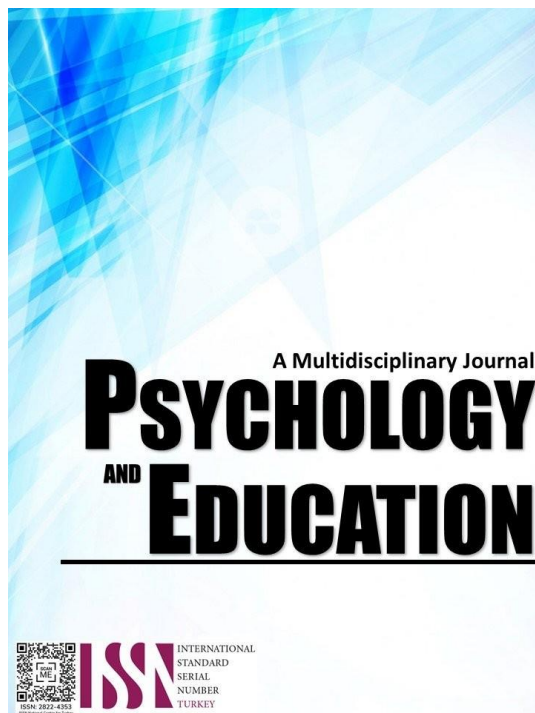


LONE WARRIORS: EXPERIENCES OF SINGLE MOTHERS RAISING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



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Lone Warriors: Experiences of Single Mothers Raising Children with Special Needs

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Abstract

Single mothers face difficulties when it comes to finances, which expose them to different kinds of situations. In the Philippines, motivation is a desirable goal for single parents with special needs. This includes getting hope and providing for the needs of their household. Therefore, even with the lack of finances in life, single mother are still inclined to complete their duty. Thus, the primary goal of this research is to scrutinize the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of single mothers with child special needs in their households. Utilizing Phenomenological as the research design and employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), several findings emerged: (1) single mother fulfill their duties. Masculine roles are traditionally defined within the family (2) single mothers under pressure from dramatic physical changes in their adolescent sons conclude that the boys are already men and urge them to act as expected of men. (3) However, single mothers with young children are more susceptible to mental health disorders than mothers with partners, especially when facing financial, social or long-distance difficulties. Appropriate social support programs and screening measures are needed to reduce disparities

Keywords: *single mother, child with special needs, financial, coping mechanisms, lived experiences*

Introduction

The sense of responsibility and passion of mothers is always clearly shown even though most of the time, they have to go through difficulties and pressure. Single mothers of children with special needs face many difficulties, including financial problems and a lack of social support in daily life (Tekola, 2022). Furthermore, (Boyce et al. (2014). However, single mothers are generally younger, have lower education levels, and have lower incomes.

Single mothers of children with special needs have difficulty raising SPED children due to misconceptions of those around them. However, financial instability and managing the behavior of children with intellectual disabilities are the most difficult and significant sources of stress for single mothers (Badu, 2016).

Parenthood is a life transition that can be especially difficult for vulnerable people, especially single mothers with children with special needs. Raising a child alone is a difficult task, and when going through difficult times affects the resilience of single mothers of children with special needs (Nurwati et al., 2020). According to Satriati et al. (2023), every parent has their own rules, and every child has different experiences with discipline.

Additionally, parents have an important role in educating their children, including teaching them good manners. Furthermore, in the study of Bojuwoye et al. (2012), it was found that single mothers had more difficulties when their children were boys due to the pressure of adulthood and showed differences between both genders because Single mothers lack knowledge about masculinity. Eventually, their son's physical changes dramatically change, and as sexual socialization proceeds, the father's failure and impotence become apparent.

One of the biggest difficulties for all families worldwide is financial instability, where two people are working and still struggle to provide for their children's needs like food, accommodation, and medicine. The two of them work as single mothers raising children with special needs. Thus, O'Connor et al. (2021) and Accountable Care Communities (ACC) were established to support single mothers and ensure the needs of each child with special needs. ACC will provide home-delivered medications, designated foods, and educational programming to enhance each child's knowledge simultaneously.

Single mothers are portrayed as having to raise their children alone, but many communities and social services show support for them. The Expanded Single Parent Protection Act, commonly known as ESPWA, has significantly provided appropriate support to single mothers raising children with special needs. ESPWA provides single mothers with access to financial support that can be used to meet their children's basic needs. Appropriate educational support is also provided because they want to give SPED children the same opportunities as other children.

Finally, social services are also part of their support because they want to empower single mothers to be resilient and overcome all the difficulties they are about to face (Legarde. 2023). Alngag (2022) stated that the Single Parents Protection Act has been in place for a long time in the Philippines, and almost all municipalities have their own offices in their respective barangay.

Moreover, it aims to explore the lived experiences of a single mother who has a child with special needs, and it revolves around the struggles and the way they try to overcome the hindrances. Thus, this study aims to deepen our understanding of single mothers and children with special needs, as they are also part of our society. The result of this study strives to give a deep understanding that can serve as a reference for future researchers. In addition to that, this study tackles how single mother handles the situation and how the people around them support their needs. Ultimately, the researchers seek to comprehend how single mothers provide for the needs of

their SPED children.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences faced by single mothers who have a child with special needs. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of single mothers who have a child with special needs?
2. What are the challenges faced by single mothers who have a child with special needs?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of single mothers who have a child with special needs?

Literature Review

Experiences of Single Mothers

Being single-parent families from the Fragile Families and Child Health Study. The current study examined the bidirectional relationship between father stress and maternal and child behavioral problems from infancy to childhood. An interaction has been found between parental stress and childhood behavior problems between the ages of 3 and 5 years (Jiang et al., 2023). However, this study shows differences in the resilience of each nuclear family's support from a single parent; the support most often given is emotional support. But single parents expect support other than material support such as financial support, because it is very helpful in dealing with children's treatment (Nurwati et al., 2020).

Most recorded events involved stressful interactions with children, especially child misbehavior. Stressful interactions involving other adults were also frequently recorded, as were financial stressors. Diaries revealed significant intra- and inter-individual variation in coping strategies as well as the types of obstacles mothers encountered when attempting to implement these strategies (Olson et al., 2013).

However, single mothers with young children are more susceptible to mental health disorders than mothers with partners, especially when facing financial, social or long-distance difficulties. Appropriate social support programs and screening measures are needed to reduce disparities. We investigated symptom prevalence and potential risk factors among mothers with very young children (Liang et al., 2019). Moreover, studies show that expanded laws on the protection of single parents have contributed significantly to improving the socioeconomic conditions of single-parent households. It has facilitated access to financial support, educational opportunities and social services. Furthermore, the law has improved the well-being and resilience of single parents, providing them with the means to overcome difficulties and handle their responsibilities effectively.

However, certain areas require special attention to maximize the potential impact of the Act. These include the need to improve coordination between government agencies, raise awareness of existing support programs, and develop targeted interventions to address specific challenges that single parents face. The study results provide valuable information for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to further improve and strengthen the Expanded Single Parent Protection Act (Legarde, 2023).

Moreover, single mothers under pressure from dramatic physical changes in their adolescent sons conclude that the boys are already men and urge them to act as expected of men. Gender socialization also occurs when mothers observe characteristics in adolescents' behavior that are considered typically masculine, which they (the mothers) do not like; and when mothers, in the face of difficult socioeconomic and other adverse conditions, draw their sons' attention to their absent fathers' inability to fulfill their duties. Masculine roles are traditionally defined within the family. Participants' attitudes toward the male gender were revealed through their conceptions of fathers as providers and authority figures, as well as their participation in gang-related activities and other dangerous behaviors related to masculinity (Bojuwoye et al., (2012).

However, single mothers choose to develop different socialization goals related to the complexity of their unique family project. These goals are also realized in everyday conversations, especially when families talk about future events in their lives (Jociles et al., 2014). Single mothers' experiences, including "the right decision at this time" and "it's addictive," and five themes from former employees, including "keeping customers coming back" and "relating to customers". Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory study was to fill the previously mentioned gaps through a phenomenological approach and provide insight into the lived experiences of American-born single mothers. Phi used payday loans and was a former employee of payday loan stores (Riley et al., (2022).

They identified obstacles as challenges in relationships, living conditions, school culture, and lack of finances and support systems. Participants are motivated to overcome these obstacles so they can improve their economic situation and provide for their children. These findings suggest a need to further develop and pursue policies and programs that support single African American and Latino students (Maitre et al., 2021).

The economic experiences of single mothers working in the informal economy receive little attention in public policy debates and transformative social development interventions. This study qualitatively explores the economic experiences of eight single mothers working in the informal economy in Zimbabwe. Drawing on African feminism, the authors present biographies of these mothers and address three main themes: financial hardship, social discrimination and the safety net (Matsai et al., 2021).

Challenges of Single Mothers

Single mothers can be enhanced through enforcement and recognition of existing laws. This article will examine the laws of other countries as they relate to this issue. The Philippines is an example of a country that passed a welfare law in 2000 (Mahat et al., 2019). This condition is certainly not consistent with the theory of student discipline, which holds that well-disciplined students come from intact and strict families when educating their children. This article aims to understand and describe the single parenting model in forming the discipline of MI students Darussalam Pacet Mojokerto and the causes of the single parenting model in forming the discipline of MI students Darussalam Pacet Mojokerto. This article uses qualitative methods with a case study approach focusing on a well-disciplined student whose parents are divorced (Satriawati et al., 2023).

However, it highlights that single mothers are most likely to experience poor psychological well-being. With a steady increase in the proportion of single-parent households headed by the mother, these findings highlight an important issue that will negatively affect many women and therefore their children and the community. It also highlights the need for community-level strategies and interventions to support this vulnerable population. It aimed to assess the level of mental distress among single mothers as measured by the GHQ-28 and how it is influenced by socioeconomic factors as well as how the level of social support in society is perceived (Rousou et al., 2019). The selection criteria of the proposed study are single mothers between the ages of 20 and 50 years old. The data collected will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Many single mothers are in the age group of 31 to 40 and 62% of single mothers are widowed. Research reveals that financial problems are a major cause of stress. Therefore, single mothers need special attention and solutions to improve their social and financial stability (Balamurugan et al., 2023).

However, this study I used data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) to describe trends in educational disparities in single motherhood across 33 countries in North America, Europe and Asia, and analyze whether these differences add to differences in child poverty through a mother's education. Single motherhood rates have increased in almost 33 countries. In many cases, the education gap in single motherhood is widening and the number of single mothers is increasing, especially among those with lower levels of education. Educational differences in single motherhood may amplify differences in child poverty because of a mother's education, but only if the educational gradient of the status of single motherhood and the child poverty gap among single mothers are significant enough. These results suggest that differences in educational family demographics are not limited to the United States but are not a universal trend (Härkönen et al., 2017).

However, A single mother faces many risks related to basic needs such as income, health care, mental health, food security, education and housing, while on the other hand, there are single mothers. Make a major contribution to social participation and economic resilience, whether they are free to make decisions regarding family financial planning, living arrangements or spiritual connections. God is strict with his children (Noeralamsyah., 2023). Found that empowerment-based approaches, like self-advocacy and assertiveness training are an efficient coping strategy for people suffering from mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities in overcoming their reluctance to access government priority services for people with disabilities. Another coping mechanism that these individuals usually employ is the reframing of negative situations and seeking support from others to cope with disability-related challenges (Antonak et al., 2013).

Coping Mechanism of Single Mothers

The baseline differences between single and two-parent mothers tend to become insignificant when mothers' education and income are taken into account. Stress levels and coping styles did not differ significantly between single mothers and mothers who were partnered parents, after controlling for SES variables (Boyce et al., 2014). However, formal support systems remain lacking and single women and single mothers are more likely to report "hostile" official support systems. These findings offer important theoretical and policy implications that suggest the need for more gender-responsive government policies and practices (Endut et al., 2015).

However, the results showed that mothers attributed their disabilities to evil spirits, divine gifts, curses, punishments, and lack of immunizations during pregnancy. Barriers to raising a child with a disability include financial constraints, caregiving, housing, loneliness, employment, stress, and lack of government support. Mothers' Coping mechanisms included religious faith, social camaraderie, hope, and help from special education professionals and social workers. It is recommended that financial and material support is essential for mothers with disabilities and their children.

The International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (2021) shows that expanded laws on protecting single parents have contributed significantly to improving the socioeconomic conditions of single-parent households. It has facilitated access to financial support, educational opportunities and social services. Furthermore, the law has improved the well-being and resilience of single parents, providing them with the means to overcome difficulties and handle their responsibilities effectively. However, certain areas require special attention to maximize the potential impact of the Act. These include the need to improve coordination between government agencies, raise awareness of existing support programs and develop targeted interventions to address specific challenges that single parents face. The study results provide valuable information for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to further improve and strengthen the Expanded Single Parent Protection Act (Legarde., 2023).

Additionally, specific parenting responsibilities strengthened the association between maternal distress and adolescents' anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the moderating role of filial emotional responsibility in the predictive relationship between maternal distress

and adolescent anxiety was different for boys and girls. Adolescents with greater emotional filial responsibility reported higher levels of adolescent anxiety than adolescents with less emotional filial responsibility when their mothers showed more distress, whereas the relationship between maternal distress and adolescent anxiety was stable in boys, regardless of emotional filial responsibility.

In conclusion, the present study suggests that parenthood is likely to occur in poor single-parent Chinese families and that adolescents who take on a greater role in the family have poorer mental health. Encourage family counseling and specific support for single-parent families in difficult economic circumstances (Leung et al., (2023).

Moreover, Clarkson et al. (2015) revealed that individuals with psychosocial disabilities often develop self-reliance and self-management. The study highlighted that when the participants are faced with anxiety and difficulties in public spaces, they tend to independently handle situations by using coping mechanisms such as positive self-talk and mindfulness to manage anxiety and pressure in public settings.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the use of gadgets and technology-based platforms, such as online shopping, online support groups, and telehealth services, has been found to enhance the coping mechanisms of individuals in accessing different services. For instance, an individual with disabilities does not need to interact with people when shopping physically, and thus, they do not need to use priority lanes in public settings. Meanwhile, some individuals with psychosocial disabilities use distractions and relaxation to handle symptoms and instances in public settings (Stuttgen et al. 2021). This involves breathing exercises, calming strategies, talking to someone and self-distraction by using gadgets in public spaces.

However, some individuals show resourcefulness and resilience in adapting efficient coping strategies, such as isolation, internalized coping strategies, disengagement, and over-indulgence, which often leads to negative consequences for individuals while also triggering and enduring existing mental health conditions (Abell et al., 2014).

Synthesis of Related Literature and Studies

The following study included a review of the literature and described studies related to research variables related to mental well-being and the experiences of people with psychosocial disabilities who are reluctant to use priority or public services. However, a comprehensive review of what we currently know about the relationship between coping behavior and acculturation experience for individuals undergoing cultural changes has not yet been undertaken. Hence, the current article aims to compile, review, and examine cumulative cross-cultural psychological research that sheds light on the relationships among coping, acculturation, and psychological and mental health outcomes for single mothers (Ben et al., 2013). Moreover, behavior and performance are at different levels of analysis. Yet, the nature of the concept, its measurement, the factors that influence its development, and when and how it influences individual-level, team-level, and organizational-level outcomes are the subject of continued debate in the literature (Deniz et al., (2014).

This shows that these people often face difficulties in public spaces due to mental illness or disability. Meanwhile, detailed literature provides relevance to this study and highlights the factors that influence participation in public spaces. However, what differentiates this study from other literature is that it specifically aimed to comprehensively explore the lived experiences, challenges, and factors associated with reluctance to use public lanes and priority lanes. The aim is to uncover the underlying reasons for the fear, wariness and reluctance that prevent these people from accessing public spaces and priority services (Schulze et al., 2013). The finding of a lack of family support, coupled with negative experiences and economic hardship, deepens our understanding of the challenges that single mothers face within these complex relationship structures. The findings highlight the need for a comprehensive support approach and demonstrate that external factors beyond individual choices significantly influence the well-being and opportunities for personal growth of single mothers (Oba et al., 2018).

The effect of inferring quality from children, the positive results of solid social back systems, and the part of social bolster in cultivating flexibility among adolescent moms advance emphasize the significance of steady systems in relieving the challenges confronted by single mother (Wasse et al., 2019).

Be that as it may, it has about appeared that moms credited their inabilities to fiendish spirits, divine blessings, curses, disciplines, and the need for immunizations amid pregnancy. Obstructions to raising a child with an incapacity incorporate budgetary limitations, caregiving, lodging, forlornness, business, stretch, and need of government back. Adapting components moms utilized included devout confidence, social camaraderie, trust, and help from uncommon instruction experts and social laborers. It is prescribed that money related, and fabric back is basic for moms with inabilities and their children.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a phenomenological research design to obtain knowledge on how people think in diverse situations, specifically their lived experiences, and challenges. As phenomenological research has a strong philosophical foundation, it gives the researchers a wide and thorough point of view. Phenomenological research design to people environment ponders inside a handbook of natural brain research, an initial comment with regard to both parts of its title may be supportive since both terms, phenomenological research design and people-environment considers, require deciphering (Graumann, 2015).

Participants

This study examines the difficulties single mothers encounter and their coping strategies. That aims to explain and comprehend a single mother's predicament. The researchers utilized purposive sampling to select the participants. The researchers specifically targeted the following criteria: (1) Single mothers with children with special needs; (2) District 1 of Bulacan (Bulakan and Malolos); and (3) Aged between 20-45.

Table 1. *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

<i>Participant's Code Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Educational Attainment</i>	<i>No. of Children</i>	<i>Work</i>
Parent #1	34	Highschool Graduate	6	Housemaid
Parent #2	45	Elementary Graduate	2	Seamstress
Parent #3	37	Highschool Graduate	4	Factory Worker
Parent #4	30	College Graduate	3	Seamstress
Parent #5	36	Highschool Graduate	2	Seamstress
Parent #6	41	Elementary Graduate	3	Housemaid
Parent #7	45	Highschool Graduate	4	Online Seller
Parent #8	39	Highschool Graduate	2	Seamstress

Instrument

The study used an interview guide to gather responses in a methodical and coherent manner. The interview guide's questions were subjected to content validation to confirm their validity. The interview questions were initially some of the single contractual workers made an attempt to respond. Through the data collection process, the responses were verified in compliance with the research topic and study parameters. An academic consultant conducted the evaluation. Before the interview session with the twelve participants in this study, the instrument was reviewed and updated after it had been accepted.

Procedure

A systematic and structured, step-by-step methodology was used to gather coherent data for the study's assessment. Following the selection of twelve (8) respondents who met the requirements for this study, they were immediately given a consent form asking for their permission to participate in the study and to record the entire interview discussion. Face-to-face, Google Meet, and Messenger are mediums of communication used for the interview, and the interviewer and interviewee's discussion was recorded using a different device. To ensure the respondents' confidentiality and for the purpose of collecting, they experienced compassion, which encouraged them to reply to questions and share more honestly in their narratives.

While the interview was being audio recorded, a series of questions were asked in compliance with the interview protocol to uncover the participants' perspectives and excavate a meaningful justification for their real-life experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms. The respondents were given the opportunity to express a phenomenon to the world in accordance with their beliefs, attitudes, and level of self-awareness through interviews. To identify precise and significant themes that were appropriate to the participants' experiences, the recorded interview process was turned into texts and carefully examined. The researcher was able to get information from this interview about the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of single contractual mothers.

Data Analysis Procedure

Numerous techniques can be used to collect qualitative data. One of the best ways to prevent content inconsistencies is to record and transcribe interviews. Making sense of the data gathered from experiences and challenges of single contractual parents. Each participant's exact remarks will be included in the interview transcripts verbatim and will go through a careful review.

In this study, the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which was developed on the modified Van Kaam technique made well-known by Moustakas, was employed. Horizontalization, breaking down experiences into their invariant parts, thematic clustering to develop core themes, comparison of different data sources to validate the invariant parts, crafting of individual textural descriptions, construction of composite structural descriptions, and synthesis of texture and structure into an expression are the seven key steps.

Ethical Consideration

The approval of the data collection method and tool by the research professor ensures that consent is obtained and that ethical guidelines have been rigorously adhered to. Participants who were selected and qualified to participate based on the defined criteria were requested to give explicit consent via informed consent with the professor's aid.

The methodology for data collection was followed as the consent form was discussed. The participants' research objectives regarding their voluntary involvement were defined, and they were informed that they could withdraw at any time. The study's aim and objectives were also given to them. Participants were reassured that all information gathered during the study's development would be utilized only for academic and research objectives, without regard for their identities, and under code names. Confidentiality was also covered. As mandated by Republic Act 10173, participants voluntarily provided personal information will be kept private and will not be utilized in a manner that violates the Data Privacy Act.



Results and Discussion

Table 2. The Analysis	
Themes	Subthemes
Will Driven	Resilience
	Motivated
	Judgment
Selfless Affection	Acceptance
	Perseverance
	Main Priority

Besides facing financial difficulties, being a single mother has a psychological impact on them. They don't have a sense of who they are or how to stay strong and get through the challenge on its own, although some people, almost separated, faced the opposite; they exhibited bravery and placed the majority of their working hours to provide for the requirements of Their kids. Daily stress brought on by lacking finances leads to sadness, worry, and low self-esteem as well as worries that they are not suitable moms. (Ramos, E., & Tus, 2020).

Will Driven

Most Asian countries preferably have always favored the dual-parent family structure, and due to the emergence of a single-parent household as a “common alternative”, There have been relatively little work has been done to study a Single mother’s problems or difficulties. Previous research has shown that single mothers, compared to married mothers, have have greater risk on both physical and mental health disorders due to their socioeconomic disadvantages, social support, and stress (Subramaniam et al. 2014)

Resilience

Hindi ako- hindi ako wala sa ano kong gumive up eh, okay naman siya tyaka minsan sumusunod. Minsan lang talaga siyang ano pag nabubully at hindi nasusunod ang gusto niya. Ngayon nga eh wala kaming wifi sabi niya Mama sabi ko ohh wag ka kakong mag wawala wala kako tayong panload ganyan ganyan. Punta eka tayo kila lola dun eka may wifi gaganon lang yon. ("I'm not—I'm not one to give up easily, okay, and he's usually fine, and sometimes he listens. It's just that sometimes he really acts up when he's being bullied and doesn't get what he wants. Now, we don't have wifi, Then I said. 'Oh, don't throw a tantrum. We don't have prepaid load, etc.' And my son suggested, 'Let's go to grandma's place; there's wifi there.' It's just like that.") (P1)

Motherhood can be challenging for single women due to the variety of risks ranging from economic hardships to poor psychological functioning. These risks can affect the child greatly. However, having a warm parenthood helps their child to reduce the chances of maladjustments due to their upbringing despite the challenges they face. (Taylor & Conger, 2017)

Motivated

Oo oo lagi basta naiiyak at naiiyak ako pero lagi dun kasi ako laging nagdadasal lahat ng bigat ng loob ko pero awa ng Diyos nalampasan ko siya. Naiiyak tuloy ako nakakahiya (laughing). Hindi siya natuto kumbaga sa ano nakakapag try siya pero ganun lang hindi katulad ng ibang special child ata nakakaano sila sunod sa teacher. Bawat nagagawa niya natutuwa ako yon nalang talaga nagpapalakas ng loob ko. ("Yes, I often feel like crying, but I always pray to get through tough times. Thankfully, with God's help, I overcome it. Sometimes, I can't help but cry—it's funny (laughs). He didn't learn the way others do, but he tries, unlike some other special kids who follow the teacher. Every little thing he achieves makes me happy; that's what keeps me going.") (P4)

According to Samzelius, the everyday lives of a single mother’s family, their struggles and their social interactions with social services and institutions, do not say anything about their private troubles, but also tell us something about the era we live in and the society we are currently in. (p.23)

Judgement

Ako... okay naman haha- medyo maano lang kase kung бага— may... yung totoo syempre may konting lungkot. Kase syempre kung бага parang- naano ako dun sa mga ibang— pag lalo pag nai-c-compare siya diba, yung mga ganon. Syempre, parang- Hindi kase siya kasabay nung ibang ka-edad niya eh- Pero, nagpapasalamat ako sa Panginoon kase kung бага- siya yung binigay samin, kase madali siyang i-manage, cooperative siya- nung pinatignan ko sa developmental, ang sabi sa kanya- attentive tsaka cooperative. Kaya yun naman talaga yung na ano ko sa kanya. ("Well, for me... everything's okay, haha—just a bit, you know, like, there's a bit of... truthfully, a bit of sadness. Because, you know, when you compare it to others—especially when you start comparing, it's like I'm in a different... in a different situation. Of course, he's not keeping up with kids his age. But, I'm grateful to the Lord because, you know, he's the one given to us. He's easy to manage, cooperative—when I had him assessed developmentally, they said he's attentive and cooperative. So, that's really what I can say in him.")

We will always be dependent on societal structures and institutions, because they provide us with the necessary things we need in order to survive and even thrive in society. Although nothing can diminish our vulnerability, resilience is what provides us with the means and ability to recover from all the setbacks, harm and challenges that come our way (Fineman, 2017).

Acceptance

Maliit palang siya talagang tanggap ko na—dahil sinabi sakin ng doctor ganon na siya eh. Sanggol pa lang siya pag pinapacheck up ko, sinabi na sakin ng doctor na ano nga siya, down syndrome. Bihira nalang siya magwala—hininto ko yung gamot paminsan minsan nalang pag sinasaktan niya sarili niya—yun nalang. Pero pag nagwawala, sumisigaw lang di ko pinapainom—kasi nanginingin yung kamay niya. ("Since he was still little, I already accepted it because the doctor told me that's how he is. When he was just a baby, during one of his check-ups, the doctor informed me that he has Down syndrome. He rarely throws tantrums—I only stop giving him medicine occasionally when he hurts himself—just to be careful. But when he has tantrums, I just let him shout because his hands tremble.") (P5)

Embracing their children's autism meant that they didn't try to make them better than; instead, they concentrated on developing a strong bond with them. "I think parents need to learn to accept their child and still, you know, find ways to support and provide the necessary resources for them," she said, emphasizing that embracing her son's autism did not mean giving up on trying to help him. (Jaswal et al., 2020)

Perseverance

Dahil nung maliit to- lahat ng—lahat gusto kong gawin para malaman ko tsaka para siya maayos. Kasi nung maliit to, yung paa niya nakaganon, tas dinala naming siya sa... orto, pinagawan naming ng sapatos naa bakal, tapos pinatignan ko siya sa developmental, ang laki rin—minsan nga sa nagpapaluwagan ako sa kanya ko lang nilalaan, pampagaling niya, pampagaling niya, may mga ganon-pero nung nalampasan naman naming okay na man na kasi nung naintindihan ko, sabi ko mas okay siya kesa sa iba... kasi Madali siyang kausapin. ("Because when he was little, I wanted to do everything to understand and help him improve. During his early years, his feet were like that, so we took him to an orthopedic specialist, had shoes with braces made for him, and had him assessed developmentally. It was quite a journey—sometimes I set aside funds just for his improvement, and it worked. But once we surpassed those challenges, it became okay. I realized that he's better than others because he's easy to communicate with.") (P3)

While taking to their children's care requirements, parents acknowledged that they were also fulfilling their duties as main therapists and caretakers. This necessitated self-sacrifice every hour, if not every minute. 'I have no medical experience, yet I work as a nurse now, administering medication, inserting tubes, and suctioning. Being the one who has to be there through all of the difficult times rather than the one who gets to be the one who is safe almost undermines the role of mother. (Currie, & Szabo, 2019)

Main Priority

Oo normal yong apekto sa trabaho pero siyempre pagka may ano uunahin ko siya ganon. Malambing si Nico sa akin, may time na minsan lang hindi siya tulad ng ibang yung pag nagagalit eh iba ganon hindi mabait. Pag kumakain siya, yung pinagkainan halimbawa iiwanan ko siya ng pagkain dito hindi niya iiwanan ng dito lang yan ilalagay niya sa lababo. Proud ako sakaniya saka marunong mag tiklop ng kumot as in tiklop na tiklop ayon. ("Yes, it does have a normal impact on work, but of course, when there's something with him, I prioritize that. Nico is affectionate towards me; there are times when he's not like others who get upset easily and become unkind. When he eats, for example, I leave his food here, and he won't just leave it there; he'll put it in the sink. I'm proud of him, and he can fold blankets really well, like, he's really good at it.") (P4)

An increasing number of people report feeling under more time pressure in their everyday lives and that they can never have enough time to complete everything on their daily agendas. Those in the family make more demands on women's time. They are more likely to be asked to take care of household duties and feel hurried in their everyday life. Additionally, women are more likely than males to multitask. (Hjálmsdóttir et al., 2020)

Conclusion

With all the struggles that they experienced, these single mothers are continuing their life as a parent of their child with special needs. Their great attitude as well as them being a will-driven mother helps not just themselves but also the child that they are raising. Single mothers with a child with special needs are still facing discrimination at this age and time. The researchers found out that most of the single mothers are experiencing discrimination most of the time from their family, but they just chose to be remained silent for the sake of their child's peace. One of the biggest concerns of single mothers is financial instability. The limitations of the jobs that they can take are evident as the single mothers are having a hard time finding a consistent income to provide their child with special needs. Thus, the amount of money that their child needed was as big as their paycheck for the whole month.

Even though single mothers with a child with special needs face multiple challenges throughout their lives, their perseverance helps not just themselves but also their children with special needs. We have all discovered that the first thing they need to continue their lives is to learn how to accept the situation. Single mothers who know how to cope would surely lessen the magnitude of their challenges. It is doubly hard for single mothers to raise their children with special needs because they have jobs both at their workplace and inside their respective houses. Balancing these things is hard so knowing what to prioritize helps these single mothers handle every situation.

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

It is recommended that the community should spread awareness regarding single mothers with a child with special needs and their right to live in our society without any discrimination. It is necessary to proceed with awareness campaigns through different places in our environment to fasten the spread and progress.

As these single mothers with a child with special needs raise their child alone, it will be better if they are guided by their family, friends, co-workers, and even the whole neighborhood. In addition, having a strong support system will also boost the esteem of both mother and child with special needs.

It is recommended to have a consistent counseling program to monitor the lives of these single mothers as well as to know what's still need to be done. Including the need for financial and health care services for both the mothers and the child with special needs probably need.

This study recommends that continuing to have skills and training programs for single mothers with a child with special needs would be a big help for them to consistently improve in raising their child. Additionally, conducting an accessible physical and mental well-being and fitness would help the mother to become healthy both physically and mentally.

Psychology students should not stop making progress in spreading awareness about contemporary things, especially the ones that need to be talked about. Online advocacies, campaigns, and projects using the internet could lead to a better understanding and awareness about single mothers with a child with special needs and could prevent future discrimination and stigmas.

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