

# Home Management Practices of Solo Parents in Samar, Philippines

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## Abstract

*The study determines the home management practices and problems met by the solo parents of selected rural areas in Samar along child rearing practices, household chores and routine, time management, and financial management. The data were collected through a descriptive correlational research design utilizing a researcher-made questionnaire in gathering data. A significant relationship in the home management practices and problems met along child rearing practices and in household chores, and routines of the respondents and their classification as a solo parent was evident. National and local government has the big responsibilities to address the needs and problems of the solo parents.*

Keywords: Solo-parent, home management, household practices, parenting

## I. INTRODUCTION

The number of solo-parent families in the Philippines has grown rapidly as society continues to grow and change through time. Based on the 2000 survey of the National Census and Statistics Office, there are at least three million single parents in the Philippines or 4 percent of the country's total 76.5 million population. The growing numbers of solo-parent families are now so prominent in society that they become important subculture and need to be accepted as a legitimate and valid unit of society (Simbulan; 2008). The primary purpose of the paper is to assess the home management practices and problems encountered of solo parents in rural areas of Samar along child rearing practices, household chores and routines, time management and financial management.

Parenthood is challenging under the best of conditions. With one parent, the

challenges are multiplied. The road of a single parent may consist of obstacles such as loneliness, grief, hurt, sadness, rejection, guilt, insecurity, and depression (Reece; 2013). According to Bronnimann (2008), most of the single parents experience responsibility overload, when one parent makes all the decisions and provides for all of the family needs. Many single parents were under stress and lacked the time to invest in their children and child rearing becomes more difficult for them. Lack of time is a factor that contributes to the inability of mothers to provide quality child care. On the contrary, Diaz (2011) pointed out that single parents become extremely self-reliant and superior time managers because they rely on no one for their personal needs.

Single-parent families have their share of daily struggles and long-term disadvantages. The issues of expensive

house helper, shortage of quality time with children, balance of work and home duties, and economic struggle are among the seemingly endless problems these families must solve. When accompanied by financial pressures, hectic schedules, and the stress of everyday activities, add up to the bulk of concerns. The solo parents of the nearby rural areas of Samar share the same social stigma with the rest of the solo parents in the country. With these, solo parents need understanding and encouragement from the society; people should learn to accept and treat them as equal from the common idea of family life. Single parents need to develop new skills and obtain additional education. One should be able to think better ways on how to lessen their burdens.

The aim of the study, therefore, is to identify the Home Management Practices of the solo parents in the Rural Areas particularly in Paranas, Motiong, Hinabangan, and Jiabong, Samar. It will serve as a basis for the social services opportunities that the society can offer to them.

### **The Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

The parent development theory (PDT) states that parenting largely encompasses six dimensions: bonding, discipline, education, general welfare and protection, responsivity, and sensitivity (Herman; 2009). The PDT considers parenting by examining the important social role which parents play. When individuals interact with their children, they are performing the role of being a parent. Mowder (2010) defines who parents are, examines the parents' roles, clarifies how parents and parenting develop and change over time, and explains how the parent role relates to parenting activities.

The Report on Psycho-Social Aspects of Single Parent Families by the Council of Europe (2014) states that the accumulation

of social roles by single parents creates a physical and psychological overload having repercussions to children. The social and emotional life of members of single-parent families is thrown off balance by the pain of separation, divorce or bereavement. The home management practices particularly on child rearing, bonding with children, provision of good education, welfare and protection, and imposing discipline sometimes become less priority of single parents. It is simply because of their desire to attain economic stability of the family. Parenting activities are focused more in reducing economic vulnerability.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive-survey research design in gathering data regarding the home management practices of the solo parents of selected rural areas in Samar. Researchers purposely visited the selected rural areas and identified the solo parents. The respondents were made to answer the Bavolek and Keene (2010) Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) Questionnaire for the child rearing practices. They were asked to answer a researcher-made questionnaire for the household chores and routine, time management, financial management and the problems they met along the different variates.

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows that the solo parent-respondents were dominated by females whose ages fell on the age bracket of 29 to 35 years of age. On the average, they had three children and have been a single parent for two to eight years. Based on the Snapshots of the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund (2014) most single parents are single mothers. In 2013, 77% of single parents in the US were single mothers. And 85% of the children living

Table 1. Age and Sex of the Solo Parent-Respondents

Age	Male	Female	Total	Percent
64-70	0	3	3	9.38
57-63	2	2	4	12.50
50-56	0	3	3	9.38
43-49	0	5	5	15.63
36-42	0	4	4	12.50
29-35	2	7	9	28.13
22-28	0	4	4	12.50
Total	4	28	32	100.00

with a single parent were living with their mother and most single parents have no more than two children. Though majority of single parents are mothers, single parents share similar problems and challenges (Herman; 2009).

Table 4 shows that solo parents in the rural areas of Samar were mostly classified as solo parents as results of death of spouse followed by being abandoned or left by husband/wife. Most widowed parents suffered many years only for children and ignored their personal needs and life options. These women are also at risk of high levels of stress related to loss of income, emotional and social support (Koshrahan, Salide, and Amehi; 2010). Another social challenge that young widowed parents report is the lack of services geared toward supporting the entire grieving family. Providing care for a family is important because death of a parent fractures the entire family system.

Results in Table 3 reflect that the four variates among solo parent-respondents had inadequate financial capability due to lack of time to engage in additional livelihood activity that their family budget is sufficient only for food and clothing. Since most of the respondents were widowed and abandoned, the death of a spouse or abandonment results in a considerable loss of income. In a study conducted by Seely & Talbot (1985) a large proportion of single parent families is considered low income, in that more than 50% of their income goes toward shelter, clothing and

Table 2. Classification of Solo Parent-Respondents

Indicators	f	Percent
As an outcome of death of spouse	10	33.33
By choice: Parents who gave birth and choose not to marry	2	6.67
By decision: As a result of annulment	1	3.33
Mutual decision to separate with/without legal agreement	5	16.67
Being abandoned or left by husband/wife	7	23.33
Decision to leave spouse	4	13.33
Not Specified	1	3.33

Table 3.  
Home Management Practices of Solo Parents

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
In terms of Child Rearing Practices	3.71	Average
In terms of Household Chores and Routines	3.67	Average
In terms of Time Management	3.53	Average
In terms of Financial Management	2.82	Inadequately Practiced

Table 4.  
Problems Met by Solo Parents

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
In terms of Child Rearing Practices	2.86	Slightly Felt
In terms of Household Chores and Routines	3.53	Moderately Felt
In terms of Time Management	2.75	Slightly Felt
In terms of Financial Management	3.81	Moderately Felt

food.

With regards to child rearing practices, household chores and routines, and time management, the respondents were capable of managing it averagely. It is in this context that children of single parents may have more duties and responsibilities

Table 5.  
Comparison between Solo Parent Category and Home Management Practices

Variables	Respondent Category	N	Total	X <sup>2</sup> comp	X <sup>2</sup> critical	Decision
Household Chores and Routine	Solo Parent (Death of Spouse	9	101	-0.51	5.991	Not Significant
	Solo Parent by Decision	2	22			
	Solo Parent by Choice	17	252			
Time Management	Solo Parent (Death of Spouse	9	123	-0.51	5.991	Not Significant
	Solo Parent by Decision	2	36.5			
	Solo Parent by Choice	17	246.5			
Financial Management	Solo Parent (Death of Spouse	9	123.5	2.49	5.991	Not Significant
	Solo Parent by Decision	2	29.5			
	Solo Parent by Choice	17	247			
Child Rearing Practices	Solo Parent (Death of Spouse	8	122.5	21.21	5.991	Significant
	Solo Parent by Decision	1	9.5			
	Solo Parent by Choice	17	197			

Alpha: 0.05, Df: 2

around the home from an earlier age.

As to the problems met by the respondents, single parents considered the problem particularly in household chores and routines and financial management as highly felt. In an article posted by Newman & Grauerholz (2002) some of the typical problems of single parents are related to finances, loneliness, time management, budgeting, disciplining and decision making.

The problems encountered by single-parent families originated from a variety of factors. Some of these were the absence or lack of support from the absent parent, the inadequacy of earnings or the inability to find work due to personal attributes, working ability and skills and domestic responsibilities.

### Relationships of Variables

Table 5. Comparison on the Home Management Practices along Household Chores And Routine, Time Management, Financial Management, and Child Rearing Practices by the Parent-Respondents as to their Classification as Solo Parent.

As reflected in the above data, it is in the child rearing practices where a significant relationship between home management practices and classification of solo parents was evident. It means that all the different classification of solo parents agree on the manner of child rearing.

As reflected in the last table, problems encountered by solo parents along time management, financial management, and child rearing practices were significantly related to all the different classification of solo parents. In an article written by Karst (2000), he pointed out that being a single parent can be hard and lonely. There is often no other adult with whom to share decision-making, discipline, and financial responsibilities. The full burden of finding responsible childcare, earning a living, and parenting falls on one individual.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS

In a home where there is only one parent, the shared set of challenges included on learning how to manage finances and making quality time for children and oneself. In the study conducted, many of the single parent households were female-

headed, and their economic struggle was much greater because single mothers earned alone and did not earn the same income as single fathers. A consequence of this economic burden was the balance of work and family duties. Single parents particularly those of mothers often worked overtime to compensate for the low salaries, thus taking time away from their children and other domestic chores. These compound disadvantages experienced by solo parents need public interventions. Remedial policies must be reinforced and various measures must be provided to reduce and eventually prevent economic and psychological vulnerability of single parents.

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