense of neglect and lack of parental affection, highlighting a crucial moment when support was needed after an injury. The absence of parental care during this pivotal time reflects studies emphasizing the vital role of parental involvement in a child's emotional and physical development (Landry et al., 2002). The lack of parental support during formative years can significantly affect an individual's self-esteem and resilience (Luthar et al., 2000).

Moreover, the participant refers to their residence in Tondo and the challenges associated with their current community. This underscores the community's role in shaping individuals' perspectives and opportunities, aligning with research on the impact of socio-economic factors on well-being (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). The participant's observations of others with supportive families underscore the pivotal role of family in navigating challenges (Conger & Donnellan, 2007).

In the statement of Mal Sho:

"Nung nasa Nueva Ecija, yung nagpapaligaw ng patago kase nga masungit, ayaw nya." (When I was in Nueva Ecija, someone courted me discreetly because I was perceived as snobbish, and my mother didn't like it.)

"Sa probinsya kasi bawal ka pumunta sa bahay ng lalaki, ganon nangyayari, nagpapaalam naman ako sa mga uncle ko. Ang naka-ano lang talaga sakín yung tatay panganay ko." (In the province, it's prohibited to visit a man's house; that's what happens. I ask for permission from my uncles. My eldest father is the one strict about it.)

"Sabi ko pa nga iniingatan ako ng lola ko, ayaw ako magka boyfriend, patago makapag boyfriend. Kaya nahihiya rin ako. Eh meron din ako pinsan, dalawa yung kanya, kaya lang kumakabet sya sa may asawa." (I said to myself, my grandmother was protecting me, not letting me have a boyfriend, so i'm keeping it a secret. That's why I feel ashamed. But I have a cousin, she has two, but she's involved with a married man.)

Mal Sho's responses offer insights into how cultural and familial factors shape their romantic relationships, revealing the impact of societal norms and family expectations.

The participant describes the difficulties of courtship in Nueva Ecija, attributing them to their grandmother's strict nature. This corresponds with research on the influence of cultural and family norms on dating practices (Regnerus & Uecker, 2011). In traditional or conservative settings, societal expectations significantly mold individuals' romantic behaviors and choices (Perilloux et al., 2011).

Additionally, the responses highlight restrictions in the province regarding visits to men's houses, emphasizing the necessity of obtaining family approval, particularly from uncles. This aligns with studies exploring the impact of community and family norms on social interactions, underscoring the importance of familial consent in specific cultural contexts (Kagitcibasi, 2007).

The participant discloses their grandmother's protective stance, expressing disapproval of having a boyfriend. This mirrors studies on how families influence romantic choices and behaviors (Collins & Madsen, 2006). The participant's reluctance and embarrassment regarding having a boyfriend underscore the internalization of family values.

Mal Sho mentions a more openly romantic cousin, even engaging in extramarital affairs. This offers insight into variations within the same family or cultural context, aligning with studies that explore how individuals within a community may interpret and navigate cultural norms.

Table 8. *Thematic analysis of Mal Sho's Challenges*

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>
Emotional Baggage	Moments of disconnection (Disconnection)
	Maintaining Order and Understanding (Stress)
	Victim of Abuse and Cheating (Abuse)
	Strives to Make Ends (Financial Constraints)
	Societal Judgment and Prejudices (Social Stigma)
	Desire for Companionship (Longingness)
	Impact of Past Relationships (Hatred & Stress)

Mal sho discussed the challenges she encountered in her life as a single mother in this section. These are The Division within the family, Toxic Relationships, Limited Financial Means, Poor Lifestyle, Harsh Opinions and Misconceptions, The Lonely Path of Single Motherhood, Stress Faced by a Single Mother and Emotional Baggage.

Based on the participant statement:

"Naku umaga na uuwi. Laman ng barangay yan e. Ngayon di na, makukulong na sila. Sarap tambay nyan e." (They are going home as it's already morning. They are always in the barangay. Now no more, they might get arrested. They enjoy hanging out.)

"Ang iniyyakan ko na lang yung college ko (pang-apat na anak). Kaya lang mabunganga din yon, madalas di kaming mag away." (I just cry over my child in college (the fourth child). However, they can be quite talkative; we often argue.)

"Pinaglaban ko yan sila. Sabi ko nga kung alam ko lang na ganyan ugali nyo, di ko na sana kayo kinuha sa mga tatay nyo. Nakikipag unahan pa ako. Yung anak ko sa Pampanga nagka barangayan pa kami nyan eh." (I fought for them. I even said that if I knew you had such behavior, I wouldn't have taken you from your fathers. I even rushed to get them. My child in Pampanga, we even had a conflict.)

Mal sho's statements illuminate the difficulties they encounter as a parent, particularly in relation to the actions of their college-aged child. The mention of the child returning home late in the morning and participating in community matters reveals concerns about the child's activities. The phrase "Ngayon di na, makukulong na sila. Sarap tambay nyan e" suggests a shift in circumstances, indicating potential legal consequences for the child and their peers.

This situation aligns with research on youth delinquency and its potential effects on family dynamics (Dodge et al., 2006). Mal sho's recognition of the child's college education as a source of pride, along with noting the child's talkative nature and infrequent conflicts, corresponds with research emphasizing the role of education in family dynamics and communication (Dee, 2004).

The expression of having advocated for their children and regretting not being aware of certain behaviors earlier reflects the intricate nature of parent-child relationships and the challenges of navigating unforeseen aspects of a child's life (Lerner et al., 2015). Furthermore, the mention of conflicts in Pampanga underscores the impact of community surroundings on family dynamics, contributing to the broader context of socio-cultural studies on family interactions (Coleman, 1988).

"Mga nananakit. Yung sa una hindi naman. Pag may nag iinterview nga dito sinasabi ko na wag na ilagay apelyido ng mga anak ko kasi nga lahat panganay. Lahat kasi sila sa naka-apelyido sa tatay." (The ones who cause pain. The first one didn't. When someone interviews me here, I tell them not to include my children's last name because they're all eldest. They all have their father's surname.)

"Iresponsable, yung mga walang ka-ano ano. Nanakit. Walang patutunguhan sa buhay" (Irresponsible, those without any connection. Causing pain. No direction in life.)

"Sa pangalawa, nambabae. Naglalabada ako non makikita mo na lang sya may ka-date. Tas manghilingi kang pambili bigas, wala daw. Pag tinignan mo yung wallet, may pera naman tas makikita mo na lang nasa inuman." (The second one, he cheats. I used to do the laundry, then suddenly you'll see him on a date. Then when you ask for money to buy rice, he says there's none. But when you check his wallet, there's money, and later you'll find out he spent it on drinking.)

"Nakipagrelasyon nga ako neto lang kaya lang iniwasan ko. Kase nagtatrabaho siya dito sa Balagtas. Alam ng mga kapatid ko yun, kase nagpost yun sa iba ng bold (nakapatong), sa pangalan ko at picture ko. Kala lahat ng friends ko sa FB ganon ako." (I did have a relationship with this last one, but I avoided it. Because he works in Balagtas. My siblings know that because he posted something explicit (involving me) with my name and picture. My friends on Facebook might think that's who I am.)

Mal sho's narrative reveals encounters with past partners who caused harm, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of their relationships. The statement about refraining from disclosing their children's last names during interviews, as all of them share the father's surname, underscores the complexities of familial relationships and the potential influence of patrilineal naming conventions on identity (Goldin & Shim, 2004).

Mal sho's second experience involves both infidelity and financial deception, aligning with research that explores the intersection of trust, infidelity, and economic factors in relationships (Mark et al., 2011).

The mention of requesting money for rice under the pretense of poverty, only to later be seen in social settings, adds a layer of betrayal and deceit, reflecting broader themes explored in studies on interpersonal trust and deception. Lastly, Mal sho's third relationship involves caution and avoidance, influenced by the partner's explicit actions shared on social media. This illustrates the impact of digital communication on relationship dynamics and the broader consequences of online behaviors on personal reputation (Fox & Warber, 2014).

The multifaceted narratives in Mal sho's interview underscore the intricate interplay of trust, identity, and the digital realm within the context of intimate relationships.

"May nabibigay ako pag meron, pag wala, hihingi ako saklolo sa kapatid ko. Naranasan niya na nag aaral sa La-Co, bente pesos lang baon nya, di pa sya nag aalmusal. Alam mo naiiyak ako. Sobra talaga. Yung bunso ko di nakakapasok yun ng buong isang linggo. Minsan uuwi ako 12 o'clock." (I provide assistance when I have something, and when I don't, I ask for help from my sibling. She experienced studying at La-Co, with only twenty pesos as her allowance, and she couldn't even afford breakfast. You know, it brings tears to my eyes. It's really tough. My youngest child sometimes misses a whole week of school. Sometimes, I go home at 12 o'clock.)

"Mahirap ang buhay. Tabing dagat. Biruin mo non magbebenta ka ng buko, apat na piso lang kita pambili ng bigas. Tas pupunta ka ng dagat, kukuha ka pa ng isda isda para lang may makain sila." (Life is hard. Imagine, selling coconuts for only four pesos, just enough to buy rice. Then you go to the sea, catch fish so they have something to eat.)

"Dati yung mga anak ko pumapasok ng walang sapatos, walang sinturon, nung pumasok siya sabi ko wag na sya mag-aral, nag-go parin. Kaya lahat ng klase ng trabaho nagawa ko na." (Before, my children went to school without shoes or belts. When one of them started, I told them not to continue studying, but they persisted. That's why I've done all sorts of jobs.)

Mal sho's account vividly depicts the economic challenges they confront, providing insight into the difficulties of supporting their family. The mention of extending financial assistance when possible and turning to a sibling for help highlights the importance of social support networks during periods of financial adversity (Thoits, 2011). The narrative of Mal sho's child studying at La-Co with only twenty pesos for daily expenses, occasionally missing breakfast, emphasizes the widespread influence of poverty on both education and children's well-being (Sirin, 2005).

Studies indicate that financial constraints, such as the inability to afford meals or educational materials, can impede a child's academic performance and overall development (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). The description of selling coconuts for a modest income underscores the harsh realities of Mal sho's livelihood, illustrating the intersection of economic challenges and resourcefulness (Appadurai, 2004).

Furthermore, the determination of Mal sho's child to attend school despite lacking basic necessities reflects the resilience often observed in individuals facing adversity (Masten, 2014). This interview highlights the diverse impact of economic hardship on family life, education, and emotional well-being, aligning with existing research on poverty and its consequences.

"Oo, nakakastress. Iniisip ko parin yon hanggang ngayon. Sasabihin pa nila 'ano ba size ni ganyan, ano ba size ni ganto'. Minsan nga may nakaaway pa ako kasi sinabihan niya ako na maluwang na raw. Kase ilang lalaki na nga yung naka-ano sakin." (Yes, it's stressful. I still think about it until now. They would even say, 'What's the size of this, what's the size of that?' Sometimes, I even had a confrontation because someone told me I'm already loose. As if there aren't enough guys who've been with me)

"Ay oo. Lahat na. Lahat lahat ng panghuhusga. Awa ng Diyos andine pako, nakatayo pa. Maramdamin ako, mababaw luha ko. Nakatanim na sakin yon." (Oh yes, everything. All sorts of judgment. God's mercy, I'm still here, standing. I'm emotional, my tears are shallow. It's deeply ingrained in me)

"May narinig pako na pag hindi daw ako nanganak ng gantong buwan, hindi sa kanila yan. Marami na akong naranasan na pangungutya ng tao" (I've heard people say that if I hadn't given birth during this month, they aren't the father. I've experienced a lot of mockery from people.)

Mal sho discloses the lasting effects of stigmatization and judgment on their mental and emotional well-being. The intrusive comments regarding the size of their genitals and derogatory remarks about their intimate experiences underscore the prevalent issue of body shaming and its psychological consequences (Tiggemann, 2015).

Studies indicate that exposure to criticism related to one's body can result in heightened stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with one's body (Karazsia et al., 2017). Mal sho's reference to engaging in confrontations due to offensive comments highlights the emotional toll of societal judgment on an individual's self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Moreover, the comprehensive nature of judgment, as conveyed in Mal sho's account of facing criticism on various fronts, aligns with research on the cumulative impact of stigma on mental health and overall life satisfaction (Link & Phelan, 2001). Mal sho's emotional vulnerability and resilience, acknowledging being moved to tears yet remaining steadfast, resonate with studies emphasizing the significance of emotional expression and coping mechanisms when confronted with social stigma.

"Tanggap ko naman na. Kaya lang minsan iniisip ko pag pagod ako, pag stress ako, pag gipit ako, wala akong kaagabay sa buhay." (I accept it, but sometimes I think when I'm tired, stressed, or in a tight spot, I don't have a partner in life.)

"Yung wala kana makakapitan. Wala kang masisilungan. Masisilungan ka man ang trato naman sayo ay di tama." (When you have no one to lean on. Nowhere to seek refuge. Even if you find shelter, the treatment is not right)

"Eh sa sarili ko na lang ah, naghahanap ako kung kelan darating na may magmamahal sakin. Sumasali nga ako sa FB ng mga single mom at single dad eh. Pero parang di ko na maatim na tatawagin kang "babe" ganito ganyan, "mahal kita", ayoko na. Naiilang na ako" (Well, for myself, I'm just hoping for the time when someone will come and love me. I even join Facebook groups for single moms and single dads. But I find it hard to endure being called 'babe,' 'I love you,' and such. I'm starting to feel uncomfortable.)

Mal sho articulates the emotional challenges of navigating life without a life partner, expressing a sense of acceptance yet revealing the underlying loneliness and longing for companionship. This aligns with studies on the impact of social isolation and the absence of a support system on individuals' mental health and well-being (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). Mal sho's acknowledgment of feeling tired, stressed, and financially constrained without a life partner corresponds with research emphasizing the role of social support in mitigating the negative effects of stress (Thoits, 2011).

The sentiment of lacking someone to lean on and having no refuge aligns with studies on the importance of emotional support and companionship in fostering resilience and mental health (Cohen, 2004). Furthermore, Mal sho's exploration of potential connections through online platforms like Facebook reflects the contemporary challenges and opportunities for single parents seeking companionship.

However, the hesitancy and discomfort expressed in the reluctance to embrace endearments like "babe" or "mahal kita" underscore the nuanced emotional landscape and caution that individuals may exercise in navigating new relationships after experiencing loneliness. This interview highlights the intricate interplay between social relationships, emotional well-being, and the pursuit of companionship among single parents, contributing to a broader understanding of the complexities of singlehood.

Table 9. *Thematic analysis of Mal Sho' Coping Mechanisms*

Themes	Subthemes
Voicing Independence	Single Mother's Journey Toward Discovering and Expressing her Independence. Single Mother Choosing Between



Expressing Frustration Through Rants or Leaving During Conflicts with Her Children

Mal Sho highlighted her coping mechanisms in this section as a single mother dealing with a variety of obstacles in her life. They are the Voicing Independence and Rants vs. Leaving.

In Mal Sho's first coping mechanism statement:

"Dati kahit duruin mo ko wala akong kibo. Ngayon nako jusko, kahit sa loob pa ng bahay. Nangaaway ako. Sinasagot ko na." (Before, even if you provoked me, I wouldn't react. Now, oh my, even inside the house, I pick fights. I answer back)

"Dati talaga tahimik ako, eh ngayon pag nagsalita ka lang ng konti, sasagutin na kita eh. Sasampalin pa kita." (I used to be really quiet, but now, if you say something even a bit offensive, I'll respond. I might even slap you.)

"Kapag kaya ko sinusugod ko, kapag nasa tama ako. Pag hindi naman ako nasa tama, tahimik lang ako" (If I can confront it and I'm in the right, I'll face it. If I'm not in the right, I stay quiet.)

Mal sho's interview suggests a notable shift in their behavior and responses over time. The initial statement reflects a past disposition of enduring actions without any reaction, emphasizing a passive response to provocations. However, the subsequent statements depict a transformation characterized by increased assertiveness and a willingness to engage in confrontations. Mal sho now articulates a readiness to respond even to minor provocations, indicating a shift from a passive to a more assertive stance.

This transformation in Mal sho's behavior aligns with studies on assertiveness training and its impact on individuals' ability to express themselves effectively in various situations (Alberti & Emmons, 2008). The progression from silence to speaking up and even resorting to physical confrontation reflects the evolving dynamics of assertiveness, self-expression, and boundary-setting.

Moreover, Mal sho's acknowledgment of choosing when to confront, based on their perception of being in the right or wrong, highlights a strategic aspect in their assertive behavior. This aligns with research on the importance of adaptive assertiveness, where individuals selectively assert themselves based on the context and their assessment of the situation (Smith & Barker, 2000).

Mal Sho's interview shows a sophisticated approach to conflict by showing a personal growth from passivity to assertiveness. This transformation resonates with psychological studies on assertiveness, offering insights into how individuals navigate and adapt their communication styles in response to life experiences and changing circumstances.

This statement from the theme Rant vs. Leaving of Mal sho:

"Dinadaan ko na lang sa ganyan (pagbunganga), minsan nilalayaan ko na lang." (I'll just vent out, sometimes I just walk away.)

Mal sho's interview unveils a coping mechanism involving verbal expression, specifically resorting to confrontations or verbal outbursts, to address conflicts or problems within their family, sometimes culminating in distancing oneself from the situation altogether. This coping strategy aligns with research on communication as a means of coping with stress and interpersonal conflicts (Brock, Barry, Lawrence, Roloff, 2016). Verbal expression, even through confrontations, can serve as an outlet for emotional release and a way to communicate frustrations.

The decision to distance oneself, as mentioned by Mal sho, reflects an awareness of the need for emotional space in dealing with conflicts. This aligns with studies on the importance of emotional regulation and self-care in managing stress and interpersonal challenges (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010). Creating distance can provide individuals with an opportunity for reflection and emotional recuperation.

Furthermore, this coping mechanism resonates with studies on conflict resolution strategies within families. Verbal confrontation, while intense, can be a form of expressing needs and emotions, and it may serve as an initial step toward conflict resolution (Afifi & Olson, 2005). The decision to distance oneself can be seen as a proactive measure to prevent escalation and allow for a more constructive resolution later on.

Mal sho's interview reflects a complex approach to coping with family conflicts, involving verbal expression and occasional withdrawal. This aligns with contemporary research on communication strategies, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution within family dynamics, providing valuable insights into the nuanced ways individuals navigate challenges in familial relationships.

The following table shows the cross-case analysis of Ju Cor and Mal Sho.

Table 10. Cross-case analysis of the emerged themes of Ju Cor and Mal Sho

Statement of the Problem	Case of Ju Cor	Case of Mal Sho	Analysis based on the statements of Ju Cor and Mal Sho
What are the experiences	Making Ends Meet	Hot and Cold Relationship	



<p>of single mothers with multiple partners?</p>	<p>Poverty runs in the family No Love At All Having No Emotional Attachment on Guys Echoes of Trauma Experiencing Abuse Pleasure in Perspective Active Sex Life The desire for relationships Family Fall-Out Broken relationship with the Fam Lack of Familial Love and Support Mothering Under Pressure Experiencing Stress in Motherhood Violence Under Pressure</p>	<p>Lack of familial love and support Navigating both support and conflicts between single mother and her siblings Forbidden Romance in a Restrictive Environment Secret Rendezvous Past is past Hatred from previous relationships Against Societal Norms Wedding Paradox Decision to discontinue contraceptive methods Ephemeral Bliss Innocence and passion of young love</p>	<p>Both cases reveal how poverty, abuse, and a lack of family love and support are closely linked. They emphasize the crucial need for childcare, strong family support, and financial stability in addressing these interconnected challenges.</p>
<p>What are the challenges being faced by a single mother with multiple partners?</p>	<p>Emotional Crossroads The Feeling of Guilt Not Contented With What She Has Absent Wallets Childrens' Biological Fathers' Failure to Provide Financial Support The Emotional Toll of Judgements and Persecution Facing Judgements and Persecutions Balancing Mental Well-being in the Complexities of Single Motherhood and Multiple Partnerships The Effects of Single Motherhood and Multiple Partnership on their Mental Well-Being Feels like Dying Single Mothers Facing Illness while Parenting Juggling Responsibilities Mother's Duty Working Everytime, Anywhere</p>	<p>The Division within the Family Moments of disconnection between single mother and her children Struggles the Single Mother Faces in Maintaining Order and Understanding with her Children. Emotional Toll on the Single Mothers Rebellious Children Toxic Relationships A Single Mother Becomes a Victim of Abuse and Cheating Limited Financial Means, Poor Lifestyle Single Mother Strives to Make Ends Harsh Opinions and Misconceptions Societal Judgment and Prejudices That Weigh on the Single Mother The Lonely Path of Single Motherhood Single Mother's Desire for Companionship in Search of Emotional and Practical Support Emotional Baggage Lingering Impact of Past Relationships on the Single Mother's Mental and Emotional Well-being Voicing Independence Single Mother's Journey Toward Discovering and Expressing her Independence Rants vs. Leaving Single Mother Choosing Between Expressing</p>	<p>Ju Cor's cases are more challenging compared to the case of Mal Sho, as she was diagnosed with an illness. However, both single mothers came from lower class families. They both showed hatred towards their ex-partners and struggles to make ends meet. To effectively discuss these challenges, they emphasize the importance of support systems and financial stability.</p>
<p>What are the coping mechanisms of being a single mother with multiple partners?</p>	<p>The Light in the Darkness Being Positive Amidst the Chaos The Enduring Power of Close Friends Getting Support from Close Friends Faith Over Fear</p>	<p>Single Mother's Journey Toward Discovering and Expressing her Independence Rants vs. Leaving Single Mother Choosing Between Expressing</p>	<p>Ju Cor's approach to her challenges was more extensive, detailed, and precise. Nevertheless, the combination of both of their responses, both of them chooses to be in peace and independent.</p>



Single Mothers Surrendering
their Struggles to God
I can do it on my own
The Path to Independence

Frustration Through Rants
or Leaving During Conflicts
with Her Children

The table below shows the cross-case analysis of *Ju Cor, Mal Sho and Mi Ru*

Table 11. Cross-case analysis of the emerged themes of *Ju Cor, Mal Sho and Mi Ru*

Statement of the problem	Analysis based on the statements of <i>Ju Cor and Mal Sho</i>	Case of <i>Mi Ru</i>	Analysis based on the statements of <i>Ju Cor, Mal Sho and Mi Ru</i>
What are the experiences of single mothers with multiple partners?	Both cases reveal how poverty, abuse, and a lack of family love and support are closely linked. They emphasize the crucial need for childcare, strong family support, and financial stability in addressing these interconnected challenges.	Family Dynamics Rebellion Not my mother's favorite Sacrificing despite of a heavy heart Educational Deprivation Uncharted Hearts: Navigating Teenage Love into an Unplanned Marriage Unplanned Situations	In the case of the three single mothers with multiple partners, it was shown that they experienced a lot of situations during their childhood, which damaged their capability in forming healthy relationships. Recognizing the link between their past and present challenges could pave the way for healing and building healthier relationships in the future. While childhood experiences are significant, it's important to acknowledge that individuals have the agency to break negative patterns and learn new ways of relating.
What are the challenges being faced by a single mother with multiple partners?	<i>Ju Cor's</i> cases are more challenging compared to the case of <i>Mal Sho</i> , as she was diagnosed with an illness. However, both single mothers came from lower class families. They both showed hatred towards their ex-partners and struggles to make ends meet. To effectively discuss these challenges, they emphasize the importance of support systems and financial stability.	Responsibility Came Across the Sea Mother's duty A Ladder to Comfort Mother as a Provider	In the case of <i>Ju Cor</i> and <i>Mal Sho</i> , they experienced a lot of scenarios compared to <i>Mi Ru</i> . The greater exposure to poverty could explain why <i>Ju Cor</i> and <i>Mal Sho</i> faced more relationship challenges compared to <i>Mi Ru</i> , whose experiences were more limited because she was from a middle class family. The varied experiences of <i>Ju Cor</i> , <i>Mal Sho</i> , and <i>Mi Ru</i> underscore the complex interplay between individual circumstances, childhood experiences, and relationship outcomes.
What are the coping mechanisms of being a single mother with multiple partners?	<i>Ju Cor's</i> approach to her challenges was more extensive, detailed, and precise. Nevertheless, the combination of both of their responses, both of them chooses to be in peace and independent.	Mother is Mothering Mother's Independence A life of purpose Motherhood Let the Light Shine Resiliency Faith Peace over Chaos Controlling Emotions	These three Single mothers maintained and were still battling for their lives. Three of them learned how to be independent and resilient. Additionally, surrendering their fears and worries to a higher authority — God, is also a way for them to feel secure and calm. It was revealed that prayer works the best for them to express their thoughts and emotions. Lastly, being positive amidst the challenges can bring optimism which serves as a guiding light through difficult times.

The previous table shows the above emerged themes on cross-case analysis amongst *Mi Ru, Ju Cor* and *Mal Sho*. And, based on the experiences by the three single mothers with multiple partners the themes are classified into three which are the Lack of Familial Love and Support, Poverty and Abuse. They all share commonalities in their experiences, all facing significant financial struggles that permeate their family dynamics. The recurring theme of disagreements related to money indicates a shared source of tension within their households. Studies, such as those by Conger and Conger (2002), affirm that economic difficulties can indeed lead to conflicts within families, influencing the overall dynamics. The paradox of having a house while experiencing hunger, mentioned by *Ju Cor*, resonates with the multifaceted dimensions of poverty, as highlighted in studies emphasizing the coexistence of material resources and deprivation in various aspects of life (Rank, 2004). Additionally, all interviews depict the tough choices families make when resources are limited, such as prioritizing food over education, in alignment with research exploring trade-offs in resource allocation, especially in low-income contexts.

Their lack of familial love/support stems from parental issues and cultural conflicts, impacting their well-being in distinct ways. Ju Cor deals with trauma and seeks justice, Mal Sho prioritizes child safety and navigates modern relationship challenges, while Mi Ru grappled with a profound sense of emotional neglect from her mother, manifesting in rebellious behavior. The themes of betrayal and feeling unsupported within the family align with broader research on the psychological consequences of broken trust and the importance of familial support for personal goals (Rotenberg, 2010; Thoits, 2011). However, the interviews also reveal notable differences. Ju Cor's experience revolves around conflicts related to parental vices like gambling, while Mal sho's interview delves into the complexities of cultural conflicts and socio-economic factors within their family, Mi Ru's experiences with familial discipline, while undoubtedly strict, lacked the element of overt abuse. The impact of these specific challenges reflects the diverse range of influences that can shape familial experiences (Chirkov et al., 2018; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

The challenges encountered by these single mothers with multiple partners are directly highlighted in the two themes that were constructed and defined, which are the Juggling Responsibilities and Making Ends Meet. All of their interviews reveal the persistent financial struggles their family faces, resulting in frequent conflicts revolving around budget constraints. The financial struggles faced by the three of them and the decision to re-enter the workforce for the well-being of the family resonate with studies on the economic challenges experienced by low-income households (Edin & Shaefer, 2015). The mention of managing multiple expenses, including rent, reflects the precarious nature of housing for families in similar situations (Desmond, 2016).

Lastly, coping mechanisms are also mentioned and the themes are classified into three. Independence, Faith and Resiliency. The interviews highlight the resilience and challenges faced as single parents, emphasizing the emotional toll of navigating parenthood alone. The assertion that they will do everything they can to provide for their children despite being abandoned by their partner reflects a determination to prove self-sufficiency. Research by Vyncke et al. (2014) supports the idea that single parents, particularly those who embrace a positive self-perception, can mitigate the adverse effects of single parenthood on their well-being and that of their children. Three cases statements show that having faith in God, seeking for help and being thankful in surviving all those challenges are their coping mechanisms. The use of religious beliefs or behaviors to facilitate problem-solving to prevent or alleviate the negative emotional consequences of stressful life circumstances is one definition of religious coping, Oscan (2021).

The outlined conceptual framework derived from the encounters of single mothers with multiple partners. As a result, under the themes of experiences that reflected the three of them came out by Poverty, Abuse, and Lack of Familial Love and Support. Regarding their challenges the results shows; Juggling Responsibilities and Making Ends Meet. Lastly, the following three themes are also taken into consideration when discussing their coping mechanisms such as; Independence, Faith and Resiliency.

The framework provides a structured way to explore the varied experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of these individuals. Themes might differ based on their ages, experiences and perspectives. Both Ju Cor and Mal sho's interviews highlight significant challenges within familial and relationship contexts. Ju Cor's account focuses on the trauma of almost being raped and subsequent harm within the family, underscoring the importance of social support and the complexities of seeking justice within familial structures. Studies on trauma and its aftermath support the need for strong support systems (Kaniasty & Norris, 2008). In contrast, Mal sho's interview revolves around concerns for their children's safety in relationships, displaying a protective stance by not disclosing last names. This aligns with research emphasizing the prioritization of child safety by survivors of abuse (Bancroft et al., 2012). On the other hand, Mi Ru's narrative focuses solely on a different facet - verbal abuse. Studies by Jourides and Cohen (2008) reveal how verbal abuse, often characterized by taunting, put-downs, and insults, can inflict significant psychological harm, contributing to feelings of worthlessness, anxiety, and depression. Narratives underline the critical role of family dynamics and support structures, even though in distinct contexts.

Despite their differing life circumstances, all individuals encountered financial hardships. These challenges, while undeniably difficult, have fostered a remarkable strength within them, enabling them to navigate complex situations and persevere. This echoes findings by Stack and Burton (2017) who suggest that financial hardship, though stressful, can also act as a catalyst for personal growth and development, empowering individuals to discover hidden capabilities and cultivate resourcefulness. All of them have challenges that make them much stronger and with that all challenges that they are facing but despite all those challenges they still believe that God is always there. As the research by Masten (2014) suggests, navigating such adversity can foster remarkable resilience and resourcefulness, allowing individuals to adapt and thrive despite difficult circumstances.

As a coping mechanism, their reliance on prayer and faith in God gives them resilience and strength in the face of hardship. The stories are consistent emphasizing the necessity for all-encompassing strategies that take into account the various coping preferences of individuals. Ju Cor's reliance on prayer and faith contributes to emotional well-being, Mi Ru's coping mechanisms revolve around being positive in life while Mal sho's change in assertiveness reflects an evolving approach to handling stressors, Integrating these coping strategies into mental health interventions is crucial for fostering resilience and promoting well-being in individuals facing diverse life circumstances. The importance of these coping mechanisms lies in their impact on mental health and the ability to navigate life challenges effectively

Conclusion

Each participant's story demonstrates how the absence of familial love and support essential elements can lead to a range of emotional, psychological, and social challenges. When individuals lack secure attachment bonds in their early years, they may develop insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant attachment. These insecure attachment styles can lead to difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy relationships in adulthood.

Every participant's path is distinguished by distinct encounters that mirror the complex interaction of individual, societal, and financial elements within the domain of single motherhood. Despite the differences in their relationships, finances, and social perceptions, all three participants showed resilience. All of their stories highlight how parenting has a profoundly transformational effect on priorities and personal development.

Families in low-wage careers are less likely to marry and more likely to divorce and experience family instability. It is possible that the lack of financial stability and support from a partner may lead to a person seeking multiple partners. While there is no research directly suggesting that having multiple partners comes from low-income families, it is quite possible seeing the situation in the community. Furthermore, this kind of topic needs to be addressed.

The significant findings of this study's conclusions recommend the following:

Form Support Groups: Support groups can offer a secure environment for exchanging insightful ideas on practical coping strategies, sharing experiences, and receiving emotional support. Support systems are crucial for single mothers especially when addressing trauma and providing support—recognizing that there is no "one size fits all" solution.

Addressing Financial Struggles: Single mothers are facing a lot of challenges physically, emotionally and even financially. This research recommends the government to put in place a number of initiatives, such as financial assistance programs including grants and subsidies, in providing financial relief to all single mothers who are experiencing economic difficulties, particularly those single mothers that are in a middle class household to low income households. Second, governments should support single mothers in their employment process and improve their initiatives at work.

Promote healthy relationships: Speak up in favor of easily accessible and interesting programs that provide single mothers with the tools they need to build healthy relationships. To empower these women in their interpersonal dynamics, workshops, webinars, or instructional sessions can cover boundary-setting, conflict resolution, and communication skills.

Future Researchers: The research suggests a need for further research on the specific challenges faced by single mothers with multiple partners, particularly regarding the impact of childhood experiences, trauma, and dual-care roles. Furthermore, psychology students will benefit greatly from learning about and participating in this field of study, broadening their general knowledge and improving their ability to understand people who engage in multiple partner fertility. The researchers hope for significant benefits from the research recommendations made in this research.

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