

The Realities of Solo Mothers Engaged in Public Service: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance was a growing concern for solo mothers in public service, as single parenthood often brought added challenges in meeting essential family needs such as food, housing, and child care. This study explored the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by solo mothers engaged in public service Lanao del Norte. The transcendental phenomenological research design was used in the study. Five solo mothers were selected as participants through the snowball sampling technique. An Interview Guide was used to analyze the data gathered, and Moustakas' method of analysis was applied. The results revealed several emerging themes: navigating the struggles of role overload, strength as a moral obligation and adaptation through time and experience. Solo mothers in public service struggled with role overload and financial insecurity but relied on time management, support systems, and spirituality to navigate these challenges with resilience. It may be recommended that LGUs develop programs that enhance benefits and introduce work-life balance initiatives to help solo mothers in public service manage their personal and professional responsibilities effectively.

Keywords: challenges, experiences, resilience, single parenthood, strategies

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, single parenthood is increasingly common, often leading to greater struggles in meeting basic needs such as food, housing, childcare, and transportation. Studies on work-life balance reveal that while remote work during COVID-19 increased flexibility, it also heightened role conflict and emotional fatigue among working mothers (Ayari et al., 2022). In Tanzania, single mothers face mental and physical burdens due to insufficient structural support (Lunyungu, 2025), while family-to-work conflict undermines work engagement among solo mothers lacking institutional backing (Murangi & Groenewald, 2024). In the Philippines, the “Solo Parent Act” defines solo parents as individuals solely responsible for raising a child, including widowed parents. Work-life balance involves prioritizing career and life needs (Vijayaraghavan & Martin, 2020), and Filipino solo mothers in government service face compounded stress from inflexible work conditions (Villamil & Dela Cruz, 2022). However, those with supportive supervisors and coworkers maintain greater resilience and satisfaction (Ortega & Santos, 2023).

Despite growing acceptance, single-parent households in the Philippines face significant societal neglect. Solo parents often experience “role strain” when professional and caregiving expectations become overwhelming (McDonald et al., 2022), with full-time working mothers reporting greater difficulty than men or women in flexible roles (Horowitz, 2019). Dual-income households mitigate such strain by sharing caregiving, chores, and financial duties, allowing for more flexible work arrangements that improve work-life balance (Buenaventura & Lim, 2021). In contrast, solo mothers shoulder all responsibilities alone, intensifying stress and reducing flexibility. These challenges are compounded by a lack of accessible support systems that could help distribute domestic and economic burdens.

In the Philippine context, social, economic, and cultural factors heighten the challenges for solo mothers. An estimated 15 million solo parents—most of them women—face patriarchal expectations to serve as both caregivers and breadwinners (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). This dual role creates elevated stress levels and emotional strain (Lim et al., 2022). Costly childcare services in urban areas force many solo parents to rely on informal family support (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). In government work, balancing career duties with family responsibilities remains a major challenge, and while the Solo Parents’ Welfare Act (RA 8972) provides benefits, its implementation is limited, especially in rural areas (Tendero, 2023; Aldaba, 2023).

The number of solo parents in the Philippines stems from legal separation, annulment, widowhood, and teenage pregnancies (Tan et al., 2022). Even without legal divorce, separations or annulments often result in mothers becoming primary caregivers (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023). Widowhood forces mothers to manage both child-rearing and household finances, while unplanned teenage pregnancies—often unsupported by fathers—add to the solo mother population (UNICEF Philippines, 2022). Public servants face additional challenges, with over 60% of women with children likely to leave their careers due to family commitments and inadequate support structures (Department of Labor and Employment, 2024). Although policies exist, barriers like costly childcare, rigid schedules, and weak community support persist (Bañez & Villanueva, 2021; Johnson & Sarmiento, 2022).

Research on solo mothers in local government remains scarce (Delos Santos, 2022), despite their unique struggles in managing caregiving duties alongside demanding public service roles involving long hours, emotional stress, and community obligations (Gonzales & Santos, 2023). Rural-urban disparities and cultural norms further affect their work-life balance (Cabrera, 2024). Addressing these gaps through targeted policies and support programs could improve their well-being, reduce stress, and enhance their career satisfaction in public service.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This qualitative study employed a transcendental phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of solo parents balancing work and caregiving (Hassan, 2024). Phenomenology was

used to uncover the essence of these experiences, focusing on the challenges, influencing factors, and coping mechanisms that shaped their work-life balance.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, the provincial administrative center hosting key government institutions such as the Provincial Capitol and Mindanao Civic Center (PhilAtlas, 2021). Its role as a hub for public service provided an ideal setting for examining the work-life balance challenges of solo mothers in government work.

Participants of the Study

Five solo mothers working in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tubod participated, selected through snowball sampling. Criteria included active public service, self-identification as solo parents in their Personal Data Sheet, and experience in balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. Participants were referred by key staff, with proper institutional permissions secured beforehand.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

An interview guide with open-ended questions, organized into opening, core, and exit sections, was developed and pre-tested for clarity. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Misamis University, followed by participant invitations. Interviews were documented via audio recording and notes, then transcribed, translated, coded, and categorized to identify patterns and develop themes.

Mode of Analysis and Ethical Considerations

Data were analyzed using Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological method: bracketing, horizontalization, clustering into themes, textual and structural descriptions, and textural-structural synthesis. Ethical protocols included informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173) to ensure secure handling of participants' information and protection from harm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Navigating the Struggles of Role Overload

Solo mothers engaged in public service revealed the complexity and weight of managing intersecting responsibilities. They are compelled to juggle the intensive caregiving demands of young children and of their professional duties without adequate rest, support, or time for personal well-being. Based on the participant's responses, it is evident that These women are not only tasked with fulfilling professional expectations in the public sphere but must also assume full responsibility for household management, emotional caregiving, financial provision, and the moral upbringing of their children.

“When my husband passed away and the kids were still small, I had no choice but to be both mother and father. I juggled my municipal job and sold goods on the side just to make ends meet” (P1).

The burden becomes especially pronounced when children are still very young. During this phase, participants described their lives as a continuous cycle of early mornings, long working hours, and emotional labor that rarely eased.

“It’s always been a challenge—waking up at 4 AM, preparing everything, and going to work while worrying about my kids” (P2).

This dual role as both emotional anchor and economic provider illustrates the depth of their resilience, yet also exposes the vulnerability of their situation. A survey by Milieu Insight found that 7 in 10 working mothers in the Philippines report difficulty balancing work and family duties, with solo mothers bearing an even heavier load due to lack of spousal or extended familial support (Insight, 2023). Recent findings from Cabrera and Sison (2022) reinforce this challenge, highlighting that solo mothers often face higher emotional burnout and lower job satisfaction. Similarly, Cruz and Delos Reyes (2021) point out that inadequate institutional support exacerbates the stress faced by solo mothers, especially those in public service roles.

“It was really hard at first because there was no one to look after my baby, and she was only 2 years old. I couldn’t bear to leave her because I’d get so worried. That’s why back then, I was allowed to work from home. But now that there’s someone to help watch over her, I’ve been able to adjust a bit” (P3).

“Balancing work and parenting as a solo mother is incredibly challenging, especially because I always have to show up strong for my children, no matter how hard things get in life or at work” (P4).

“Raising my kids alone after losing my husband was heartbreaking. I had to work while worrying about them constantly” (P5).

The results implied that the realities of the solo mothers engaged in public service is not merely just about multitasking but also about the cumulative, enduring pressure of embodying multiple roles as well as navigating a complex matrix of emotional, financial, and logistical demands, often sacrificing their own well-being to fulfill the needs of both their families and the public they serve.

Burden of Sole Responsibility. Unlike partnered parents who may divide parenting duties and emotional labor, a recurring sentiment across participants is the helplessness that arises when work obligations prevent them from immediately attending to their children’s needs.

This often results in a greater emotional, physical, and psychological strain. As Encila and Madrigal (2021) point out, balancing work and family becomes significantly more complex when no partner is available to share the responsibilities, particularly in the context of demanding professional roles such as public service. One mother expressed deep anguish at not being able to attend to her sick child immediately due to work commitments; others emphasized the sad reality of the supposed shared journey in partnered households as it became solitary. Similar findings were reported by Ramos and Licup (2022), who observed heightened levels of stress and burnout among solo mothers in government positions. Likewise, Del Mundo and Javier (2023) discussed how role strain in solo parenthood often leads to long-term emotional fatigue and disrupted work-life satisfaction.

“The worst times are when my kids are sick and I can’t be there right away. It breaks my heart every time” (P1).

“When my kids acted out while I was at work—those moments reminded me how alone I was in disciplining and guiding them” (P2).

“When something happens at work and I can’t leave right away, I feel the pressure. Sometimes I feel guilty not being there for my child, especially when I see something worrying in the news” (P3).

“When my children need constant attention or when they get sick, it adds to the pressure at work. I can’t always be in two places at once” (P4).

“Whenever they got sick, I’d run back and forth between the office and home. That kind of pressure never really goes away” (P5).

The testimonies shared underscore not only the logistical burdens they carry but also the deep psychological toll of being physically and emotionally torn between two worlds.

Emotional Strain of Solo Parenting. Evidently, there is an intense emotional weight of having to constantly choose between urgent work duties and pressing family needs. This highlights how the emotional aspect of a mother can be directly affected from the burden of having to perform parenting alone. This burden is intensified for those engaged in the public service, where work-related pressures often intersect with the demands of solo parenting. Based on the responses, the work-life balance not only reflects financial vulnerability but also the emotional toll of having to sacrifice no parent should face alone. One mother recalled a time when a child’s serious illness forced her to juggle hospital visits and employment responsibilities while also enduring financial hardship, similar situation was also being faced by another mother.

“When one of my children got very sick, I had to split myself between hospital visits and work. We were deep in debt—I even pawned our house at one point” (P1).

“There were times I thought about pulling them out of school because of how hard it was financially. Thankfully, I didn’t give up” (P2).

Participants also expressed constant worry about leaving their young children at home, especially during their formative years. This only implied the factors like maternal guilt, attachment, and fear of being absent during critical moments of child development. Studies by De Jesus and Navarro (2022) revealed that solo working mothers often report heightened maternal guilt stemming from long hours at work. Similarly, Lim and Soriano (2023) emphasized that the absence during early developmental stages can contribute to emotional strain and long-term anxiety in solo mothers.

“The biggest challenge is leaving my baby at home when I go to work. I worry about her, especially because she’s still so young and might need me” (P3).

“The main difficulty is managing time. I have to meet work deadlines while also making sure my kids get the attention they need, especially since they’re still at an age where they require constant nurturing” (P4).

“There were days I only slept four hours because I had to do everything—from cooking to helping with homework to working” (P5).

The effects of this however are multidimensional. From a physical standpoint, participants experience sleep deprivation and fatigue in result of pushing themselves beyond their limits to meet both

professional and maternal expectations. Furthermore, this sense of duty, though admirable, results in a self-imposed silencing of distress, which can deepen emotional strain over time.

Persistent Financial Insecurity. There is no denying the pervasive reality of economic strain for solo mothers. Their narratives reveal that public service employment, while stable in theory, often lacks the financial robustness required to support single-parent households adequately.

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“There were times I thought about pulling them out of school because of how hard it was financially. Thankfully, I didn’t give up” (P2).

It also speaks the truth about balancing educational aspirations with financial limitations—where the right to education becomes a privilege for those who can afford it.

The act of pawning their house, a deeply personal and emotional decision, reveals the lengths to which solo mothers must sometimes go to ensure their children's well-being and survival. This echoes the findings from Agustin (2020), who noted that financial insecurity often leads solo parents to extreme measures in order to cope with the costs of raising children alone. Similarly, Ramos and Velasco (2022) found that single mothers frequently resort to selling personal assets during financial crises. In the same vein, Cruz (2023) highlighted that solo parents often experience chronic financial vulnerability, compelling them to make difficult trade-offs between long-term security and immediate needs.

Moreover, the inability to rely on a partner’s income places solo mothers in a uniquely vulnerable position, often compelling them to work beyond official hours, juggle multiple income sources, and endure chronic stress. Their responses highlight the stark and painful realities.

Workplace Pressure and Stress. Being a solo mother in the field of public service demands unwavering commitment, resilience, and the ability to handle high-pressure situations. Their role in this field often come with rigid schedules, urgent tasks, and unpredictable demands, leaving little room for flexibility when personal emergencies arise. Moreover, where precision and accountability are paramount as public servants, mistakes can carry significant consequences which greatly contributes to the pressure and stress as they face challenges at work alongside of being a solo parent.

“There’s little flexibility at work during emergencies, and with no backup at home, the pressure is constant” (P1).

“I get stressed at work, especially when I make mistakes from having too much on my mind. There's not much room for error” (P2).

“The hardest part is being away from my child. It’s tough to not be able to go home right away when I want to. I always worry about what could happen when I’m not there” (P3).

“The biggest challenge is the time constraints. My job doesn’t always allow flexibility, especially when something unexpected happens with my children” (P4).

“It’s hard when I can’t leave work even though I know my kids need me at home” (P5).

These findings align with broader studies indicating that solo parents, especially mothers, face significant challenges in balancing work and family due to a lack of institutional support and flexible work arrangements. While solo mothers demonstrate resilience, their experiences underscore the need for more substantial institutional support, including flexible work arrangements, affordable childcare, and adequate

legal protections. Similar conclusions were drawn by Delos Reyes and Navarro (2022), who emphasized the importance of workplace policies tailored to solo parents. In addition, Uy and Santos (2023) noted that the lack of government and employer support exacerbates the emotional and financial strain experienced by solo mothers in public service.

Additionally, a study focusing on single-parent employees in Kidapawan City revealed that these individuals often find themselves stretched thin, striving to excel in their professional roles while being present for their children, and are frequently unaware of supportive policies like RA 8972 (Calbaza, 2024). Moreover, the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 8972, as amended by Republic Act No. 11861, emphasize the need for flexible working schedules for solo parents. However, the implementation of such policies remains inconsistent, further exacerbating workplace stress for solo mothers.

Strength as a Moral Obligation

Participants consistently expressed that their strength derives meaning from its purpose whether through providing basic needs, being a positive example, or earning appreciation from their children. They perceive the need to remain strong not merely as a personal trait but as a deep-seated moral responsibility driven by their roles as both caregivers and role models.

"The most fulfilling part is knowing everything I do is for my children. Every time they're okay, I feel like all the sacrifices are worth it" (P1).

"It's meaningful when I know I'm setting an example for my children, showing them how to stay strong" (P2).

"The most meaningful part is when I realize that my hard work allows me to provide for my child. Even when things are tough, I'm doing it for her" (P3).

"The fulfillment comes from knowing that my efforts are shaping my children's future. The work I do is important, but providing for them is my top priority" (P4).

"It feels fulfilling when my kids tell me they appreciate what I've done. That gives me strength" (P5).

The participants emphasized how strength serves as their moral compass that guides their actions. It is sustained by purpose, shaped by love, and affirmed by the hope of a better life for their children.

In Filipino society, motherhood is idealized as a sacred responsibility, and solo mothers often feel compelled to live up to this ideal despite limited support. This strength, driven by moral obligation, becomes a quiet but powerful force that shapes not just their own lives, but the futures of their children and the communities they serve. According to Cruz and Ramos (2022), the societal expectation of motherhood in the Philippines reinforces the pressure on solo mothers to excel both at home and in their professional roles. Similarly, Mendoza (2023) observed that solo mothers often prioritize their children's well-being over their own, making personal sacrifices to fulfill their perceived duties. Furthermore, Tolentino and Garcia (2024) found that these expectations frequently lead to emotional burnout, as the burden of living up to an idealized motherhood often outweighs available resources and support systems.

Sacrifice and Dedication for Family. The demands of the public sector, often involving long hours, limited flexibility, and emotionally taxing work, intensify the complexity of their responsibilities. Yet,

these women continue to demonstrate unwavering commitment to their families, seeing their sacrifice as an expression of love and purpose rather than burden.

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These mothers endure a "double shift," balancing public service work during the day with the unpaid domestic labor they carry out at night. This phenomenon is further compounded by the Filipino patriarchal system, which perpetuates the notion that women are inherently self-sacrificial, normalizing their struggles and emotional pain. Additionally, research by Oxfam Pilipinas and the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) found that traditional gender norms continue to dominate, with women disproportionately shouldering unpaid care work. This "second shift" of domestic responsibilities, combined with full-time employment, intensifies the challenges women face, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Guerrero, 2022; Reyes & Aquino, 2023; Torres et al., 2024).

However, despite the sobering reality, the participant's responses reveal a sense of fulfillment that is rooted in the belief that their sacrifices are meaningful because they are done for the well-being and future of their children.

Adaptation Through Time and Experience

While the initial stages of solo motherhood were evidently marked by overwhelming stress and emotional exhaustion, they developed the strength, strategies, and mindset necessary to adapt. However as expressed by the participants, adaptation did not happen overnight. It was a process highlighting how endurance and resilience allowed them to gain control over their circumstances and find a more manageable rhythm between work and parenting.

"I had to grow stronger and more resourceful. Over time, I became better at balancing everything, but it was never easy" (P1).

"It's been a gradual process. I've learned to prioritize my responsibilities, but it's a constant juggle between work, deadlines, and being there for my kids" (P4).

"Now that they're older, I've been able to breathe a little. They've learned to handle more on their own" (P5).

Adaptation did not erase difficulty, but it allowed them to endure it more effectively. Based on their responses, the progression of time, particularly as children aged, contributed significantly to participants' sense of relief and improved balance. Nonetheless, even as mothers adapted, the weight of responsibility remained.

"As they got older, I learned to let go a little. But I still carry all the responsibilities on my shoulders" (P2).

Which only proves the idea of how adaptation involved ongoing emotional labor and sacrifice. Thus, one response from a certain participant emphasized how support in any form played a crucial role in their adjustment.

“It’s become more challenging, but now that I have help at home, I can focus better at work. Still, it’s not always easy” (P3).

The responses reveal the proactive and deliberate decisions these mothers make daily to maintain balance. Adaptation, in this context, is not merely a passive consequence of time but rather an active process of growth, where solo mothers evolve from simply surviving to effectively managing the complex demands of both solo motherhood and public service. These findings underscore the resilience and adaptive strategies employed by mothers to cope with multiple roles, showcasing their capacity for personal and professional transformation over time (Reyes & Tan, 2022; Soriano & de la Cruz, 2023; Mendoza, 2024).

Seeking and Accepting Support. While solo motherhood often evokes an image of strength and independence, the narratives of the participants in this study underscore a more nuanced truth: survival and balance are often made possible through the willingness to seek and accept support. Though their support systems are not always abundant but were pivotal in overcoming particularly difficult situations.

“I survived that tough time when my child was ill and we had nothing. Prayer, persistence, and a bit of help from family got us through” (P1).

“When my youngest became a GSIS scholar, I felt like my hard work finally paid off. That gave me hope” (P2).

“There was a time when I was under a lot of stress at work, but my dad helped me with some financial support. That allowed me to focus better and manage everything better” (P3).

“There was a time when I had to finish an urgent work project while my kids were unwell. I was able to manage it by dividing my time effectively and asking for support from my family” (P4).

“When my kids stayed at their grandma’s while I had a big work deadline, it gave me peace of mind to finish the task at hand. Knowing they were in good hands helped me focus” (P5).

Consistent with recent findings by López & Duran (2023), who emphasized that single mothers benefit significantly from informal support networks during high-stress periods, this study affirms that collaborative coping—even when minimal—is a protective factor. Similarly, Tan and Martinez (2022) highlighted that the presence of kin-based support reduces psychological strain among solo parents, particularly in urban, high-pressure careers such as public service. Furthermore, Garcia and Santos (2023) noted that emotional and practical support from extended family and close friends is critical in buffering the negative effects of work-family conflict, particularly for those in demanding public sector roles.

The participants’ response emphasized how seeking support was not a sign of weakness but an adaptive, strategic choice that allowed them to breathe and helped them in navigating their roles as a public servant and a solo caregiver.

Practical Strategies for Balance. The participants demonstrated resilience through the implementation of practical, everyday strategies that helped them manage competing responsibilities. Maintaining mental clarity and emotional composure under pressure became part of their survival strategy, driven by the fear of their children’s future without them, especially since they are their children's only support.

“Time management is key. I wake up early, plan meals, and try to stay calm even when things pile up” (P1).

“I’ve learned to ask for help when needed, and I manage my time the best I can” (P2).

This mirrors the findings of Rivera (2025), who emphasized that single mothers in demanding professions often develop rigid daily structures and planning habits to reduce cognitive load and minimize daily disruptions. According to her study on Filipino solo mothers, time-blocking and pre-planned routines were critical in achieving a semblance of control over unpredictable schedules. Similarly, Vargas and Mendoza (2022) found that solo mothers in high-demand roles tend to rely heavily on strategic planning and time management techniques to cope with the pressures of balancing work and family responsibilities. Additionally, Aquino and Mercado (2023) highlighted that these mothers often create highly structured environments at home to ensure that both their professional obligations and family duties are managed effectively.

“I rely on my family for support and make sure I have someone I trust to look after my child. That way, I can do my job without constantly worrying” (P3).

“Staying organized and having a solid support system of family and friends has been key. I make sure I take care of myself too, even if it’s just for a short while” (P4).

“I stay connected with my kids emotionally, and that makes everything feel lighter” (P5).

From their response, it is clear that support systems not only provide practical help but also offer emotional assurance as well as in prioritizing moments to recharge and emotionally connect with their children. Furthermore, their narratives highlight not just hardship, but agency—the conscious decisions and adaptations they make each day to protect both their children’s well-being and their professional responsibilities.

Faith and Inner Grounding. Spiritual beliefs and practices, alongside a commitment to personal development, enable them to navigate the emotional and psychological challenges of single parenthood. These elements not only provide solace during difficult moments but also foster a sense of empowerment throughout their journey.

Faith and personal growth as central pillars serve as their crucial resources for coping with stress, maintaining a sense of purpose amid difficult circumstances.

“I rest when I can, and I try to exercise to clear my mind. My sister also helps me out a bit” (P1).

“I turn to God. When I’m overwhelmed, I pray. That keeps me going” (P2).

“When it gets overwhelming, I try to ask for help—whether from my family or my trusted nanny. It helps me focus on my work” (P3).

Solo mothers in public service often use a mix of physical, spiritual, and social strategies to manage their work-life balance. For instance, one participant (P1) mentioned that she rests when she can, exercises to clear her mind, and gets help from her sister. Exercise helps improve mental health, and family support can reduce stress (Biddle & Asare, 2011; Thoits, 2011). Additionally, another participant (P2) shared that she prays when overwhelmed, which helps her feel calm and focused. In this way, spiritual practices like prayer can provide comfort during stressful times (Koenig, 2012). Similarly, P3 highlighted that asking

for help from family or a nanny allows her to stay focused on work, showing how external support is key in balancing work and family life (Thoits, 2011). Therefore, these combined strategies help solo mothers effectively navigate the demands of both their professional and personal lives.

“I rely on time-blocking and staying organized. Taking small breaks helps, and I’ve learned that it’s okay to ask for help when things feel overwhelming” (P4).

“I de-stress through music and talking to friends. Singing helps me forget things for a while” (P5).

This demonstrates they are not immune to the challenges of life and are willing to ask for help when needed, allowing assistance to come to them in order to navigate the complexities of daily life and raise their children effectively. This aligns with the notion that mothers, especially solo parents, often rely on external support networks, not only for financial assistance but for emotional and social backing, helping them manage the demands of parenting and maintain well-being (Farnacio & Reyes, 2025).

Drawing Strength from Emotional Bonds. Evidently, in the participants’ journey of solo motherhood within the demanding sphere of public service, the emotional ties served as an anchor during times of exhaustion, uncertainty, and isolation.

Participants described how their children’s growth and resilience, small moments of connection, and even spiritual practices helped them realign with their responsibilities. One mother shared how her relationship with her children and her support system gave her renewed focus.

“I rely on my family for support and make sure I have someone I trust to look after my child. That way, I can do my job without constantly worrying” (P3).

“I stay connected with my kids emotionally, and that makes everything feel lighter” (P5).

Similarly, Villanueva and Santos (2021) emphasized the role of relational resilience in Filipino solo parents, arguing that strong emotional bonds not only reduce the psychological toll of caregiving but also enhance one’s capacity for self-regulation and long-term coping. Solo mothers in public service often draw strength from emotional bonds with family and caregivers to manage work-life balance. These emotional connections provide comfort and help solo mothers cope with the pressures of caregiving and work responsibilities (Russell, 2013; Thoits, 2011). Furthermore, reaching out for help from family members or trusted caregivers enables solo mothers to focus on their work while maintaining a sense of emotional well-being (Sullivan, Dodd, & Long, 2015). By relying on these emotional bonds, solo mothers are better equipped to handle the challenges they face in both their professional and personal lives.

Conclusion

The lived experiences of solo mothers in public service reveal a shared reality of role overload, emotional strain, and the constant negotiation between professional duties and single-handed parenting. Despite the financial, emotional, and workplace pressures they face, these women draw strength from deep family bonds, a sense of sacrifice, and spiritual grounding, viewing resilience as both a personal commitment and a moral duty. Over time, they have cultivated adaptive strategies—such as effective time management and seeking support—that enhance their flexibility and capacity to balance competing demands, enabling them to persist and thrive in both their caregiving and public service roles.

Recommendations:

Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that government agencies, policymakers, and public institutions work collaboratively to implement comprehensive and sustainable support systems for solo mothers in public service. This may include institutionalizing flexible work arrangements, ensuring the effective delivery of existing benefits, providing targeted financial and educational assistance, and offering accessible programs for mental health, stress management, and skills development. Strengthening these measures can not only alleviate the financial, emotional, and logistical burdens of solo mothers but also enhance their resilience, productivity, and overall well-being, while future research can further inform policies and interventions that address their evolving needs across various sectors.

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