

Inang Tatay: The Journey of Single Moms Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

People classify single parents as a solo parent is separated by their partners and raise their child dependently. Aside from this, they also manage the household and carry the burden of supporting the child's development. Thus, despite being one of the predominantly conservative countries, the Philippines cannot change the constructed perspective that society conforms to single parents' condition. These perspectives devalued solo parents' worth and changed the sense of purpose and responsibility in their household. The hardships that they do are less to be recognized and appear to be downgraded. Further, this study aims to describe the lived experiences, challenges and coping mechanisms of single moms during the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Utilizing Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) with the 10 participants who met the criteria. Moreover, the implications of the study were discussed, and recommendations were suggested.

Keywords: Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Single Mothers, Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA), COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION

People classify single parents as a solo parent is separated by their partners and raise their child dependently. Aside from this, they also manage the household and carry the burden of supporting the child's development. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2019) states that people see all sorts of single-parent families as consisting of mothers, husbands, and even grandparents bringing up their grandchildren. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reported from a recent survey that the Philippines has around 15 million single parents, of whom 95% are women, or more than 14 million.

Despite being one of the predominantly conservative countries, the Philippines cannot change the constructed perspective that society conforms to single parents' condition. These perspectives devalued solo parents' worth and changed the sense of purpose and responsibility in their household. The hardships that they do are less to be recognized and appear to be downgraded. One of the controversies that showed discrimination is what Senate Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III, unfortunately, said that, in the street language, when they have children and are single, these people just got knocked up or "*na-ano lang*." This statement exhibits that the perception of being a solo parent has been misinterpreted. (Alvarez, 2017)

Single parenting becomes a challenge, mainly being a single mother. It takes a single parent to balance two individuals' roles with raising children and running the house simultaneously. These challenges contribute to solo parents' living experience that results in factors that describe and affect their way of living.

One of the leading causes of becoming a single parent is teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy affects 5.99 percent of Filipino people, based on Save the Children's Global Childhood Study (2019), the second-highest incidence in Southeast Asia. According to the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) in 2017, an estimated 538 babies are born daily to Filipino teenage mothers. Some things have influenced their own lives and even others by growing the population of adolescents involved in this situation. Single adolescent mothers are usually mentally distressed; their relationships and education are often affected, which results in economic dependency on parents and grants from the government (Sibanda & Mudhovozi, 2012). Pregnant girls tend to drop out of school, reduce opportunities for potential jobs, and

reinforce the cycle of poverty. Being a parent has a link to having responsibilities. Providing children's basic needs to become healthy and giving the happiness they need is present in life's challenges even for the most prepared parents. However, some teens become parents at their early ages that result in some consequences caused by this matter.

In most cases, teenage parents are not married as the occurrence of pregnancy is sudden. Teen fathers often neglect their parental duties and responsibilities due to fear and inability to provide adequate care for their child, leaving their mother with even less social support and financial assistance. Therefore, dependency on the parents may occur since these teenagers cannot provide for the child's needs. That results to further obligations that the grandparents carry.

However, there is a chance that teenagers abandoned by their parents face significant challenges. Abandonment is one of the most prominent types of trauma that leads to teenage pregnancy, but many teenagers become pregnant and do not have common abandonment problems. Some adolescent girls may feel neglected, and even if the parents have not abandoned her entirely, they may indulge in imprudent actions for various reasons. They might be desperately calling for attention and wanting to replace fatherly love with a friend's adoration, looking for unconditional love. They are less likely to pursue school, not possible to attend college or continue their education, unable to develop skills at work, look for childcare, and more likely to live in poverty. (Rain, 2020)

On the other hand, abandonment can affect the child, particularly the wife who has been abandoned by the husband. *Partosa-Jo vs. C.A.* (G. R. No. 82606, December 18, 1992) addressed abandonment as follows: Abandonment is a departure of one partner with an avowed intention never to return, accompanied by a prolonged absence without cause, and without, in the meantime, caring at least for one's family, while capable of doing so requires absolute cessation of marital relationships, obligations, and privileges, with separation intention. If one left the conjugal property without returning, the partner is considered to have abandoned the other (Abandonment, 2016).

The difficulty for adults to cope with an unplanned pregnancy and pregnant teenagers are at greater risk. One of the essential parts for adolescent's progress is the family's support for them. Without a family's help, she is more likely to have trouble dealing with the financial, physical, and emotional conditions of becoming a new mother on her own (Rain, 2020).

Single parents in the Philippines are generally not settled by any consultation and legal settlement to have a legal agreement to make a stable living for both parties. Couples may petition a court for legal separation under Filipino law, but only under particular circumstances. In the Philippines, legal separation is the termination of marital obligations, including any existing property relationship between spouses. (Philippine Laws on Divorce, 1987)

As of now, an annulment is the only way for the Filipinos to end their marriages. An annulment invalidates a wedding on the grounds of deception, impotence, misconception, or being under the legal age of marriage. While the Philippine law provides for annulments, the legal requirements are lengthy, expensive, and time-consuming. If a court grants an annulment, both parties can move on as if they were never married, leaving each person free to remarry. Marriage, in effect, never existed on the grounds of annulment. (Philippine Laws on Divorce, 1987)

But the death of the spouse is another cause to be deserted by the partner. Death may have been due to an accident or may have been due to a short-term illness or a chronic health condition. In this latter case, you may also have been placed in the position of being a caregiver. (The Death, 2017)

Family Code Article 212 - Within the case of either parent's absence or death, the parent shall still pursue parental supervision over the kids unless otherwise qualified by the court to be the kid's guardian or the children's property. (Attorneys of the Philippines, 2017)

Art. 64. – *Widowed or Neglected Parent Assistance and Her Minor Dependents. The State shall offer assistance to the widowed or abandoned parent or where either spouse, due to sickness, arrest, etc., is in the prolonged absence and cannot support his / her children. The National Government or other officially authorized agencies with similar roles shall support financial and other vital social services to assist such parents in obtaining the required information or abilities necessary for proper care and family maintenance.* (Executive Order No. 64, 1986)

According to a study by Gingerbread (2015, as cited in Stack & Meredith, 2018), parenting starts not only by nurturing and expressing love but also by seeking to become financially stable to meet the needs of the child, mainly by providing education, shelter, health care, and a safe future. Almost twice of the single-parent families are likely to be in poverty as those in nuclear families, with 67% of single parents experiencing financial difficulties.

Solo parents are likely to make twice as much effort as they can to make enough money for their kids. The working poor is the individuals who are either partnered or not. These people spend 27 weeks or more (either employed or actively seeking work) and yet have an income below the poverty level. The Labor Statistics Bureau reports that 10.6 million people in 2012 were considered working poor, including many single parents. The effect can be even more staggering that results in acquiring more work to make additional income. (Universal Class, n.d.).

A father or a mother's absence has a significant impact not only on the child but also on the single parent. A household without the presence of another affects many aspects of the family situation. By setting up the needs and future of their lives, single parents bound up in raising the child, playing the absent parent's role that a child needs most significantly in growing up. Thus, this study aims to describe the lived experiences, challenges and coping mechanisms of single moms during the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

1.1 Research Questions

The study attempted to determine the lived experiences of single moms during pandemic. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges that the single moms face in their daily lives, and why do they consider those challenges?
2. What are their ways of providing for the needs of their child?
3. What are the parenting styles of single moms towards their child?
4. What are the benefits that the government provides in supporting single moms?
5. What discriminations do they experience as a solo parent?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 *The Formation and Generality of Single Parents*

Families are one of the essential elements of society. It is a primary one, a source with whom newborn communicates and mingles. The family's most critical and extraordinary task is to make arrangements and raise society's expectations and assumptions against young people. In each step of their lives, parents facilitate their children and unconditionally love them. However, as a result of single parenting, this affection and warm-heartedness seem to decrease and directly affect the child's overall health and upbringing.

Single-parent families can be described as families where a parent lives with dependent children, without a spouse or partner, either alone or in an enormous household. From the latter half of the 20th century, there was a rapid and dramatic rise in the number of single-parent families. Some have used this change to argue that we are experiencing a family breakdown (defined as a married couple living with their dependent offspring) with adverse effects on children, families, and community. (Popenoe, 1996, "Single-Parent Families").

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2019) noted that today's single-parent families have become even more prevalent than the "nuclear family, which consists of a mother, father, and children.

Today we see all sorts of single-parent families: headed by mothers, fathers, and even by a grandparent raising their grandchildren." (para. 1).

The Filipinos are considered to have healthy and tight family relations. Before all others, they placed high regard and focused specifically on their families. They work all day and do everything they can to feed their families and care for them. In other countries, when a person turns 18, they will live apart from their family. They value their family so much in the Philippines that they have kept them intact over the years. (Goyala, 2019).

Today, some 13.9 to 14 million Filipinos are single parents struggling to support their families and independently raise their children. As stated in the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), about three (3) million children live in single-parent homes in the Philippines. There are children of single parents, widows, children of refugees, or foreign employees. (of Rainbows and Butterflies, 2015).

In the Philippines, the Filipino families' definition could be expanded to include non-traditional families (e.g., single-parent households, childless couples, cohabiting couples, same-sex parents, reversed role families). These are responsive to the changing Philippine society's demands brought about by many factors such as economic, social, and political issues, technological advancement, and migration, among other topics. (Tarroja, 2010).

2.2 Definition of Family

From the State's perspective in the Philippine Constitution and the Family Code, marriage's importance in creating a family has been emphasized.

The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Article II, Section 12 asserted that the State acknowledges family life's integrity as a primary independent social entity, preserves and enhances the family. It shall protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception equally. The government shall support parents' inherent and primary right and responsibility for civic efficiency and the development of moral character in the rearing of young people.

Article 149 of the Family Code of the Philippines (2010) stated that, as the country's foundation, the family is a fundamental social institution that is valued and protected by public policy. Consequently, family ties are regulated by statute, and no destructive family tradition, practice, or agreement shall be accepted or given effect. (218a) (216a, 218a) (216a, 218a)

In the 2009 survey questionnaire, the National Statistics Office also issued descriptions of Filipino families' various types. A single-family is described as either a single nuclear family or a father and a mother with unmarried children. Single-family also refers to a single household and unmarried sisters and brothers living in the same home. Another type is the extended family, a nuclear family with families living under one roof. The third type is two or more unrelated family members; it is identified as a household with two or more persons who may not be related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption. The National Statistics Office's list of different types of families serves as recognition by stating that different families exist apart from the traditional ones. (Tarroja, 2010)

However, these definitions are insufficient to identify that the solo parent families are included in non-traditional families.

2.3 Definitions of Solo Parents

Solo parents are individuals in either one of these categories:

"Parent left alone with parenthood liability for at least one (1) year due to legal separation or de facto separation from spouse, as long as he/she is entrusting with the custody of the children" (paragraph5 (a) Section3, RA 8972).

"The court or the church's decree on the declaration of nullity or annulment of marriage, he/she is responsible for the custody of the children, the parent left alone or alone with the burden of parenthood" (paragraph6 (a) Section3, RA 8972),

"A parent left alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to death of a spouse" (paragraph2 (a) Section3, RA 8972), and;

"Parent left solo with the obligation of parenthood for at least one year due to the abandonment of spouse " (paragraph 7 (a) Section 3, RA 8972).

2.4 Parenting Styles of Solo Parents

Nevertheless, some studies are linked to different parenting styles that appear in solo parents. Some parenting styles usually followed by single parents can be defined considering the various characteristics presented by these studies.

Parenting Styles apply to the way parents raise their children. It can be applied to the levels of standards, performance criteria, compliance with guidelines, etc., of the parents and the type of discipline used to fulfill their expectations. (Parenting Styles, 2017).

The authoritative parenting style is where parents are caring, sensitive, and compassionate in this parenting style but set firm boundaries for their children. By explaining laws, debating, and reasoning, they seek to regulate the actions of children. They listen to the perspective of a child but do not always support it. (Parenting Styles, 2017).

Permissive parents are warm but lax in this parenting style. They fail to set firm boundaries, closely monitor children's behavior, or require their children to be appropriately mature. (Parenting Styles, 2017).

Uninvolved parenting style is referred to as irresponsible parenting. It is a parenting style where parents do not respond to their child's needs or wishes beyond the necessities of food, clothes, and shelter. (Uninvolved Parenting, 2020).

The authoritarian parenting style is about being stern and strict. It insists on unquestioning obedience and intimidation, shaming, and other punishments to enforce good conduct. (Dewar, G., 2010-2017).

These identified parenting styles will form the basis of the current study to examine whether these parenting styles emerge within the single parent in a Filipino setting. The researchers have identified these well-known parenting styles that also exist among single parents. In the local context, the following summary shows common parenting styles and their outcomes on children. Longitudinal research in Cebu City found that, with mothers more persistent than fathers, the majority of parents consistently had a permissive style over time (Hock 2013, 63). The findings have illustrated the gendered roles of men and women, mothers, and fathers in the Philippine community. Parenting styles varied between the gender of the parents and the gender of the children. Daughters identified more rigid (authoritative, authoritarian) mothers and fathers than the sons did. Sons registered a higher permissive parenting style among their mothers (70.3 percent) and fathers (58.7 percent) than their daughters (Hock et al. 2016, 111). The authoritative style has been shown to predict better educational achievement, self-esteem, and prevention against the son's drug entry. This style scored best for teenagers who want to spend time with family and parents on most subjects and matches Filipinos' family-centered values. The younger respondents clarified the warm, authoritative relationship they had with their parents. Characterized by generous praise and rewards such as hugs, the quality of their time spent with them, the effort they had made to prepare their meals, and the nurturing and discipline they had earned (Gilongos & Guarin 2013). However, Permissive parenting appeared beneficial to children in late adolescence and emerging adults (18–21 years of age in the study) and was found to protect against depressive symptoms of a daughter. (Pajaron, 2019)

2.5 Issues Faced by Single Parents

Parenting, mainly when you have to go it alone, is hard work. As social expectations and family values alter, single mothers are a fast-growing segment of the population. There are several problems that single mothers typically face that are unique to their circumstances in terms of work, finances, child development, and discrimination.

2.5.1 Work. It's hard enough to raise a family. But for single parents struggling to make ends meet, it is even more complicated. They need no more obstacles; they need more opportunities. There are different dilemmas that single working mothers may encounter while raising their child on their own. It seems all too much for one person to deal with sometimes, so they need to find time for themselves. (Srivastava, 2017). E.g., *"She's coming to work late, and she's always using the reason she's a single parent. I usually don't mind if my workers come to work late as long as there's no urgent work that needs to be completed. In her situation, we incur a lot of pending / backlog tasks, and most of the time, she comes in when half of all working hours are already over."* Sophie546. ("Solo parent, 2014).

2.5.2 Financial. Acting as the sole provider of their child without a partner will generate a range of economic challenges. As a single parent, they need to plan to handle all financial conditions. It is also necessary to live within a reasonable plan and save money to cope with unexpected emergencies. (Measom, 2019). The effect of financial distress on health on 15 single parents was discussed in this research. Using constructivist thematic analysis in semi-structured interviews were performed and analyzed. Participants described the lack of food and fuel and made sacrifices to ensure that their basic needs were met. Participants went without food in some situations and struggled to pay bills. There were accounts of loneliness, anxiety, depression, paranoia, and suicidal thoughts. (Stack and Meredith, 233).

2.5.3 Emotional Development of a Child. Kids who see their parents struggle, divorce, or die are at a greater risk of having mental difficulties than their nuclear family counterparts. These emotional issues will make their lives a mess. They can turn to alcohol, drugs, or a life of crime to deal with these issues. All three options help them take their minds away from their home life problems, giving them a false peace perception. It starts as a one-time thing, but soon it will become a regular thing for them. They use drugs daily, drink alcohol, and some even resort to small-time offenses. If they do not quit at an early point, all three of these issues can get bigger and create many problems for them and the adult they are living with. ("Negative Psychological Effects," 2016).

2.5.4 Stigma. The most common symptom of shame raised by mothers from a variety of backgrounds and situations was stereotyping. The primary culprits, The Daily Mail newspaper and

Jeremy Kyle Show, depicted teenage moms being pregnant to wring off the State and that are single moms who do not know their children's father. (Carroll, 2019)

2.5.5 Government Benefits. Traditional family and single-parent families are a basic social unit composed of parents and their children, regarded as groups, whether they live together. (a) A one or more adults' social unit and the children they care for. (b) ("Family," n.d.). *Filipino family is recognized as the foundation of the nation by the State. It will, therefore, reinforce its solidarity and actively promote its overall growth.* (The 1987 P.H. Const., art. XV, § 1.).

Declaration of Policy– The State's policy is to establish the family as the nation's foundation, maintain its unity, and ensure its sustainable development perspective. A comprehensive system of services for solo parents and their children to be carried out by different sectors such as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Health (DOH), National Housing Authority (NHA), and other related government and non-government agencies. (Section 2, R.A., 8972). This Act is known as the "Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000." (Section 1, R.A., 8972). An act that grants the solo parents and their children's rights and privileges, providing appropriate funds and other purposes. (R.A., 8972).

Criteria for Support– Any single parent whose income is below the poverty line set by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) at their place of residence, subject to the assessment of the DSWD worker in the area, shall qualify for assistance. However, provided that the benefits referred to Sections 6, 7, and 8 of this Act shall be enjoyed by a solo parent whose income is above the poverty threshold. (Section 4, R.A., 8972):

Flexible Work Schedule– A flexible working schedule for single parents shall be provided by the employer. Provided, the same shall not affect the productivity of its employee and the company. Furthermore, provided that any employer may request an exemption from the requirements of DOLE on specific meritorious grounds. (Section 6, R.A., 8972).

Work Discrimination – No employer shall allow discrimination upon on terms and conditions of employment based on his/her status against any solo parent employee. (Section 7, RA, 8972).

Parental Leave – Under the existing laws, parental leave of not more than seven (7) working days per year shall be provided to any solo parent employee who has rendered service of at least one (1) year. (Section 7, R.A., 8972).

Educational Benefits– The following advantages and privileges must be provided by DECS, CHED, and TESDA:

(1) Scholarship services for eligible single parents and their children in basic, tertiary, and technical training institutions; and

(2) Appropriate non-formal education services for single parents and their children.

In order to execute this program properly, the DECS, CHED, and TESDA shall declare rules and regulations. (Section 9, R.A., 8972).

Housing Benefits– Solo parents shall be allocated to housing projects. As declared by the NEDA, provisions of the housing legislation prioritizing residents below the poverty line are given liberal payment terms for such low-cost government housing projects. (Section 10, R.A., 8972).

Medical Assistance– DOH should provide a comprehensive health care program for single parents and their children. The DOH will implement the program through their provincial/district/city/municipal hospitals and rural health units (RHUs) and local government units (LGUs). (Section 11, R.A., 8972).

The counseling services, which include individual, peer group, or family counseling, will resolve personal relationships and role conflicts. (b) Article XV, Section 15, Implementing Rules and Regulations RA 8972).

The inclusiveness of this legislation for single parents has modified continuously over the past 20 years, encouraged by the House Committee on Review of Laws, headed by Zambales 2nd District Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla, which seeks to amend the Republic Act No. 8972 or the Welfare Act of Solo

Parents of 2000. Amendments aimed at extending the benefits to solo parents and their children, such as introductory product discounts, drugs, tuition, among others, would help solo-parents cope with their enormous task of raising their children on their own, said Dumlao.

Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr., Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep., wrote in the explanatory note of his bill that R.A. No 8972 is necessary to update the provisions of the law. It makes more inclusive, new, or enhanced existing benefits representing the Filipino family's changing times and challenges. (Atienza, 2020)

This data shows that single parents' lived experiences are comprehensive regarding the factors that affect their lives as a single parent. It identifies that family is one of the basic and essential elements of society. The primary component of having a family is having parents, guardians, or someone who can be considered a parent. Children have the right to be protected, be treated with affection, be educated, have medical treatment, and be secure from cruelty and violence. Parents must protect their children's rights until they are old enough to make their way in the world. (Your Duties and Rights, 2020). Solo parents have these obligations that are difficult to handle because they don't have someone to accompany them in providing for their family's needs, particularly their child.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a qualitative approach that aims to provide a detailed study. It is about personal lived experiences in the account of its period rather than one suggested from pre-existing theoretical presumptions. It recognizes that this is an interpretative attempt for people who are making sense in terms of experience and development. Before the transition to more general statements in its approach to examining each case's detailed experience, it is specifically idiographic. IPA can be useful as a methodology on topics such as phenomenon, which involves psychosomatic interaction that is hard to articulate, convoluted, vague, and emotionally burdened (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study are the single parents, about their experience during this COVID-19. The researchers determined how individuals adjust and handle the circumstances amidst the pandemic.

This study started with a few respondents, and the criteria were the following: (1) must be a single mom, (2) age of 15-55 years old. After considering the criteria, ten (10) participants were qualified to be an interviewee.

3.2 Instrument

The study utilized a semi-structured interview guide to gathering the data and responses of the respondents. Also, have an ethical consideration to the respondents, the researchers have a consent letter. The interview guide's questionnaire was checked through validation, revision, and adjustment for the ten (10) participants. The one-on-one interview will as long as the researchers will get the information from the respondents.

3.3 Procedures

A semi-structured interview requires the interviewer to ask more open-minded questions rather than strictly following formalized questions. It allows discussion with the interviewee instead of a straightforward question and answer format (Doyle, 2020).

The researchers are to interview for them to succeed in the research. In an interview, they will collect the data through interviews with ten (10) respondents. For additional information, researchers need to prove the respondents' answers, so they will ask follow-up questions to emphasize the research. The proof and evidence that research conduct from the interview will be done and transcribed through a recorded tape via messenger call and google meet and personal interview. This record will put in a written form to further understand the results.

4. RESULTS

The summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study has shown in Table 1. The study has completed by ten single parents residing in the Municipality of Bocaue and Marilao, Bulacan. The participants ages 16 to 53 years old. The majority of the participants are employed or self-employed. Some were able to establish their own business, while some are employed in private sectors.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency
Age	
16-24 yrs. Old	2
25-30 yrs. Old	2
31-35 yrs. Old	1
36-40 yrs. Old	1
41-50 yrs. Old	2
51-55 yrs. Old	1
Employment	
Unemployed	2
Employed	4
Self-employed	2
Highest educational attainment	
High School	5
College	4
Vocational	1

The following sections summarize the results gathered from the in-depth interviews. The findings of this study are laid out in themes found within the interview of each participant. These findings are organized with five different sections that cover various aspects of single parenting. These aspects include their challenges, providing the child's needs, parenting styles, government benefits, and discriminations toward single parenting. Each section is further grouped into themes, which are derived from the responses of the participants. Subordinate themes of each subordinate theme are listed with their frequencies, in descending order of prevalence. Moreover, direct quotations are provided by various participants to further discuss each theme or domain.

4.1 CHALLENGES

The subordinate theme discusses the risks and difficulties that their parenting had brought them. Listed in Table 1 are the subordinate themes that were found within the interviews. Six of the 10 participants expressed their financial problems, while 7 participants highlighted their constant lack of emotional support.

Table 1. Challenges themes

Challenges Themes	Frequency
Financial problems	6
Lack of emotional support	7

4.1.1 Financial Problems

Worries in financial stability were very evident for the single parents, especially in providing for their child's needs. Some of them struggle with this because of the absence of their partners. These parents face financial problems as they have difficulties sharing childcare and financial responsibilities with their partners (Bahk, 2021). This is reflected in the statement of participant no. 9:

"Yung financial. Ako lang mag-isa eh, mahirap suportahan kapag talaga hindi enough yung like, sahod mo ganun. Pati emotional na rin. Wala kang ka-agapay. 'Yon. "

Another single parent (participant no. 10) had the same worries. He stated,

"Syempre bilang isang single parent. Mahirap, kasi ikaw lang mag-isa ang nagde-desisyon sa dalawa mong anak. Ako rin yung nagpo-provide sa aming pang-araw-araw na gastusin, pambayad ng tubig at kuryente, ganyan, baon tapos tuition..."

4.1.2 Emotional Support

Living without the presence of their partners give burden in terms of holding responsibilities in their household. This burden lessens their ability to stand on themselves and leads to emotional incapacity. Participant no. 8 share her experience of lack of emotional support:

"...syempre una na yung pagiging mother and a father at the same time. Ako yung may responsibilidad na gawin yung mga dati n'yang ginagawa noong buhay pa s'ya..."

Participant no. 3 shared the same experience as she stated,

“...siguro yung p’ano ko napalaki yung mga bata na ako lang mag-isa. Ang hirap, ang hirap nung ako lang mag-isa. Sa awa ng Diyos, kahit papaano, ayan na sila, may maliit pa ‘ko, hanggang ngayon tinataguyod ko. “

4.2 WAYS OF PROVIDING THE CHILD’S NEEDS

Listed in Table no. 2 are the participants' ways of providing for their child's needs. Seven out of 10 participants stated that they could provide through working. While five out of 10 participants have their family to support them.

Table 2. Ways of Providing the Child’s Needs Theme

Ways of Providing	Frequency
Work	7
Family’s Support	5

4.2.1 Work

An essential part of providing for the needs of their child has permanent work. Besides, having a minimum wage of income helps them to at least save for some other essentials. Most of them have additional part-time jobs such as online selling, online teaching, and caregiving. Participant no. 8 shared her experience on how she provides her child’s needs. She stated,

“Kasi inaalagaan ko rin yung anak ng isa kong kapatid, binabayaran n’ya ako... Siguro para matulungan n’ya na rin ako, ganun. Nagbebenta rin ako online, kahit ano pa ‘yan... Binebenta ko through online, online seller ganun. “

With the same experience, participant no. 4 narrated,

“Minsan nagoonline seller ako o ano, depende. Sa printing ganon. Yun yung trabaho ko talaga. Pero yung ano ko talaga, is yung online selling. “

4.2.2 Family’s support

As a solo parent, providing their needs by themselves is tough for most of them. With the support of other family members who have the ability to help, they become the other source of support.

Participant no. 3 has her parents’ support as stated,

“...nagtitinda ako, iiwan ko sa magulang ko para kahit papaano pag-uwi ko may kakainin kami. “

Participant no. 6 described how a family member supported her. She said,

“Mahirap po sobra. Kasi ano po, wala po talagang nakukuhang trabaho, mahirap po talaga maging single parent, kasi nga po bata nga po ako. Opo ako lang po talaga mag isa. Yung biyanan ko po tinutulungan po ako. “

4.3 PARENTING STYLES

The participants’ parenting styles are listed in Table no. 3 showing six out of 10 participants being non-restrictive to their children. They instead advise than to use a firm hand. Four out of 10 participants showed disciplinary actions by being strict and forceful in executing their rules.

Table 3. Parenting Styles themes

Parenting Styles Themes	Frequency
Non-restrictive	6
Restrictive	4

4.3.1 Non-restrictive

This style of parenting is more likely to be permissive and have their open hand and being neutral. Also, they are considerate to their child by giving punishment to express it by giving advice. Participant no. 5 detailed this style as she narrated,

“Kailangan mong sabihan kung anong mga mali n’ya, mali ‘yan anak, ganito gawin mo, ganyan. Kailangan mo sawayin, utusan para matuto mag-trabaho, ganon. “

Participant no. 9 expressed her thoughts, saying,

“Pagsasabihan ko s’ya, sasabihin ko kung anong mangyayari... Kasi yung mga bata rin ngayon naiintindihan na rin naman kung ano yung sitwasyon eh, ta’s ieexplain ko rin ng mas naiintindihan. ‘Wag uunahin ng galit. “

4.3.2 Restrictive

This punishment-heavy parenting style uses a firm hand to discipline their child and to attain their rules strictly. Rather than teaching their child to have better choices, they are invested in making them feel sorry for their mistake. They are not interested in negotiating, but they are focused on obedience. This parenting style had shown to what Participant no. 8 stated,

“Eh, nasisigawan ko eh. Minsan napapalo, ganun. “

Participant no. 2 described how she discipline her children, stated,

“... kailangan ko na kayong sigaw-sigawan para Makita n'yo na nagagalit na 'ko, para makita n'yong gali tna ako sa inyo, para Makita n'yong dapat kayong sumunod sa'kin dahil ako bilang magulang, ako ang dapat sinusunod n'yo, hindi kayo ang magpapasunod sa akin, hindi ako ang pasususunurin n'yo lalo ako lang ang mag-isa sa buhay na nagtataguyod sa inyo. “

4.4 GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

Table no. 4 shows the list of the single parents who receive government benefits. There are seven out of 10 participants who are not part of any government benefits associated with the Solo Parent Act. At the same time, three out of the 10 participants used their title as one of the single parents as part of other government agencies that give other benefits.

Table 4. Government Benefits Themes

Government Benefits Themes	Frequency
No Benefits	7
Other government benefits	3

4.4.1 Non-beneficiaries

Most of the participants stated that they are not part of those who receive government benefits in line with being single parents. Although these participants are aware that they should have these benefits allotted to them, they don't know how to apply to it. Participant no. 4 shared her experience. She said,

“Wala. Pero diba meron naman tayong solo parent I.D., 'yon, i-aanoko pa lang s'ya, ipa-process ko pa lang s'ya, hindi ko pa kasi s'ya napa-process. “

As for Participant no. 10, he stated how not aware he is, saying,

“Wala... Wala akong alam sa ganyan-ganyan. “

4.4.2 Other government benefits

There are certain benefits that single parents also have. Some of the participant mentioned that they are part of SSS and PhilHealth. Participant no. 3 is one of these as she stated that:

“Siguro PhilHealth. Pero hindi ko kasi s'ya masyadong na-ano, nahuhulugan saka yung SSS, hindi ko pa rin masyadong nahuhulugan kaya hindi pa ako sigurado. Pero meron ako. “

Participant no. 2 have the same condition. She said,

“Meron, sa SSS, SSS ng papa mo. “

4.5 DISCRIMINATION

This section shows the single parents who had experienced discrimination. Three out of 10 participants are discriminated against by a family member. At the same time, two out of 10 participants had been gossiped about by their neighbors. Five out of 10 participants didn't encounter unfair treatment by society.

Table 5. Discrimination Themes

Discrimination Themes	Frequency
Family members	7
Neighbors	3
No experience	5

4.5.1 Family members

One of the sources of encouragement should be the family. But, as the participants stated, some of them experienced unfair treatment and discrimination within the family. Participant no. 4 described how she experienced such discrimination. She said,

“Sa ano, usually sa malapit sa ’yo ganon. Una sa mga relatives, ganon. Chismis, ganon. “

Participant no. 3 had the same encounter saying that,

“Sa pamilya ko, sa asawa ko. “

4.5.2 Neighbors

The community often sees a person with prejudice, not knowing the truth about someone’s life. Some participants experience this judgment along their neighbors. Participant no. 6 narrated her experience. She stated,

“Meron, halos lahat. Halos lahat ng kapitbahay. Kung anu-ano ang mga sinasabi nila. “

Participant no. 10 had the same encounter saying,

“...nung bago-bago pa lang kaming hiwalay, hindi nawawala yung chismis sa kapitbahay, syempre. “

4.5.3 No experience

Single parents must be treated fairly despite of their situation. Most of the participants are fortunate to experience a non-discriminatory community. Participant no. 2 shared her situation with her siblings. She stated,

“Sa mga kapatid ko, wala naming nagdi-discriminate sa amin kasi tinutulungan naming ang bawat isa. Kung sino ang nasa ibaba ng pamilya, sila ang itataas, tinutulungan. Walang diskriminasyon. “

Participant no. 9 shared her thoughts about this. She said,

“I think, wala naman. Kasi ngayon, sa ngayon kasi marami nang proud na single parent sila. Kaya yung mga tao ngayon sila na ang nag-iingat na mag-question na like bakit ka single parent. Pero, syempre yung iba, kahit hindi nila sabihin, mararamdaman pa rin na nangja-judge ganyan. Pero hindi naman yung magiging status mo sa buhay eh. Sabi nga nila, ngayon ’yan ang issue, pero once na tumaas ka, or umangat ka sa buhay, ang makikita na nila kung paano sila nagging proud... Sila yung proud kapag may nararating ka eh, kaya kapag binaba mo yung sarili mo dahil lang sa pangja0judge nila, ayon, saka ka nila lalong ibababa. “

5. DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the single parents' lived experiences amidst the CoVid-19 pandemic. To elaborate on this matter, it was sorted into five themes: challenges, ways of providing the child's needs, parenting styles, government benefits, and discrimination. Moreover, the findings of the study were fulfilled by conducting an in-depth interview. The participants expanded their responses to the five themes into corresponding subthemes. The results from the previous chapter will be interpreted and discussed further in this section.

On the other hand, the participants' experiences, challenges, and difficulties as a single parent are evident in the number of participants who lack emotional support. Since they are the only ones holding the responsibilities, living without their partners' presence lessens their ability to stand on themselves and leads to emotional incapacity. However, emotional incapacity does not determine how people live and surpass the challenges. Nevertheless, there are still people who support and uplift them when they experience this situation.

People are struggling to provide for their everyday needs. The study's participants find ways to provide for their child's needs. The respondents support their child by working, as shown in the number of results. Besides, having a minimum wage of income helps them to at least save for some other essentials. Most of them have additional part-time jobs such as online selling, online teaching, and caregiving that are more likely to be in the new normal of their lives. Even the people with partners who help and support each other are also struggling in this situation.

In terms of how the parents raise their children, their parenting styles are evident. Parenting style is the construct representing the standards and strategies that parents use in their child-rearing. Quality of parenting is essential because it influences how the child behaves. The participants have commonalities in being non-restrictive to discipline their child following the result. This permissive parenting style expresses the way of being neutral and considerate on giving punishments.

On the other hand, the findings show that some of them are strict since they are using firm hands in attaining their rules. It is easier for a family when both parents practice the same style of parenting. But this study shows that even single parents manage to discipline their children in their ways without their companion's presence.

In today's generation, single parents are recognized by the government. This can be seen by the benefits that are given to them. This study shows that most of the participants are not that aware and do not exercise those government benefits exclusive for the single parents. These benefits will help them to ease the burden, especially in their finances. But, some of them are engaged to other government benefits such as SSS and PhilHealth. This is evident in how the government lacks ways and strategies to disseminate information about the single parents' benefits. This must be resolved by the authorities since the number of single parents is continuously increasing.

Discrimination arises from the individuals' beliefs associated with their characteristics, groups, and norms they belong. Single parents can't remove the fact that they are experiencing unjust treatment by some people. Discrimination is proven to have huge effects on everyone regardless of their status. This study is the opposite of this matter because of the participants' responses wherein they don't have any discrimination experiences. However, some of them encountered unfair treatment by their neighbors. They have been judged by the community without knowing the truth and even make false judgments about them. But the worst discrimination experienced by these people could be inside their house.

In sum, throughout the themes in the present study attempted to reach the different aspects of being a Filipino single parent. This study shows the challenges of providing the child's needs, parenting styles, government benefits, and discrimination. Nonetheless, it was observed that single parents are not different from other parents with their partners' presence. The findings also suggest that single parents experience challenges such as financial problems and emotional support. Providing their child's needs greatly affects how they support their child by working and with the family's help. It also suggests that the participants engage in different parenting styles; it is evident that the non-restrictive parenting style has been mostly used while some participants do not often use restrictive.

On the other hand, the government has its role in supporting its citizens. It includes single parents in terms of finances. However, most of them are not aware of the benefits that they can be used. Lastly, the study shows that discrimination is least to be seen by these single parents' lived experience. This research on single parents' lived experience is essential as it provided insight into a significant description of how they live as a single parent. Moreover, their identity and strengths as a single parent in the Philippines were given a deeper meaning.

6. CONCLUSION

This present study aimed to explore and understand one of the significant aspects of single parents' lives, which is rarely observed in the Philippine setting. This study looked at the lived experiences of Filipino single parents. Much information about the different aspects of their lives as parents was gathered and analyzed to understand their family formation better. Upon interviewing ten single parents, several findings were collected regarding the single parents' challenges, providing the child's needs, parenting styles, government benefits, and discrimination.

The participants in our study discussed their experience as single parents. The findings suggested that in terms of challenges, they struggled mainly in financial and emotional support. The participants find it challenging to provide for themselves as they do not have partners responsible for the family. Therefore, work and the participants' family's support are the sources for providing the child's needs. It is noticeable even on the complete families that they are leaning on these ways. Filipinos are known to have a tight culture that impacts the orientation of a family. However, the findings suggested that the participants are more likely to be non-restrictive, particularly in teaching their children. Also, other parents are considered to be restrictive in their parenting style. These single parents have their ways of disciplining their children to be responsible for themselves. There is individual assistance from the government that can help, specifically the single parents. But, based on the result, the participants included themselves on other government benefits. It is also evident to the findings that there are single parents who are non-beneficiaries even though they are aware of it. In general, the government has the responsibility and accountability that will support their citizens according to their duty. People have the right to be treated equally. Equality is ensured for everyone to be equal regardless of their race, gender, religion, age, and status. The present study found that single parents often encounter this within their family members and neighbors. Yet, the findings also suggested that

most of the participants have no experience being discriminated against. On account of the participants' answers, they ignore others' prejudice.

Moreover, the researchers also recommend further looking into the participants' interaction in their educational attainment. Future researchers would observe whether there is a difference in the educational attainment of single parents across different socioeconomic status, gender, and age with a larger sample.

The study's results can be useful to explore topics beyond the scope of this research. It will be interesting to observe single parents' children in their emotional capacity and gender development. Future research under Single Parents' lived experiences in the Philippine setting specifically with the topic according to their government benefits. It will promote awareness of the condition of single parents in the Philippines.

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