



American Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation (AJIRI)

ISSN: 2833-2237 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1 (2025)

PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

The Stories of Resilience and Perseverance from the Lens of Filipino and Ethiopian Single Mothers: A Multi-Case Study

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Article Information

Received: July 12, 2024

Accepted: August 16, 2024

Published: February 19, 2025

Keywords

Single Mothers, Single Parenting, Single Parents' Coping Strategies, Solo Parents Challenges, Qualitative Research, Case Study

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the lived experiences of the Filipino and Ethiopian single mothers. Two from rural area of Davao Region, Philippine Islands and one from Amhara Region in Northern Ethiopia. Qualitative methods via case study were used. Their storylines were captured through an in-depth interviews and the data collected were examined using cross-case analysis. They are given pseudonyms as Penelope, Yeshimebet and Ysabelle to protect their identity. In each case, close family members were also interviewed to entwine triangulation technique in gathering the data. Results revealed that emotional challenges, financial challenges, childcare challenges and coping strategies were commonly shared in all cases. Whereas, thought on being resilient and persistent, thought on being a positive thinker and thought on being strong were subsequent common themes drawn from their narratives. A distinct theme such as run away was identified from the life of Penelope where she fled away from her home town for a change of environment. Other distinct theme like involvement in social civic activities went to the life of Ysabelle where she engaged in government feeding program and Zumba dancing activity to alleviate depression. Seven major themes occurred as common by single mothers while two distinct themes emerged. This implied a call for single mothers to seek financial and psychological advice from experts with regards to the benefits and privileges set forth by the government in supporting single mothers welfare in all aspects.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the United Nations Women's Research recorded around 101.3 million single mothers (Bhatt, 2020). As a matter of fact, motherhood is the most challenging role even to the great successful career woman, best educated and those with a life partner (Luthar & Ciciolla, 2015). In the case of single mothers, their endurance were identified from their responsibility at work and their obligation at home. Mostly, they were regarded high in their position as single parent (Giriskan, 2021).

In the Philippines, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reported from a recent survey that there are around 15 million single parents, of whom 95 percent are women, or more than 14 million. To exemplify, the life of single parents have so many challenges especially in the case of single mothers. One woman is performing dual roles, the obligation in administering the household concerns and the childcare responsibility. The execution of these role in the family normally affect the single mother's way of living (Garci et. al., 2021). In support, single parents are struggling in performing the dual responsibility about financial stability and caring of the children (Bahk, 2021). In Ethiopia, the number of single parents have been increasing over time (G/Mikeal & Abebe, 2022). In relation, it is mentioned that the future of single mother is confronted by different obstacles including financial woes, emotional disturbance, and other psychological challenges. The lack of a partner is very difficult that resulted in a lack of confidence. Lone parenting is to

mean shouldering the responsibility of childcare and the difficulties of responding to questions from their children about their real identity in the community (Zufan, 2021). Furthermore, a research conducted highlights the significance of the positive adjustments of a single mothers to raise their children in dealing with financial challenges that require protective process. The researchers recognized some vulnerabilities that single mothers went through and on how these hardships disrupted their lives (Murry et al., 2001; Taylor & Conger, 2014). In this light, the researchers decided to conduct an investigation on the stories of single mothers resiliency and perseverance in combating all their difficulties. This idea was sought from the story of resilience researchers that they demonstrated that positive output are possible for some kids who were exposed to extreme stressors and difficulties; this is consistent with the finding that having a proficient parent can lead and promotes healthy developmental paths and can give protection to their children from estrangement despite adversities (Masten, 2014).

There were various research conducted relating to this topic but considering its limits on the geographical location, this investigation was conducted in rural communities in the Province of Davao Region in the Philippine Islands and in Amhara Region in Northern Ethiopia, Africa. This implied a call for single mothers to seek for financial and psychological advice from experts as well as the policy implementors about the benefits promulgated by the government for the welfare of the

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single mothers. Also, other single mothers may learn from the testimonies of their hardships encountered and how they combat their difficulties in order to survive in the qualms of life's strongest storms.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the hardships and difficulties encountered by single mothers?
2. How do single mothers cope with the challenges they encountered?
3. What insights can be drawn from the experience of the single mothers?
4. What are the similarities and differences of each case?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section exhibited related studies and literatures from various scholars in the field. The topics are arranged according to the sequence of the presentation below.

Single Parenting

Single or solo parents are people who are left in charge of raising their children on their own. Regardless of a parent's marital status, according to the data from the National Statistics Office (NSO). In the Philippines, there are 14 million single parents. The rise in the number of single parents has prompted the Republic Act 8972, often known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, was passed by the National Government. It was established to offer a full range of services for single parents and their kids. The demise of their partner, the law protects fathers and mothers who raise their children alone due to abandonment, divorce, or even rape victims who have children. This Law also regards those who are left to raise children alone as solo parents taking care of youngsters that are not their own like godchildren, nieces, or nephews (Villosillo-Balbuena, 2022). More so, their financial resources are limited and they are frequently emotional as a result of their difficulties in raising a child without assistance from their spouse. They are stress in their daily struggles, socially isolated, and financially battered (Murry *et al.*, 2001; Taylor & Conger, 2014; Waldfogel *et al.*, 2010).

Hardships and Difficulties

Raising children is one of the difficulties single mothers encounter. Children who do not have a partner must simultaneously play the partner and their own roles, working long hours to meet the family's financial demands while juggling job and family and household, as well as social stigma. As a result, one may feel helpless, lonely, anxious, fury and shame. Women may have difficulties in their social and emotional lives during a time when the demands of parenting are great. The modifications frequently required by these changed personal and societal situations need being ready and able to take on a variety of new challenges (Mohamad *et al.*, 2020).

It would also be beneficial to raise awareness regarding

homeless and underprivileged single mothers. First, the issue's representation in the media needs to alter. Instead of criticizing or mocking single mothers, social media could be used to raise awareness of societal issues. Their families should be assisted and be given various seminars for single mothers and their kids who live in poverty. In addition, they should be given educational benefit. The government should create international alliances for social and economic progress and develop employment-promoting policies aimed at helping single mothers (Roze *et al.*, 2018).

Emotional Challenges

The single working mothers struggled on their experience on isolation in their fight with life, work, and children as a result of their situation (Giriskan, 2021). Children whose fathers are not present face emotional difficulties since they frequently envy those who are things fathers impart to their kids and which harm the children's emotional health. Further, the As the children's only parent, the absence of the father creates a vacuum in providing for their fundamental necessities. Mothers often struggle alone and without help as they move to put food on the table (Koketso, 2019).

The findings showed that anxiety and sadness in adolescent children were strongly correlated with maternal distress. Additionally, the correlations between parental distress and teenage anxiety and depression were strengthened by instrumental filial obligation (Leung *et al.*, 2023). Equally important is the emotional life that single mothers that affected by their single status. Single mothers went through different situations in their everyday living; they usually experience tensions. Reports said that they were lonely, irritable, helpless, irritable and lack of confidence. They mentioned that there extreme sadness that might lead to their depression. Their deepest worry is there inability to take care of the children because of the toxic emotion that caught them. They are convinced that their feeling lonely was cause by financial difficulties, and apprehensions about future situations (Birara, 2021).

Financial Challenges

Single women and their children suffer harmful effects from poverty and financial difficulties. Inflation in recent years has caused economic problems. Compared to other groups, single mothers are more likely to experience such financial woes. Their physical health suffers because even if they did not get enough sleep and rest, they are obliged to work that even if they were ill they continue to provide the children's need to accomplish everything, which make them perpetually worn out and got over fatigued (Stack & Meredith, 2018).

In the Philippines, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reported from a recent survey that there are around 15 million single parents, of whom 95 percent are women, or more than 14 million. That is to say, single parents have so many challenges especially in the case of single mothers. It will take one woman to perform

dual roles, the obligation in administering the family households concern and the childcare responsibility. The execution of these role in the family normally affect the single mother's way of living (Garcia *et al.*, 2021). In support, single parents are struggling in performing the dual responsibility about financial stability and caring of the children (Bahk, 2021).

Coping Strategies

It was discovered that single mothers faced four different sorts of issues, including psychology, parenting, conflict between job and family, and financial constraints. In the absence of the father at home, the mother may need to work long hours while performing task at home at the same time (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019).

Another risk factor for mothers who are single consists of psychological traits that pertain to coping. Researchers have repeatedly proven that single mothers who are highly optimistic have lower levels of internalizing symptoms including depression and anxiety (Taylor & Conger, 2014). Furthermore, single mothers who are not supported by their husbands engaged in a combine effort to attend to their family and work responsibilities. In this case, they are vulnerable to under pressure and getting stress on a daily basis (McManus *et al.*, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative method via case study. The idea in using qualitative approach was taken from Patton (2002) that in understanding a phenomena in real life context is the ultimate goal of a qualitative research. It was emphasized by Creswell and David (2017) that 2 to 5 participants of a case study is adequate. In this investigation the researchers involved three single mothers to constitute the interviewees.

Interviews

An indepth interview was used because this is most common in qualitative research. This is a kind of technique allows personal discussion between the interviewer and the interviewees to get the experiences of the participants. In this way, the dialogue offers an indepth understanding of the participants' beliefs and feelings on most important issues on their experiences under investigation. In like manner, the informants are the one's who are knowledgeable about the issues in order to provide the exact information needed by the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005 & Roger, 2003).

The researchers point of view in deciding to conduct this study reside on the curiosity and motivation whether a Filipino and an Ethiopian single mothers share similar experience as single parents despite the distance and culture.

Triangulation

The researchers used triangulation technique in collecting the data. This technique increases trustworthiness by utilizing several or numerous data sources (Erlandson

et al., 1993). In support, Lincoln and Guba (1984) recommended that no single information ever receive significant consideration unless it can be verified by three sources. In gathering the data, the researchers interviewed people related to the participants to collect data from different sources. As such, the data are coming from a reliable source and saturation had been accomplished.

Prolonged Engagement. It was explained by Erlandson, Harris *et al.* (1993) that prolonged engagement enables the establishment of credibility to study an organization or other social culture over an extended period of time. In order to avoid temper distortions brought on by specific events or due to the unfamiliarity of the researchers and respondents with one another's presence, the long-term participation also aids the researcher in developing rapport and trust with the respondents. In the context of this investigation, there was no conflict ever happened between the researchers and the participants. The researchers already built a good relationships with the participants before conducting this study.

Observation

Lincoln and Guba (1984) stated that if prolonged engagement provides range, while persistent observation provides depth. This observation will add the dimension of salience to what might otherwise identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail. In this study, weekly observation was used since the participants are known by the researchers. The detail of the participants' lived experiences was examined.

Member Checks

There should be no data be included unless it has to be validated by member checks (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). After the interview, the researchers showed the transcripts of the previous data gathered to the interviewee to make sure if the interviews were correctly transcribe. The participants had the chance to reject the data in which she felt it is something personal and need to be omitted from the data sets.

Cross-Case Analysis

In a multi-case study, several cases are examined to understand the similarities and differences in each case. The cases are used to predicts similar 'literal replication' or contrasting results for predictable reasons 'theoretical replication' (Yin, 2003). The data was analysed using cross-sectional analysis. It was used because Wang and Cheng, (2020) mentioned that a cross-case analysis is observational that analyze data from a population at a single point in time. The multi-case study had to be analyzed using two steps. Firstly, the data have to be analysed within-case and to be followed by cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). In this case study, the data were collected, transcribed and analyzed in each case. Afterwhich, cross-case analysis begins. It was expounded

by Miles and Huberman (1994) characterized cross-case analysis as challenging and necessitating a close examination of intricate process configurations in each situation.

RESULTS

The lived experiences of the three participants were explored using the interview guides. Their responses were captured and presented in italics to signify direct quotation from their tongues. Their statements provide a strong conviction that their profound stories are worthy to be heard.

Case 1 [Penelope]

Penelope is not her real name. She is a Filipino, a 38 year old and a teacher. She got married to a womanizer with seven children to seven women excluding his legitimate child from his legal wife.

Penelope's life was not easy she used to release pardon to her husband after involving with another woman until his infidelity became a usual routine. The legal wife could not bear the repetitive wrong doings of her husband anymore. She fled away from home and relocate herself to another Region bringing her own son and an adopted child from her husband's mistress. They started a new life without the children's father. As a mother of two boys, she need to work hard day and night. Her long days work brought her down to her knees. The hardships and difficulties she endured were also the struggles of her children. She left home early morning for work and arrived home late at night. The small children were alone by themselves. When it rained and lightning comes the children were just hide under their bed covering themselves with a blanket. The single working mother narrated this story with sadness in her eyes, she almost cried. We sympathized on her grief and started to inquire if she had other difficulties encountered alongside with her single parenting. She posed for a while and continued to narrate:

"Daghan ko ug mga pag antos kahit noong mga panahong hindi pa kami hiwalay ng asawa ko. Ngayon na hiwalay na kami bali tumi-triple na ang mga paghihirap ko. Watching my children enduring their hardships in each day made me feel like dying pero kailangan maging strong ako. May mga gabi na halos di ako makatulog, I was worried and bothered. Dahil sa decision ko ay naging malayo kami sa mga magulang ko, ang totoong pamelya ko at wala kaming relatives dito. Kinondisyon ko nalang ang isipan ng aking mga anak to make them feel strong, sinabi ko na please do good because ako lang ang paryente ninyo dito at kamo lang din ang paryente ko. Lahat tayo strangers in this place. Kahit konti lang ang sahod ko, I decided to enter into an agreement na mghulogan ako ng lupa buwan-buwan hanggang sa matapos ito bayaran para makapag patayo ako ng isang maliit na kubo-kubo at meron na kaming matuluyan at di na kailangan mangupahan pa ng bahay.

The English Language Translation, "I had plenty of sufferings even before I got separated from my husband.

Now, that I am single again in rearing my two children my hardships got tripled. Watching them enduring their hardships in each day, made me feel like dying but I need to be strong. There were nights that I almost cannot not sleep I was worried and bothered. We are far away from my parents and relatives. We do not have relatives here and I kept on telling my children to do good because their relatives and only their mother and my relative are only the two of them. We are all strangers in this place. Despite the small salary that I got from my new work, I need to get a small lot area where I could built my shanty hut, to do away with renting a house. So, I entered into an agreement to pay the lot per month until it will become fully paid in due time."

Our first meeting was a sort of introducing oneself telling some stories about her life experiences as a single working mother and a teacher. She was crying while elaborating her story. She mentioned that her new employment tested her patience. She need to persevere in order to survive. The workplace is 30 kilometers far away from her living place and her cut-off time of work was at 9:00 P.M. In this, she usually arrived home if not pass 12:00 A.M. in the morning but usually almost midnight due to the scarcity of transport jeepneys. In order to reach home she had to ride by jeepney and motor single. One midnight, the motorcycle driver tried to molest her leg, she pretend that her stomach was aching and acted like vomiting so the driver stopped beside the road. She alighted from the bike and run away directing to the grassland where the motorbike could no longer run after her. She was crying while retelling the stories. Endurance and perseverance were required in order to survive for her children.

The enunciation of Penelope caught our attention because from her lonely face and teary eyes spoke of sincerity while saying:

"Walay maka tugkad sa akong mga pag-antos ug kagol-anan human me nngbulag sa akong husband. Nangangailangan ako ng asawang tutulong sakin pero wala at parang mabaliw ako mag-isip kong asan ko kukunin ang aking mga pangangailangan dahil ang sahod ko ay short"

The English Language Translation, "No one can fathom my endurance and loneliness after I broke-up with my husband. I was succumbed to different hardships and difficulties. I need someone to cling to but to no avail, I was in vain. My mind was tortured where to get money for my children because my salary was overdropped."

In addition, her financial constraint was another issue she need to combat with. She need to save even a little centavo in preparing for rainy days. She reinforced the formula, income minus saving is equal to expenses. On weekends, Penelope and her family went to the seashore to get some seashells and small fishes for viand. The children were happy while bringing some clothes for laundry in a spring. On the second interview, the researchers tried to probe about her coping mechanisms with the challenges she encountered. She thought deeply and shared that she used to compose herself in the midst of hardships and difficulties. She was saying: "Ang akong ginabuhat kay

positive thinking lang gyod. Kong akong madunggan that the children will look for their father mokalma lang gyod ko aron ang mga bata di sila maguol uban nako. Sultian lang dayon nako that there father is working sa layo na lugar sa ingon ana na paagi mohilom man dayon ang mga bata. Sa mga panahon na ang mga bata would like to play akoang e substitute and akong sarili na ilang amahan ngdula ug pang boys aron maramdaman nila na andito pa rin ang ama nila, masakit para sa akin. In my hardships, kong naa koy kasakitan I have to borrow the patience from my mother's heart pero kong naa koy kalisdan sa trabaho I had to borrow the brain of my father's intellect."

The English Language Translation, "I used to think positively. When I heard of my children crying and inquire where is their father, I had to remain calm. I used to tell them that their father had some work in a far place to make a living. In that way the children stopped crying. There were times that the children wanted to play, I just acted as a father to them, playing with rubber band, hide and seek and other plays for boys. In my work, I strategized myself that I can handle my hardships, when I was hurt and felt down I borrowed the heart of my mother, and in my job when it is difficult to handle I just borrowed the brain and intellect of my father."

On her way home from work daily, she was thinking about her safety on road in the middle of night where she decide to get a bike for her personal use and to alleviate the harm. However, her worries about her children did not lessen. Her heart constantly pounding wishing to arrive home immediately but due to the distance she need to be patient. In the end, she finally got a nanny to take care of her children.

Penelope's life is a good example of resiliency and perseverance. Her endurance made us believe that nothing is impossible for a single mother who need to work to support her children. She is a living testimony on how to combat life's hardships and difficulties. Her positive outlook in life brings her into success as she was able to finish studying in a higher degree despite her responsibilities and obligations acting as a mother and a father to her children.

On our third meeting, the researchers asked her on what she can share to other single working mothers. She was smiling and said that everything happen for a reason. Above all things, one person need to be prayerful to God Almighty. That, everything has his own time so in achieving our ambitions and dreams in life, a person need to wait for the right time. The fulfilment of a woman is the child, thus having children is always a gift from God above. As time heals, she was able to recover from the dearth of happiness, her struggles made her into a strong woman as a single working mother.

To her, single parenting is not an easy task because she was in-charge in developing the children well-being. She gave to them quality time despite her hectic schedule for she knew that sharing her life with them make them grow into a responsible person in the future. As a parent, one should inculcate into the young minds of her children

about the value of faith in God, respect to the elders, love and commitment and most especially the virtue of forgiveness for she knew that her children had some resentments towards their father.

In our last meeting with Penelope, we thank her for her valuable time shared to us. We expressed our appreciation towards the end and the researchers assured her that her personal information will not be shared to protect her privacy.

Case 2 [Yeshimebet (የሽሜቤት)]

She is an Ethiopian, 35 years old and a mother of two children. Yeshimebet and her husband could not get along with each other well for several years that causes conflict between them every now and then. They finally ended up in divorce.

The first meeting was remarkable, she narrated her story in a well manner and was just normal. As the communication progressed, the interviewer proceeded in asking question on what are the challenges did she encounter in her life as a single mother. In teary eyes she begun recounting moments in her life when she was in her most devastating situation. One time, she was working and felt so tired but she arrived home discovering that her one child body temperature was very high. She got a fever. The normal thing to do was to get some water and apply first aid medication but the fever did not calm down. She decided to bring the child to the clinic the following day where she got absent from her job. She needed some support but no one did. She was in distressed and feeling hopeless she did things all by herself alone. Her feeling of isolation caught her up above her head.

It could be examined from the narratives of Yeshimebet that the need to have a good life partner in raising a child is very important in the world of uncertainties. She continued in saying:

አማረኛ ትርጉም፤

"እንደ ብቸኛ እናትነቴ የቤተሰቡን ሁሉንም ወጭ የመሸፈን ሃላፊነት አለብኝ። የቤት ኪራይ፣ የወሃ የመብራት እና የምግብ ወጭወች እከፍላለሁ።ከባሌ ጋር የተፋታሁት ሃላፊነት የጎደለው ሰው ስለሆነ ነው። ሁሌም ይጠጣል፤ በዚያ ላይ ጥፋ ገቢ የለውም። ሂወቴ ተመስቃቀለብኝ። ልጆቼን ለመመገብ እኔ ነኝ ሰርቼ የማመጣው።የእኔ ወርሃዊ ገቢም ቤተሰቦቼን ለመደጎም አይችልም።ጭንቀት ውስጥ ነበርኩ። የተከራየናት ቤት በጣም ጠባብ ናት፤ የምንተኛው ወለል ላይ ነው፤ የቤት ዕቃ የለንም።ልልጆቼም ከእኔ ደመወዝ ጣፋጭ ምግብ ለመግዛት አልቻልኩም።"

The Amharic Translation in Latin alphabet-

"Ende bechena enateneta ybetesebune huluneme weche ymeshefen halafinet albegne. Yebate kiraye, yweha ,yemebrate ena ymegebe wochewechegne ekfelalehu. Kebale gare yetefatahute halafinet ygodlewe sewe selhon newe. Hulayeme yiteta,bziya laye tiru gebi yellowem. Hiwote temesekakelebegn. Lejochegn lememegebe ene negne sereche ymawetawe. Yene werehawi gebime batesebochene lemedegome ayechelem. Cheneket wesete neberku. Yetekerayenate bate betam tebase nate. Yemenetegnawe welele laye newe. Yebate eqa yelenem.

Lelejochem kene demewoze tafache megebe Imgezate alechalekume.”

The English Language Translation, “As a single mother I need to be responsible in the whole expenses of my family. From the house rent, water and electricity bill and food expense. I divorce from my husband because of his irresponsible behaviour. He engaged in drinking almost everyday and has no good job to earn for his family. My life became miserable. I was the one working with a little salary to feed my children. My monthly income could not even support my family needs. I was in in misery. We rented in a small house we even sleep on the floor without house appliances. My salary could not even buy some tasty food for my children.”

She further stated that another hardest situation she was able to deal with was when her children requested her to help in answering their assignments because of her educational attainment. She finished junior high school but to her she did not understand many of her lessons because of lack of concentration. She was physically present in the class but mentally absent. Her mind goes out to her works as she was a working student in her high school era and her employer were very strict.

On the second meeting with her, the researchers were keen to probe about her coping styles to combat her problems encountered. She said that in life a person need to have a strong mind to tackle every uncertainties that caught along life’s highway. The over aching experience of Yeshimebet explicated that life is not always certain in this world. True enough that when one person decided to get marry the couple is convinced that their decision was already enough to settle down. However, there were uncertainties that might sometimes could changed the whole thing in life. As she continued portraying her storylines she recounting in saying:

አማረኛ ትርጉም:-

“ብዙ ችግሮችና ፈተናዎች ቢኖሩብኝም ህይወት መቀተል ስላለበት እተጋለሁ። ልጆቼ ወጣቶች በመሆናቸው ለእነሱ ስል መኖርን እመርጣለሁ። በሰምንቱ ቀናቶች ውስጥ የትርፍ ጊዜ ስራ እሰራለሁ። ይህም ሆኖ ገቢዬ በቂ አይደለም። ልብስና የትምህርት ወጭ በጣም ከባድ ነው። ከጓደኞቼ ገንዘብ ብብደርም በወለድ ነው የሚሰጡኝ። ለልጆቼ የወደፊት ህመም ቢያምብኝ ስለምፈራ ትንሽም ቢሆን ገንዘብ አስቀምጣለሁ፤ ከሞትኩ ማንም ዘውር ብሎ አያያቸውም።”

The Amharic Language Translation in Latin alphabet- “Bezu cegerohena fetenaweche binorubegnem hiyewote meketel selalebete etegalehu. lejoche wetatoche bemehonachewe lenesu sele menorene emeretalehu. besamenetu kenatoche yeterefe gize sera eseralehu. yehem hono gebeye beki ayedelem. lebesena yetemeheret weche betam kebede newe. Keguwadenoche genezebe bebederem bewelede newe yemesetugne. lelejoche yewedefit hememe biyamegne selemefera teneshem bihone genezebe aseketalehu. Kemotekume maneme zewere belo ayayachewem.”

The English language Translation, “Despite the hardships and difficulties I did encounter, life must continue. I need to survive for the sake of my children because they

are still young. I work in part-time job during weekends. Even then, my money is not enough for the them. Buying clothes, and school supplies were very hard for me. I involved in lending money from friends and the worst thing is that, it has an interest as well. I was worried about their future so I deposited a little amount of money even a very small Birr (Ethiopian currency) in the bank in preparation if they get sick I am thinking that if I die, no one will support them financially.”

As the researchers uncovered the thought of the participant, mixed emotions could be gleaned from the glaring facial expression of the interviewee. Her sadness felt down to our knees that radiates into our attention. Yeshimebet shared:

አማረኛ ትርጉም:-

“ምንም ችግሮች ቢበረቱብኝም ሁሌም ጠንካራ መሆን አለብኝ ብዬ አስባለሁ። ይህ የእኔ የህይወት አዋጅ ነው። ምንም ነገር በሂደት ቢያጋጥሙኝም። ይህን ለእኔም ለልጆቼም ጥሩ ህይወት ስል የማደርገው ነው። ህይወት ፍትሃዊ አይደለችም። ጥሩ ባል ያገቡ ሴቶች ይህን ችግር አያዩትም። በህይወት እራስን ከሌሎች ጋር ማወዳደር ጥሩ አይደለም። ስለራሳችን ነው ማሰብ ያለብን። ጽናትና ትግዕስት ሂይወቴን በዚህ አግባብ እንድቀጥል ረድቶኛል።”

The Amharic Language translation in Latin alphabet- “Menem chegeroche biberetubegnem hulame tenkara mehona alebegne beye asebahelu. Yehe yene yehiwote awaje newe. menem neger behidete biyagatemugnem. Yehene le enem lelejochem tiru hiwot sele yemaderegewe newe. Hiwot fetehawi ayedelechew. Tiru bale yagebu setoche yehene cheger ayayutem. Be hiwot erasene mawedader tiru ayedelem. Selerasachene newe masebe yalebene. Tsenatena tegeste hiwotene bzihе agebabe endeketele redetognal.”

The English Language Translation, “It is required for me to stand strong in the midst of this turbulent time in my life. This is my proclamation as a living witness to my own experiences. No matter what happen along my way, I had to surmount it for the betterment of my life and for my children. I must say, that life is unfair. There were those who did not suffer because they got a good husband. In life, we cannot always mirror ourselves from the lives of others but we have to be mindful of our own business. Perseverance with patience helped me to continue go on with life.”

On the last portion in meeting with her, she was asked on what can she shared to other woman that might contribute a lesson from her life’s story. She said that it may be good if a woman must be observant to men. It is good if a woman will the personal character of the man before accepting him into becoming a spouse. There were lot of men out there who were just good in the beginning or at the courting stage but when time comes their true color will come out in the open. In addition, repentance always comes last. However, after all life must go on so what we need is adjustment, acceptance and hope. That in life, a person must be resilient and perseverance in order to survive amidst all odds.

She then assured by the researcher that her identity will

be kept confidential. As part of the qualitative ethical consideration, the transcript was showed to her as member check upon reading the transcript there were information that she wanted to be omitted. The researchers were grateful for her voluntary participation in the study.

Case 3 [Ysabelle]

A pseudonym Ysabelle is used to hide the real identity of the participant in this case study. She is a Filipino lady, an office worker and mother of two kids, a girl and a boy. Her life became complicated when she learned from a real source that the father of her children who lived with her for several years and who promised to love her was a married man. It was late already when she knew the reality which prompted her to decide to leave the man and take the responsibility of being the mother and the father of her two children.

This information was divulged by the interviewee upon the researchers first meeting with her. After that short introduction one of the interviewer asked on the difficulties that she encountered as a single working mother if there were any. We observed that her face suddenly looked sad and after which she began to narrate her story.

In conjunction with this decision to be alone, she uttered the following:

“Lisod gyod kaayo sa akona kay ako ra isa ang moatiman sa akong mga anak labi na gyod kong magkasakit sila. Ako ra ang motan-aw sa ilaha so lisod gyod kaayo para nako kay working mother man ko. Unya my son is only five months old ug ang akong girl is four years old. Pero bisan paman sa akong kahintang naningkamot gyod ko na mahatagan nako sila ug maayong kahintang. Mapa eskwela nko sila ug mahatagan nako ug maayong education.”

The English Language Translation, “As a single working mother of two kids, a five months old baby boy and a four years old baby girl it is very hard on my part. I was alone in taking care of them especially when they got sick. Despite of it all, I had to persevere so I could give them a good life and I could send them to school to get a good education.”

As the interview progresses she mentioned that she got envy to see some women who got a good husband. She felt jealous and lonely but she tried to convince herself not to be affected by this feeling because she had children that needed her so she need to be strong. From a stuttering voice of sadness she tried to hold water not to cry but in a spark of a moment she burst into tears as she expressed her emotions. She was crying then and she told us that she felt ashamed to the people around in the community who knew her as a mistress.

On the second phase of our meeting, the researchers were careful in the disposal of the interview questions knowing that the issue we tried to investigate sounds sensitive and personal. This time, we mentioned about if the father of her children give financial support or if she received any support. She remained calm and humble herself and replied that there was no financial support

coming from the father or any agency for her children so she had to work hard for survival. In time of need, she turn to no one but to some lending agencies where she could source money other than friends and some concerned family members. It was difficult to be alone raising two children.

In addition, her work was affected by her condition. When one of the child would get sick she had to be absent from work. At times when it is schedule for the child immunization, she had to be absent again in order to go to the Health Center. From her facial expression we could feel her hardships on how she was able to strategize herself in order to cope with the pressing demands of her children’s need. Aside from the health condition of her kids, she was concerned about the discipline. As the ball rolling, for her to survive with the challenges she was encountering along the way she opined in saying:

“Naa koy gikuha na magbantay sa mga bata, pero mabalaka gihapon ko kay sila ra baya. Unya ako pong giisip ang pag disiplinila nila in order to raise them as a good member in the society. Pero bisan unsaon nako I cannot do it alone. That is why I placed them in my mother’s house. Naa poy akong mga igsoon na motabang ug bantay kay kong manguha ko ug laing mga tawo mahadlok ko kong unsaon pa lang ang akong mga anak. Aside from this, I had to involve myself in different activities like the government feeding program for children, and on weekends I had to join physical activity like Zumba dancing para pod ma reduce akong stress.”

The English Language Translation, “I got a nanny for my children but I still have some worries because they were left alone in the dorm. My other concern is about their discipline because I want them to grow as a good member in the society. But whatever I do, I cannot do it all alone so I decided to place them in my mother’s house where my siblings could help in watching my children. At least, I come to realize that if I entrust my offspring to some nanny out of my bloodline I am afraid if they might be harmed. Aside from this, I had to involve myself in different activities like the government feeding program for children, and on weekends I had to join physical activity to reduce my stress like Zumba dancing.”

On the last day of our meeting, the researchers asked about her opinion on what she could share to other women so they could get some lessons from her testimonies:

“Ang akona lang, na unta mapanaminan nila akong kaagi na kong ma inloved dili unta dayon dawaton. Ang pinaka importante is imoha sa gyod nga kilalanon ug sination ang lalaki ug ang tawo that you would like to become your partner for a lifetime. Dili maayo na mag—ora—orada ka na mag ingon ang lalaki na I love you unya mosugot ka lang dayon. In the end, you never know na di ay to wala pa di ay nimo nasinati ang usa ka tao. Pait kaayo ang akong kahintang and I do not want my children the experience the same ug sa tanang babae na unta dili sila mahisama nako.”

The English Language Translation, “I wish that other women may see my predicaments and learn something

from my experience that when they felt inloved they will not decide to accept the man immediately. It is a must that they have to know first the background of the their suitor, if they had an interest to make this man their lifetime partner. I have tasted a bitter life and I do not want my children to experience the same inclusiveness of all women.”

In the last part of the story, Ysabelle’s emphasized the resilient character of the Filipino women that withstand in the depth of Filipino culture. This character is sustained by faith in God and perseverance that truly lives within the heart of every single working mother to take the responsibilities in taking care of their children amidst all trials and difficulties. Prior to say goodbye, the researchers assured the participant on the confidentiality of the data gathered that her identity will not be divulged publicly.

DISCUSSION

This section presents the similarities and differences of the three cases using the within-case and cross-case analysis. Emerged from results are the prevailing themes on hardships and difficulties that they encountered. Their behaviour in dealing with these challenges have demonstrated their resilience and persistence in combating life’s test that are true to all cases. They shared similar experiences these are: emotional challenges, financial challenges, childcare challenges and coping strategies.

Emotional challenges was common to the three cases when Penelope was struggling to deal with her sadness after her marriage broke-up and raising her children alone. Similarly, Yeshimebet dealt with loneliness too when she and her husband finally got divorce after dealing with disagreements under the bond of marriage while Ysabelle shared her load of sacrifices and live alone with her kids after knowing the truth that she was plunged into a married man.

Emotional problems can always be difficult to deal with as in the case of the three single working mothers. However, one must be aware on the possible effects of emotional bar down. There is a need to express their feelings in an appropriate manner in order to strive the balance between their responsibilities in raising their children all alone and their emotional stability. A research result, mentioned that one may feel helpless, lonely, anxious, fury and shame and marriage divorce. Single mothers may have difficulties in their social and emotional lives during a time when the demands of parenting are high (Mohamad...et al, 2020).

In addition, it is mentioned that the single working mothers struggled on their experience on isolation in their fight with life, work, and children as a result of their situation (Giriskan, 2021). Children whose fathers are not present face emotional difficulties since they frequently envy those who are things fathers impart to their kids and which harm the children’s emotional health. Further, the As the children’s only parent, the absence of the father

creates a vacuum in providing for their fundamental necessities. Mothers often struggle alone and without help as they move to put food on the table (Koketso, 2019).

Looking into the financial challenges as the second common theme, there were studies conducted about the financial burdens of single mothers raising their children alone. The study conducted by Birara (2021) findings showed that the primary cause of stress among single working mothers was a financial issue because of their inability to pay for their children’s education and medical care. In support, it is said that the poor physical and mental health, harsh parenting techniques, lower rates of school completion and employment, and parenting stress are all issues that low income single working mothers experience with (Radey & McWey, 2021).

This was true in the lives of the three cases when Penelope engaged in borrowing money to some friends around just to cope up the financial needs of her children. Almost the same activity was done by Yeshimebet when she said that her finances cannot support his actual need especially at times when someone got sick from the family. Ysabelle shared an equal slice of pie when she mentioned that since her children have no financial support she had to source out money to buy for her children’s need.

Another emerging theme is the childcare challenges which is common to three cases. This is the concern of the single mothers who were caught with the responsibility while working for the family. In the life of Penelope she almost lost control of her own emotion when there was a time that she got angry to her little son without valid reason. She caught herself feeling irritable and lonely almost all the time. Yeshimebet also share similar experience as she was easily got angry to her children, an indication that she was emotionally unstable. While Ysabelle could not took care of her children, her mind went away due to resentment to her man. She could tell that disappointment with the situation distorted her feelings.

Anent to this, a research results revealed that the respondents were asked to specify the kind of challenges that they encounter about the childcare, all of them responded that there are two main concerns, the first one is psychological needs. While the second one is about social needs, financial needs, medical needs and educational needs (Mtemeri, 2019). In addition, the emotional life that single mothers that affected by their single status. Single mothers went through different situations in their everyday living; they usually experience tensions. Reports said that they were lonely, irritable, helpless, irritable and lack of confidence. They mentioned that there extreme sadness that might lead to their depression. Their deepest worry is there inability to take care of the children because of the toxic emotion that caught them. They are convinced that their feeling lonely was cause by financial difficulties, and apprehensions about future situations (Birara, 2021).

The last common theme emerged during cross-case

analysis is the coping strategies of the three single mothers. Coping strategies is essential to make a person being in control with his thoughts and emotions in any stressful situations. It will help feel better and can make the mind stay on the right tract amidst the stormy weather that might withered a good disposition in life as expressed in the lived experiences of the three ladies in countries included in the study.

The three single working mothers, an Ethiopian lady and two Filipino women share almost the same character in surmounting life's uncertainties. Penelope worked overtime each day to patch up with financial woes she had encountered while raising her children. Whereas, Yeshimebet shared similar experience in getting for an extra job in order to earn more for a living and Ysabelle engage in tutorial work to sustain her financial needs. Likewise, Stack and Meredith (2018) portrayed a story that financial difficulty affected the household and fuel poverty, as expressed by some participants in sharing about their financial challenges they had when supplying heat in the house where they reside in. Numerous studies have shown the connection between financial stress, bad physical health, and poor mental health from various participants. In fact, all of the single mothers frequently search for better-paying jobs and in pursuit of cheaper and a reasonable place to stay (Mtemeri, 2019).

In a separate interview, the three single mothers were asked with same question on what they would like the share to other women which they think could give a lesson. They illuminated similar answers which generated these themes, thought on being resilient and persistent, thought on being a positive thinker, and thought on being strong.

In the case of Penelope, what she did was to persevere in order to survive. She had no other choice but to accept everything. While combat the difficulties by all means and ways, the same struggles were experience by Ysabelle. No matter what happened, to them, life continues. The bits of persistence to single-parent households portrait a high rate of poverty rate than those in family structures with two parents, with 67% of single parents reporting that they experience financial difficulties (Gingerbread 2015). Single parents therefore, parents must deal with a variety of pressures, such as stigma, job, and poverty (Stack & Meredith, 2018).

The thought on being a positive thinker is certain too all interviewees, were all of them need to reinforce their situation with positive thinking in order to survive in those trying times. As in life, one positive mind can carry the burdens of the heart. This idea is congruent with the article published which said that a single parent might not view their condition as an extra to their responsibility when raising their children alone, yet single parenting has a certain overwhelmingly favorable impacts that demand consideration that only solitary parents can enjoy and this typically the creation of stronger connections with their children alone (Wolf, 2019).

In addition, the thought to be strong in life were emphasized by the three musketeers in sharing their lived

experiences. All women were resilient as they were able to survive with their trials in life. Their utterances were full of conviction that with strong determination no problems as high as mountain could never be climbed. As their journey continues, they are sailing in the same boat and that all of them would like to share their stories of perseverance. This is highlighted in a research study that changing unfavorable perceptions may result in higher levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem for single mothers. The purpose of intervention research is to mothers' self-efficacy has been successful, and it appears that self-efficacy is a concept that can be changed in terms of application (Coleman & Karraker, 1998). Undoubtedly, teaching how to think strong possibly increase optimism and can be a cognitive behavioral therapy, although it is not apparent if such practices actually work but it is believe that it has an enduring effect on the consequences brought on by single parenting (Carver *et al.*, 2010).

The within-case distinct themes goes with Penelope when she fled away from home and relocate to another Region for a change of environment. This is her coping strategy to take care of herself from severe pain that might lead her to depression that she was experiencing from the dearth of good relationship. This hatched on the finding of Margalit and Klietman (2006) that coping mechanisms comes in several forms. One is problem-oriented coping, which describes actions taken to deal with the causes of stress by altering either the individual's behavior or the environment settings, or both. The term "emotional regulation coping" referred to coping methods intended to lessen emotions avoiding emotional distress and keeping a positive interior environment.

In contrast, Ysabelle involved herself in a physical activity like government feeding program for children and Zumba dancing to reduce her stress and to maintain her shape while striving to move on. In view hereof, it is said that the total stress levels can be reduced by engaging in physical activity, which also enhances a person mental and physical well-being. Regular exercise can improve the mood by easing the tension, anxiety, rage, and moderate sadness that frequently accompany stress. Stress can cause depression whereas physical exercise can boost self-confidence (Madell, 2020).

Implications for Practice

The similarities and differences of the three cases which emerged in common themes and distinct themes are essential concerns to encourage other single mothers on how to strategize themselves in order to overcome with their trials and difficulties. From the insights of the interviewees, it could be inferred that plunging into a wrong relationship that ended up into legal separation or divorce is a consequences resulting from abrupt decision making.

Indispensably, the results of this investigation have implications for single mothers in the world to learn from the challenges and difficulties in which they dealt with while trying to move on. The words of wisdom that they

uttered for future readers on this article would somehow give them an overview on the circumstances that a single mother has to endure. Their stories of perseverance and resilience is implicated here to give a lesson especially to the young women who in one way or another may have the plan of getting married. Also, it is implied that single mothers need to voice out their concerns to the authorities and to the stakeholders for possible advice rather than succumb in a hopeless situation.

Implications for Future Research

This qualitative research using multi-case design collected some emerging themes about hardships and difficulties, coping strategies and insights from the tongues of the single mothers. Henceforward, this will challenge future researchers to look into the perseverance and resiliency of the interviewees in surpassing the predicaments brought about by circumstances after separation from their spouses. Their living testimonies will serve as an instrument guide for future researches to go deeper into the issue and delve into expanding the coverage if this inquiry will have an upshot.

We believed that maybe future researchers will increase the number of participants if another method and design will be used to investigate a similar topic. Also, geographical locations where the study was conducted maybe expanded to other settings to generate more responses from the participants. This research will adhere to be used as springboard as future reference for the topic in which this study is made purposely.

CONCLUSION

Several challenges were encountered by single mothers in dealing with solo parenting. Their lived experiences in coping with the hardships and difficulties have efficacy value to those single mothers who might have been in similar situation in their lives. Their narratives are essentials, taking into account on their individual coping on how they were able to survive in adversities. Single mothers need an intervention program that will help reduce the pain that they are dealing at the onset of the separation. Depression is a severe emotion that might affect a person's disposition and it will paralyze their actions, thought and feelings. Social support from family members, relatives and friends are needed and necessary. Stakeholders in the community such as government officials might hear and listen to the agonies and predicaments that single mothers went through during the turbulent time in their lives.

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