

Navigating Dual Commitments: Lived Experiences of Single-Parent Teachers in Public Schools

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Abstract. Teaching is widely recognized as a profession that demands not only instructional competence but also emotional commitment and sustained engagement with learners' holistic development. When educators simultaneously assume the role of single parents, they face complex responsibilities that extend beyond professional expectations. This study explored the lived experiences of single-parent teachers in balancing their dual roles as educators and sole caregivers in selected public schools in Aklan, Philippines. Specifically, it examined the challenges they encountered and the coping strategies they employed in managing work and family responsibilities. Using a descriptive phenomenological research design, the study involved six purposively selected single-parent public school teachers from the municipalities of Madalag and Batan, Aklan. Data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method to identify essential meanings embedded in participants' narratives. Strategies such as member checking and peer debriefing ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Results revealed four major themes: balancing professional responsibilities and parental obligations, work considerations, financial challenges, and support systems and coping strategies. Participants reported experiencing role conflicts, limited opportunities for professional advancement, and persistent financial pressures due to their responsibilities as sole providers. Despite these challenges, institutional understanding from school administrators and strong support from family members and colleagues emerged as critical sources of resilience. Participants also employed adaptive coping mechanisms such as social engagement, religious participation, and self-care practices to maintain emotional well-being. The findings highlight the need for responsive institutional policies and targeted support mechanisms within the Department of Education to address the unique circumstances of single-parent teachers. Strengthening workplace flexibility, financial assistance programs, and professional development access may contribute to improving teacher well-being and sustaining professional effectiveness.

Introduction

Teaching is widely recognized as a profession that extends beyond classroom instruction, encompassing mentorship, emotional guidance, and the holistic development of learners. Teachers often function *in loco parentis*, assuming responsibilities similar to those of parents in supporting students' academic and socio-emotional needs. In the Philippine educational context, teacher quality and professional responsibilities are anchored in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasize learner-centered pedagogy, responsiveness to diversity, and professional commitment to student development (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017). As such, teaching already demands substantial emotional labor and professional dedication.

At the same time, single parenting remains one of the most demanding family roles due to the absence of a partner to share responsibilities related to childcare, financial provision, and household management. Globally, single parents often

experience increased psychological stress, financial constraints, and time pressures compared to two-parent households (Amato, 2014). When teachers assume single-parent roles, they are required to simultaneously manage professional expectations and sole parental responsibilities, creating a complex intersection between work and family obligations.

Research suggests that single-parent educators frequently encounter challenges related to work-life balance, limited personal time, and increased emotional strain due to competing responsibilities between home and school (Reimann et al., 2020). Similarly, single parents in the teaching profession may experience heightened stress levels as they manage instructional duties alongside household responsibilities without consistent partner support (Gupta & Khan, 2021). These realities highlight the need to better understand how single-parent teachers navigate their professional commitments while fulfilling parental responsibilities.

Despite these challenges, single-parent teachers may also demonstrate resilience and strengthened relational capacities in educational settings. Studies indicate that personal experiences related to parenting independently can enhance teachers' empathy toward learners, particularly those from similar family backgrounds (Martinez & Lee, 2020). Such perspectives suggest that the dual roles of teacher and single parent may not only present difficulties but may also contribute positively to classroom relationships and instructional sensitivity.

In the Philippine context, teachers continue to face increasing professional demands, including administrative workload, curriculum reforms, and expanded roles in learner support systems. These responsibilities may become more complex for single-parent teachers who must independently manage both family and professional obligations. However, despite the growing number of single-parent educators in public schools, limited empirical research has explored their lived experiences, particularly in the province of Aklan.

Research Questions

Understanding the lived experiences of single-parent teachers is essential in developing responsive institutional support mechanisms and professional wellness programs within the Department of Education. By identifying their challenges and coping strategies, this study seeks to generate insights that may inform policies and interventions aimed at promoting teacher well-being and sustaining professional effectiveness.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the lived experiences of single-parent teachers in managing the demands of both teaching and parenting?
- 2) How do single-parent teachers describe the challenges they encounter and the coping strategies they employ while balancing work and family responsibilities?

Assumptions of the Study

This study is anchored on the following assumptions:

1. The single-parent teachers participating in the study will provide honest, accurate, and sincere accounts of their lived experiences in balancing teaching and parenting responsibilities.
2. The participants have sufficient experiences and insights related to both their professional roles as teachers and their responsibilities as single parents, enabling them to meaningfully contribute to the study.
3. The research instruments, such as interview guides or questionnaires, are appropriate, clear, and capable of capturing the relevant information needed to answer the research questions.
4. The participants fully understand the questions and are able to express their thoughts and experiences effectively.
5. The experiences shared by the participants are representative of the realities faced by single-parent teachers within the context of public schools in Aklan.
6. External factors, such as the interview environment or personal circumstances at the time of data collection, do not significantly influence or distort the responses of the participants. The findings of the study may provide useful insights that can contribute to the development of support programs and policies for single-parent teachers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of single-parent teachers as they navigated the dual responsibilities of professional teaching and parenting. Descriptive phenomenology

seeks to examine how individuals make sense of their experiences and to uncover the essence of a shared phenomenon as perceived by participants themselves (Moustakas, 1994).

A descriptive phenomenological design was appropriate for this investigation because the phenomenon under study remains insufficiently explored from the perspective of single-parent teachers, particularly within the local Philippine educational context. This approach enabled the researcher to capture rich, first-person accounts and describe how participants perceived, interpreted, and responded to their circumstances while consciously engaging in bracketing to minimize the influence of prior assumptions and biases.

By focusing on participants' narratives, the study generated a comprehensive understanding of the meanings attached to their lived experiences, extending beyond surface-level descriptions toward the essential structure of the phenomenon.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Aklan. The province is in the northwest portion of Panay Island and focused on the participants within this geographic area specifically in the municipality of Madalag and Batan.

Madalag, a landlocked municipality in Aklan, occupies a total land area of 269.60 square kilometers, representing approximately 15.32% of the province's total area. According to the 2020 Census, Madalag has a population of 18,890, accounting for 3.07% of Aklan's population and 0.24% of the Western Visayas region, with a population density of roughly 70 inhabitants per square kilometer (PhilAtlas, n.d.).

Batan, another municipality in Aklan, is included as a secondary study site should additional participants be required. It spans 79.22 square kilometers, accounting for 4.50% of the province's total area, and has a population of 33,484 according to the 2020 Census, representing 5.44% of Aklan's population, with a population density of approximately 423 inhabitants per square kilometer (PhilAtlas, n.d.).

The selection of Madalag and Batan as research sites is guided by both practical and contextual considerations. These municipalities were chosen due to the researcher's established connections with potential participants, the accessibility of the sites, and the suitability of their educational, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics.

Both areas offer meaningful contexts for exploring the lived experiences of teachers who are also parents. The richness of their community life, cultural norms, and economic realities makes these municipalities ideal for investigating how single-parent teachers manage and balance their dual roles at home and in school.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of six (6) purposively selected single-parent public school teachers from the municipalities of Madalag and Batan, Aklan. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants possessed direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation.

Participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: 1) Must be a single parent (mother or father) for at least ten consecutive years; 2) Must be currently employed as a public-school teacher in Madalag or Batan District; and 3) Must be raising their child or children without support from a former partner. To ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were assigned throughout the study.

The participants included four female and two male teachers aged between 37 and 62 years. Their years of experience as single parents ranged from 10 to 22 years. Their circumstances included separation and widowhood, providing diverse perspectives on single-parent teachers across different life stages and family situations.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' lived experiences. The interview guide consisted of three sections: 1) Preliminary demographic and contextual questions; 2) Questions exploring participants' experiences in managing daily responsibilities as teachers and parents, including time management, professional obligations, family responsibilities, and personal well-being; and 3) Questions examining coping strategies used to manage dual-role demands.

The interview protocol underwent content validation by three experts with backgrounds in education and qualitative research to ensure alignment with the study's objectives and adequacy in capturing the intended phenomenon. Revisions were incorporated based on expert feedback prior to data collection.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained. Eligible participants were then contacted and invited to participate voluntarily. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, procedures involved, confidentiality safeguards, and participants' rights prior to securing informed consent. Data were collected through in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to describe their experiences in their preferred language (Akeanon, Filipino, or English). Follow-up probing questions were used to clarify responses and deepen understanding of participants' narratives. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission and supplemented with field notes. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy prior to analysis.

Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method, a systematic approach designed to extract the essential structure of lived experiences from participants' narratives.

The analysis followed seven steps: 1) Reading all interview transcripts repeatedly to gain familiarity with the data; 2) Extracting significant statements relevant to the phenomenon; 3) Formulating meanings from significant statements; 4) Organizing meanings into thematic clusters; 5) Developing an exhaustive description of the phenomenon; 6) Identifying the fundamental structure of the experience; and 7) Returning the findings to participants for validation through member checking.

This analytic process ensured that interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts while maintaining phenomenological rigor through reflexive bracketing. To ensure the rigor and credibility of the findings, strategies aligned with qualitative research standards were employed.

Credibility was strengthened through member checking, wherein participants reviewed their interview transcripts and confirmed the accuracy of their responses. Dependability and confirmability were enhanced through peer debriefing with a qualitative research expert who reviewed transcripts, coding procedures, and emerging themes. Authenticity was further supported through continuous consultation during the analytic process to identify potential researcher bias and refine interpretations. These procedures contributed to ensuring that the findings accurately reflected participants' lived experiences and strengthened the overall trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided all stages of the research process. Participants provided written informed consent prior to participation and were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained using pseudonyms and secure handling of research data. Participants were also informed of potential emotional discomfort associated with recalling personal experiences and were given the option to pause or terminate interviews when necessary. Following the completion of data collection, participants were provided with opportunities to clarify their responses and review the findings to ensure accurate representation of their experiences.

Results and Discussion

This part presents the narratives of single-parent teachers in the Division of Aklan highlighting their varied experiences juggling both teaching and parenting. This study generated four (4) major themes with six (6) sub-themes which are: Balancing Professional Responsibilities and Parental Obligation (Teaching while Parenting and Family over Professional Development); Work Consideration; Financial Challenges; and Support and Coping Strategies (Family and Co-workers, Socialization, and Self-care).

Theme 1: Balancing Professional Responsibilities and Parental Obligation

As teachers, it requires heart, dedication and passion not only as someone who teaches and inspires inside the four corners of the classroom. Oftentimes, these teachers have more responsibilities at home that allow them to juggle two demanding roles at the same time. That is where dual responsibilities are needed to be done right away and the sacrifices, they made just to be resilient and making sure that their families are prioritized and taken care of. In addition, this is where compromises come in that choosing their families over promotion through expanding their professional development has been evident. It may be considered a sort of regret, but for them choosing their family is the best decision.

Teaching while Parenting

As the saying goes, “You cannot serve two gods at the same time” is one of the most popular lines implied when a person cannot fully perform his functions at the same time, level and competence. This goes exactly evident to the single-parent teachers who displayed their situations when faced with different activities that hampered their parenting due to their work. According to Vashetina et al. (2022), Women teachers often experience a greater imbalance between work and home life due to their primary roles in child-rearing and homemaking, which can prevent them from undertaking additional tasks or activities, including professional development.

The teaching profession itself has become increasingly demanding, with reforms, administrative workloads, and heightened expectations in student support requiring extended time and energy (Xiao et al., 2024). For single-parent teachers, the convergence of these professional pressures and parental duties creates a particularly strenuous situation, often leaving them with workloads that feel “worse than expected” (Ebora & Calimutan, 2020).

The narratives as to how single-parent teachers exemplified traversing two responsibilities at the same time were documented and comprehensively shared and discussed by the participants in this study.

Alice started the sharing by emphasizing that her location where she was teaching became a reason why she was away from her child which made her feel torn – which should be prioritized.

“Kabudlay ipagsabay do magpaka nanay hay Saturday – Sunday malang kami gaiba ag from Monday to Friday hay igto euta ako ga stay sa ang workstation. (I was really struggling knowing the fact that my location was far from my child and I only had the weekends to be with him. And it is hard to juggle two roles at the same time.)

This experience of Alice is a reflection how single-parent teachers need to attend to two different people-her students and her child. She even continued her sharing by highlighting the missed activities she had with her child because she needed to prioritize her work.

“May mga times kapin mga activities nga need kunta ang presence but because of my work igto ako sa maeayo nga lugar na distino before hay uwa ako una hay gina buslahan ako it akong unga nga dapat iya ikaw ma, dapat Nakita nimo, duyon do mga ma sakit man para kakon bilang mother kaso kung indi man ako mag trabaho paalin kami maka survive, she said.” (There were times that I was needed by my child. But because of my work and I was far from him; he got mad at me. It hurts on my part, but I cannot do anything.)

It is disheartening when this kind of situation occurs when the love of your life did not see his parent watching him performs or doing well in school. This kind of sharing mirrored that study conducted by Encila & Madrigal, 2021) where they stated that, “Solo parent teachers frequently experience this conflict, reporting difficulties in reconciling professional responsibilities with parental devotion.”

Her narrative was added by underscoring that her calling to teaching was given more priority over her child. The reason why she had this narrative because she had someone to stand on her behalf whenever she is needed by his child, in the person of her mother.

“Syempre supposed to be may mga instances nga igto ka dapat eh but because of the calling it duyon mga bagay bagay kung бага mas gina pili mo ruyon kesa sa imong unga. Need kaman kunta it imong unga pero shempre mas pilion nimo, kase sayod ko mata nga una nga maka proxy kakon may maga tindog on my behalf baea.” (Supposedly, I should be with him but because of the calling of my profession, I chose this over him because I know my mother is there to stand on my behalf.)

According to Agustin, 2019; Encila & Madrigal, Filipino single mothers, including teachers, consistently report heightened difficulty in harmonizing work and family demands.

In the same vein, Beatrice confessed how she navigated her life doing parenting and teaching. In her case, she must do it all by herself by preparing the things that her children needed and proceeding her errands going to school. She uttered,

“Pagka weekdays gida hay I got to get up early mag prepare for mga baon mag luto ng baon ko, baon ng mga bata at saka pag na prepare ko na ang baon nila, ako naman ang mag preprepare pasok sa trabaho, after the day hay shempre hindi na tatapos role ko after school mother parin ako ng mga bata after school sa bahay na ako mag pahinga saka na ko naman na fo-followup mga anak ko.” (During weekdays, I got to wake up early to prepare the food of my children and mine as well. At school, I am still the mother of my students. And after school, I still have to perform again my role as a mother by following them up.)

These activities of Beatrice showed how single-parent teachers are battling their responsibilities especially when conflicts and priorities are present. Prior studies affirm that working mothers in leadership roles are especially prone to such conflicts, with role overload, ambiguity, and competing priorities intensifying their stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hafiz, 2015). These findings support the argument that the teaching profession, with its time-intensive nature, magnifies role conflict for single mothers compared to other professions.

Beatrice's experience is the same as what Christine had involved where she, too, needed to wake up early all by herself to prepare the food and things of her children. After which, her "being a teacher" begins. She narrated,

"Pag bugtaw it alas kwatro it agahon hay naga eaha eutang eutang karon among pamahaw, baeon it ang mga unga ag baeon nakon tapos pag abot iya perform kaman it ing trabaho as maistra." (At 4 o'clock in the morning, I see to it that I already cooked the meals of my children. Afterwards, going to school is another duty to be performed aside from being a parent.)

The irony of teaching comes when a mother who is a teacher cannot help her children with their projects at school. This was added by Christine when she was asked but justified her answer in an acceptable point of view.

"Kung may project akong mga unga ngaron, indi gidang kanda ka bulig syempre may trabaho ako, kung indi man ako mag trabaho uwa man kami it kwarta uwa kami it gastuson ag uwa man kami it kan-on," she added. (Whenever my children have projects in school, I cannot help them. But since I have to work, it makes money to put food on the table.)

Things are getting heavier when these single-parent teachers experience physical ailment that could hamper their functions as parents and teachers. Daisy, who is also a single mother narrated how she must put things first – her responsibility as a mother or her being a teacher to her students.

"Yes sir, kalisod gida sir kapin kung ga masakit ako hay di ko masayran kung alin ang unahon kung ang unga or responsibilidad as teacher pero hay ginikanan kita hay sayod naton nga kinahangean gid kita it atong unga ag atong iskuyla," she expressed. (It is hard when I have a health problem because I do not know what to put first. Is it my responsibility as a parent or being a teacher?)

This shared experience of Daisy supports the study conducted by Marnique (2024) where it stated that health-related constraints can further exacerbate these challenges, sometimes contributing to absenteeism.

She further discussed that in cases where she could not make it to their activities or awarding ceremony, she made sure that she finds time.

"Yes sir may una gida siguro hay may time gida nga indi ko gida ma achieve hay naga bawi ako sir, halimbawa hay may mga awarding hay may klase ta ako sorry makon be hay may klase si mama." (Yes, there where times that if I cannot make it, I make sure to find time the next time. I have a class, so I tell my children to make them understand the situation.)

Daisy's situation is not different to anybody else single parents. She has to deal with life's pressure and questions which must be prioritized. Single mother teachers frequently struggle with child discipline, time management, and maintaining work-life balance, leading to guilt and self-doubt (Manrique, 2024).

Erik, the only man in this study is not excused to this kind of experience. Given that he is a man, a powerful and decisive in decision-making as perceived by the majority, also shared how he handled things on his own juggling two responsibilities. He spoke,

"Hay na budlayan gida ako karon ko primero ay shempre siin ang unahon lalo kung may mga meeting hay gina taw-an ko gid it oras nga maka agto sa andang meeting hay daywa pa abi sanda hay uwa ga parehas andang schedule. Akon nga time hay pag halin ko igto ag pag abot iya hay akong mga ueobrahon sa iskuylahan hay iya ta ako ga focus lang kanda." (I find it hard at first which one should I focus first. Every time there is a parent's meeting in their school, I see to it to attend even my two children have a different schedule. And in most cases, my responsibility as a teacher is being sacrificed because my attention is focused on my two children.)

Felix got the chance to share his experience as well as to how he struggled in performing both roles. To him,

"Kung pwede eang kunta tunga-on ko ro ang eawas para ma perform do daywa ka obligasyon kaso indi gid. Struggling gis masyado," he said. (If I could only divide my body just to perform two roles at the same time, I would. But it is difficult.)

The struggles in balancing two responsibilities were evidently shown in the shared experiences of the single-parent teachers. This exposed how limited time will be when it is divided into two, and how fragile our body can be when things are performed at the same time. Their rich narratives is a reflection that the society is still dealing with this kind of situation. As Encila & Madrigal, 2021 reported that solo parent teachers shoulder these responsibilities alone, magnifying their time and energy constraints. In addition, according, without the support of a spouse, solo parents must become adept at juggling overlapping schedules and responsibilities (Encila & Madrigal, 2021).

Family over Professional Development

Single-parent teachers often face significant obstacles in their professional growth due to the demands of their family responsibilities. A key challenge is the lack of sufficient time for professional learning, which is compounded by conflicts with family responsibilities. These conflicting demands result in "role friction," where the stress from one area impacts performance in another (Tulo & Lee, 2022).

As a teacher, to get promoted one must update himself in ways that could improve himself professionally. It is where professional development and graduate education programs were designed to help teachers step into a higher position and receive bigger salary. However, because of the circumstances that single-parent teachers are in, there were sort of compromises that took place which allowed them to choose their family over shimmering promotion. Single-parent teachers also confront the tension between investing in their professional growth and fulfilling family responsibilities. Many are compelled to shoulder dual parental roles, managing both the nurturing and the disciplining functions usually shared in two-parent households (Encila & Madrigal, 2021).

Alice recalled as she started to enrol for her master's degree for a promotion. However, since the class is conducted during weekend, and that is the only time she can have a bond with her child because she was teaching in a far-flung area, refused to pursue her graduate education. She expressed,

"Way back 2013 siguro to hay nag iskuyla ako nag masteral ako for promotion, mas need ako kato it akong unga, weekends akong time malang nga ga iskuyla mas ging pili ko mag spend time sa akong unga kesa mag iskuyla. Tao kung saea pero hay, bukon man it saea kaso akong oras ging tao ko sa akong unga." (It was in 2013 when I started my graduate education journey. However, I was needed by my child that is why I gave up and focused on my child. I do not think it was wrong, but I guess it was not since my time is devoted to him.)

Alice's sharing is a testament for many teachers who wished to pursue graduate education to get promoted yet confronted by certain things like prioritizing the welfare of their children. Her sharing is congruent to Christine's journey where she wanted to study but did not pursue. She uttered,

"Abo taron sir, dahil priority ko ta akong mga unga, like gusto gidmana nakon mag iskuyla hay indi dahil na prioritize ko ta akon nga unga. indie eun man ako maka pa promote hay uwa man ako naka iskuyla hay dapat naka graduate kaman." (I really wanted to study but needed to prioritize my children. I guess I cannot be promoted because to, one must be a graduate.)

Alice and Christine's sharing both affirms the research study conducted by Alonge & Osagiobare, 2020 stating that solo parent teachers experience significant strains when attempting to meet the demands of both career advancement and child-rearing.

Daisy's narrative differs from Alice and Christine's in terms of wanting to pursue. To her, she did not plan because she knew her priorities. But she is not closing her door to a possible try.

"Halimbawa karon sir hay masteral uwa ako nag buoe dahil ging priority ko gida ang unga na sisip ko sa ulihi nga inadlaw hay pwede eun ako ka masteral that time gida sir hay need gida nakon diparahon akong unga hay ga minasakit imaw that time sinakon kato hay to follow hasta na lipatan, basta ging una ko ta ro kapakanan It akong unga." (I did not pursue my master's degree because I had to prioritize my children. There were times that they get sick. Maybe one day I can pursue it.)

When children's health becomes the narrative, this becomes automatic that parents worry a lot and will do anything just to ensure their safety and wellness.

Erik's story became challenging when his wife passed away and solely raising his children all by himself. That is why, giving up his promotion was decided and no longer pursue it because of his old age.

“Kat buhi pata ang asawa nga sa seminar ako hay akong isip hay iya ta kanda kapin tag ga masakit imaw kato. Pero tag single eun ako uwa eun ako nag pursue nga magpa promote majo ging give up ko euta baea imaw ag may edad eun abi ako. Tag rato ngani nga re-classification hay gina encourage ako It akong mga kaibahan hay indie eun makon ako.” (When my wife was still alive but got sick and I was in the seminar, my heart and my mind were in my kids back home. And when I became single, I did no longer pursue promotion and I gave up on it, given with my old age. Just recently in the reclassification, I did not apply.)

Felix decided where he thought that choosing his family over pursuing a graduate study is the best decision because it might be selfish if he would prioritize his own self. He uttered,

“Although no choice is still a choice hay akon lat a gin pili hay do family ko ron. Daw selfish man ako at some point kung una hon ko ang sarili.” (I chose my family over pursuing master’s. I said this because I do not want to be selfish.)

Participants’ experiences in giving up promotion and graduate education can be considered as one of their bravest decisions made ever. For many, it could be a feeling of loss because of the opportunities could affiliate to it but for them it was the right choice, raising their children on their own is a rewarding feeling. Fulfilling their children’s needs remains a strong motivator, pushing solo parent teachers to persist despite exhaustion (Ebora & Calimutan, 2020).

Theme 2: Work Consideration

Teaching is said to be the noblest profession. This saying is always present since then up to present. But how can teachers still fulfil their job hundred percent when they are also needed by their children? Good thing that people who are in the educational system specifically in the Department of Education understood the situation of these participants. According to Ajani, 2025; Alonge & Osagiobare, (2020) educational institutions play a critical role in creating environments where single-parent teachers can balance professional and personal demands. Flexible work arrangements—including flexitime, telecommuting, part-time schedules, and job-sharing—are considered essential to empower teachers to manage competing responsibilities.

When Alice was asked about the considerations given to her in her workplace, she explained positively and hope for a policy that considers single parents like her. She uttered,

“Siguro hay, may mga times abi nga need mo ura urada nga mag panaw but then due to work nga indi kita eagi ka panaw panaw taw an eang it consideration kung need naton. Ag gina taw-an mat ang gid. I don’t know kung aling policy ron, taw an it time kapin hay kung ikaw malang isaea taw-an it time ro mga solo parent nga mag spend maka panaw sa andang paeanawon although need man it tanan ron, just as simple consideration kung need naton hay indi man kita pag higpitan gid.” (There are things that are needed to be done right away, but due to work-related is somehow difficult to accomplish. Good thing, I got considered and understood my situation. I am not really sure if there is a policy form the DepEd in considering single-parent teachers to be excused in certain important matters concerning family.)

Alice’s response is an eye opener to the Department of Education that aside from giving consideration depending based on reasons, must have a clear policy emphasizing a different privilege for single-parent teachers like her. This response confirmed the study of Eden, 2025; Tuazon et al., (2022) where it pointed that addressing the multifaceted challenges of being a single-parent teacher requires comprehensive institutional support and flexible policies within the educational system. Schools should implement adaptable work schedules and parental leave provisions that extend beyond existing legal frameworks, such as Republic Act No. 8972, to better accommodate the unique needs of single parents

Christine also shared that in her workplace, her situation was understood and even helped her especially when it comes to technology matters. She said,

“Hoo sir, na intindi nanda ako, ako abi sir mahina gida ako sa technology uwa mata nanda ako gina require nga mag inubra. Gina buligan gida nanda ako.” (They understood my situation and even helped me in technology-related matters.)

This kind of consideration is needed especially when teachers in their late 50’s struggle to adopt the rapid change of technology applied both inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to their rich accounts, Daisy benefited also how she was treated with consideration in her workplace when emergency arises. To her,

“Kung sa school sir in time nga emergency hay ma dali eang mag eaong ag kung ano kailanganon it mga single parents.” (I got permitted when emergencies arise.)

The context of work consideration continues as Erik revealed how kind and considerate his school head is when matters to family are the subjects. He exposed,

“Hay ma buot mata akong school head hay naga eaong ako karon nga ma’am may nag agtunan ako nga importante ag ako gida ro need mag agto hay gina consider mata nana.” (My school head is kind and considerate and allowed me to go when important personal matters are needed to be attended.)

“Sana All” – a popular saying by Gen Z, translated in English as, “Hope Everyone” is an exact description how positive and understanding Erik’s school head is. A type of saying that also wanting that other school heads or school administrators must display especially when their teachers are experiencing something extraordinary compared to ordinary individuals.

These worthy stories of theirs come to end when Beatrice learned and realized that by listening to her story and understanding by others is a form of consideration and hopes everyone would receive the same kindness that she experienced.

“Listening ears gida from them ag bisan papaano hay may considerations kakon, because ang pagiging single parent ag teacher at the same time hay bukon it ma dali lalo gid pagka activities hay na hahati ro anang attention as a teacher and mother, siguro hay lenient or bigyan nga consideration where single parent are in.” (Listening is already a form of consideration because they get to understand my situation and given me consideration. Hoping that others would experience the same thing as me as a single mother and parent.)

A little bit of understanding and consideration are not difficult to grant or offer when these single parents are still performing their job as teachers. They juggle their time, effort, money, and even their body in performing two roles.

Fostering greater societal awareness and acceptance is paramount. There is an urgent need for broader understanding and the development of customized support systems from both society and educational institutions to acknowledge and address the unique challenges confronted by single parents (Prahars et al., 2025). By alleviating social stigma, a more supportive and inclusive environment can be cultivated, enabling single-parent teachers in the Philippines to flourish both professionally and personally, thereby enriching the educational experience for their students and the wider community.

However, despite existing Department of Education policies, there remains a pressing need for enhanced institutional support and policy refinement to effectively regulate teacher workloads and foster a healthier work-life balance (Calamaan et al., 2025; Eden, 2025).

Theme 3: Financial Challenges

One of the most common perceptions among people when they hear “single parent” is financial. Like how they can survive given that they are the only one doing the grind just to meet the ends. This kind of set up has been a problem among Filipinos – how to cope with financial burden alone. A revelation opposite when a person has a partner to share the financial duties. Two-parent households typically demonstrate greater economic stability and more equitable distribution of responsibilities related to childcare, household management, and work (Farnacio & Reyes, 2021).

Participants in this study were not excused in this situation and even unearthed their struggles when financial matters were raised. Research indicates that single mothers, a significant portion of single parents, experience higher rates of stress due to their financial situation and increased workload compared to their counterparts in two-parent households (Viterbo, 2025).

Christine’s revelation towards teacher’s salary is the things that concerns her when it comes to raising her child. She recalled,

“Indi ko kaya akong unga buhion indi ko kaya pa iskuylahon, kasi sayod naton nga ro sweldo malang it maistra kato hay 10 plus malang ginagatas pa kato ang daywa nga unga paano ko abi makon buhion.” (I cannot raise my child back then on my own given that I only have a limited salary in teaching.)

The burden of being a sole wage earner often translates into fewer available funds and limited financial support, exacerbating their vulnerability (Baluyot et al., 2023). Beyond the day-to-day struggles, single parents are also subject to emotional trauma and economic hardship, contributing to an overall sense of stress (Lucero-Dueñas, 2025). This sharing of Christine painted how a single-parent teacher faces huge problem when she alone battles for the survival. Alice and Daisy on the other hand mentioned how they get into a compromising situation when both of their children were hospitalized. Alice narrated,

“May mga times especially kung may ma hospitalized kamong, duyon gida shempre we need bigger nga amount of money, duyon ro bigger kakon, na experience ko abi nga na hospitalized akong unga 1-week guro ng ana hospital kato kaya struggle gida nga maka provide agad agad nga datong amount of money, kumabaga uwa gid it tinago that’s why nalisdan.” (There was a time that when we got hospitalized, that is the time I get a problem financially. I experienced financial burden why my child got confined for one week.)

The financial challenges faced by single parents have profound implications for their families’ well-being. Economic stress is strongly correlated with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression among single parents (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). Moreover, financial strain can negatively impact children’s academic performance and emotional development, as single parents often struggle to provide consistent educational and emotional support (Cooper et al., 2009). Daisy also mentioned about hospitalization and experienced to borrow from certain group of people and even attempted to ask from lending companies but still ended up nothing.

“One time sir hay nag masakit imaw ag ging ospital gida imaw mayad eang sir that time hay bakasyon so uwa it classe na duea ang obligasyon ag focus eang ako kana tapos hay that time uwa gida ako it kwarta so nag try ako mag hueam sang colleague hay uwa gida sanda na try ko eun mag hueam sa mga 10 percent hay uwa gida sir.” (My child got sick. Fortunately, it was their vacation that is why I got to attend to his needs and medications. However, in terms of money I struggle a lot because no one lent me money during that time.)

In this case, money is much needed. Not in the aspect for leisure, travel and recreation but for the expenses needed for hospitalization. These experiences of Alice and Daisy confirms that financial and health-related constraints can further exacerbate these challenges, sometimes contributing to absenteeism, according to Manrique, 2024.

Erik also took another experienced pertaining to how he got trouble in borrowing money because some private lending institutions limit him due to his age. He uttered,

“Dahil sa trabaho hay naga usoy ako karon it ma utangan hay makaron ma budlayan euta ako duyon akong na problemahan makara nga sa akong edad hay limit lang ro naga pa loan kakon.” (At work, it is inevitable that I look for someone I can borrow a money with. And I am having a trouble because of age, limited loan institutions permit me to avail.)

This kind of limitation contributes to a bigger problem because when a person is constrained, negative things occur. In his case, his medicine that serves as maintenance was affected.

“Single eun ako ro problema ng ana agyan nga mejo maintenance baea sa baeay indi ko euta ma kaayad kasi financially uwa eun ako hay naka focus eun kanda ag kailangan namon sa baeay.”

Felix’s sharing also made a huge constraint on his part questioning how he can provide more and how they can survive daily.

“Grabe do gastos. Taga liog tana. Madya indo mo baea ngaron matungkad kung paano namon masurvive do mga inadlaw.” (I cannot bear the expenses and question myself if how I can provide my family and survive.)

In addition, Beatrice’s narratives brought her in discussing how difficult her life was when she was in another place teaching and rearing her child. This kind of sharing also noted that teachers’ salary was not enough.

Alam mo naman ang buhay sa maynila bawat kilos mo doon pera bawat galaw mo doon pera lahat ng kakailangan-nin mo pera alam mo naman ang swedo ng teacher its inadequate for me and for my child’s need. Financially hay as a teacher shempre akong salary hay inadequate gida ron para kakon ag sa needs it akong children. (The salary of a teacher is not enough to compensate our living way back in Manila. And you know for sure how money works there.)

The honest revelation of Beatrice exposed how teachers find difficulty in budgeting her salary as a teacher. This sharing is not only felt by those single-parent teachers but even though who have partners but still encounter difficulty in raising their children. This revelation exposed the study of (Doroy, 2025; Tagapulot & Macalisang, (2024) stating that the cumulative effect of these financial pressures can significantly impede their ability to achieve financial freedom, often leading to debt and continuous struggles in managing household expenses.

Alice then added to her narrative that her child is in college now and the need for money is her problem. Still, her salary cannot suffice the needs for the education of her child.

"May mga challenges especially makaron akong unga hay college eun kung amat hay, although may trabaho kita, may mga financial problem man baea, ngani ro allowance weakly gina problemahan naton."

Alice then revealed that she is not financially secured – no savings at all. According to Viterbo (2025), Single-parent teachers in the Philippines often encounter considerable financial challenges stemming from their dual roles as educators and sole providers for their families. An estimated 14 to 15 million single parents in the Philippines grapple with pervasive issues such as low income, elevated living costs, and constrained access to resources. This precarious financial situation frequently leads to significant financial stress, compounded by the constant pressure of balancing work and childcare responsibilities (Cruz et al., 2024). The economic hardships faced by these educators can have far-reaching implications, affecting not only their financial stability but also their psychological well-being (Cruz et al., 2024; Viterbo, 2025).

Financial problem is inevitable regardless of the status, religion, gender and profession. In the case of the single-parent teachers their experiences doubled their hardships as they raise their children while making sure that their future is bright and promising.

Theme 4: Support and Coping Strategies

Single-parent teachers may be considered heroes because they juggle both worlds at the same time, but their struggles were evident. Thus, human as they are they must be given the support system they need so that they can draw inspiration and motivation to continue life because they feel included and validated.

In the light of their experiences, participants were able to identify support system and coping strategies in life. They emphasized the importance of people close to their lives and the impact they made to them. Likewise, self-care and open communication were evident that allow them to strengthen their relationship with their families and on their personal lives.

Family and Co-workers

Single parenting as perceived by many as a negative one because of the overwhelming tasks and responsibilities that need to be done. This is added when a single parent is also a teacher that needs to function as the second parent of the students in school. With these organic situations, single-parent teachers need support system to continue living their purpose, responsibilities and personal dreams.

In the Philippines, extended families provide vital child-rearing support (Lopez et al., 2017; Andrada-Poa et al., 2021), while colleagues frequently step in to share lesson planning, offer classroom assistance, or advocate for flexible work arrangements (Manrique, 2024). At the school level, administrators are encouraged to demonstrate sensitivity to the family needs of single-parent teachers through supportive leadership practices and flexible policies (Alonge & Osagiobare, 2020).

Participants of this study unveiled their stories how they were supported by certain group of people and allowed them to continue life despite of their unfortunate circumstances. Alice laid down her narrative the moment her partner refused to hold accountable for her pregnancy revealed how her parents supported her and stood by her during her low moments.

"Since uwa ako ging panagutan it akong partner kato ging ask ko akong parents shempre sanda malang kakon ga support, willing mata sanda sanda kakon nag support sa pag iskuyla ag at the same time ro mga needs it akong unga." (The father of my child refused to be accountable that is why my parents took over his responsibilities and supported me until I got back on my feet.)

She even added that when there were moments that certain occasions were missed, she made sure to get back to him with the help of her parents.

"I see to it nga may time ako nga mag bawi sa akong unga and with the help of my mother my parents during those times na overcome ko man imaw, Si nanay naga support para indi nakon ma feel nga I'm all alone in this single parent thing, una gid imaw ron ever since the world begun sa pagka buhi ni Nico hay imaw gid ro una nga una nga ga support." she added. (I made sure that I will back to him with my parents` help. My mother is the one who stood up on my behalf in order for me not to feel alone in this battle. She was there since then.)

The sharing of authentic experiences continues as Alice relates how her colleagues, aside from her parents supported her at school and never hesitated to offer their help willingly. She continued,

"Yes akong mga colleagues hay very supportive mata kakon, very open mata sanda kakon, halimbawa nga need ko anda nga help hay willing gid sanda nga mag bulig kakon, mag hambae eang ag very open gid sanda nga mag bulig kakon." (My colleagues in school are very supportive, very open and willing to help me.)

This kind of set up eases the situation of Alice given that she alone is the source of strength of her child. She needs also group of people making her feel supported and guided in raising her child to become responsible and kind. Alice's experience captured a related study conducted by Lucero-Dueñas, (2025) that tackled Building strong support networks through community involvement, faith-based practices, and extended family can provide a crucial buffer against the pervasive stress they encounter

Beatrice's good family relationship and close family ties became a secret why she had no problem in raising her children. This is an advantage when a person lives in a compound surrounded by families and relatives. She said,

"Actually, among community compound imaw una ako ga istar nga magka eapit akong siblings hay bukon it ma lisod hay kung ano akong kinahangian una sanda ag nayang nga I'm thankful sa akong family ngaron hay very supportive gid sanda kakon. (My siblings and I are living in the same compound. So, it is not difficult because they are there to help me.

Because of this, whenever she has important meetings to attend to, it is easier for her to leave her children and let her family take good care of them for a while. That is why, family plays an important role especially in this crucial part of her journey as a single-parent teacher.

"Mayad una akong mga kapamilya na bilin ko sanda hay excuse anay ako sa duyon absent anay ako hay may uebrahon ako sa school. Hoo kapin tag ma intok pa imaw kaso abo galing anang mga igkampuran nga mas ma bahoe kana kaya may nagatake care kana, so uwa gidang nag anon ga mag hire it yaya hay una gid akong relatives, big help gid sanda." (It is good that I have a family who can take over my presence as a parent whenever I have things to do at school. They have their cousins as well who are older than them and they get along with each other.)

She further added that family is a great help and served as a support system they became the reason as well to continue life.

"Yes of course, I can say that Family is a great help for a single parent they support me with my school work, I'm proud to say that my family is my best support system, duyon gida, sana yung iba hay may family din na katulad ko. Duyon gida dayon imong gina isip kung mejo down imong pamatyag hay dahil sa kanila hay you need to go on." (My family gives me reasons to continue life because of what they did to me. I am so thankful to them.)

Colleagues' presence and friendship built serve as an armor to loneliness and depression, that moral support plays a huge role to keep going. She shared,

"Hay hoo akong mga colleagues hay bukon eang it co-worker kundi friends man sanda. Moral support, kung amat hay financially din." (My colleagues are not only co-workers. They are my friends who support me morally and financially).

Support is needed most especially when single-parent teachers are losing their hope and purpose of existence. It cannot be denied that Filipino resiliency is still present and applied personally and with the help of the family. As Agustin, 2019; Dagmang & Casama, 2018; Encila & Madrigal, 2021 mentioned, Filipino solo mothers rely on time and resource management, effective home and work planning, and support from significant others to meet responsibilities.

Christine's situation affirms Beatrice's sharing because she is also supported by her siblings who provided almost everything to her children. From gadgets, even up to the point when she was starting to build her life, her siblings helped her get through of her situation. She tackled,

"Uwa gida ako ging pabay-an it ang mga igmanghod, siyam kami tanan, tanan sanda ron hay una gid sanda ron hay una gid sanda ron. Tanan taron sir halimbawa nanda hay kailangan it ang mga unga ro laptop na taw-an ta nanda ron sir. Kat ging pa ea-as ako uwa kami it naulian nag hambae ako paano kami uwa ta kami it baeay ng ana istaran, mag nag tao ta eagi kakon karon it kwarta hasta naging okay akong istaran, sanda gida karon tanan nag bulig." (I was not abandoned by my siblings. In fact, they were the ones who support my children in their needs and wants in school like laptop. Even when I was ejected from the house of my ex-partner, my siblings did not hesitate to give me money so that I can have a house of my own.

She even added that she is being spoiled by her siblings even the most needed and essentials goods are still being provided by them to her.

"Tanan gida sir halin sa bugas hay weekly gina padaehan kami tanan gid nakon nga needs. Kaya uwa gida ako naka agi it stress dahil una sanda." (I could not have stress knowing that all of our needs are being provided by my siblings.)

Lucky is she that she got the help she needed when times are rough and tough. This kind of situation where Christine was in exemplified what family is all about – through thick and thin, for richer or poorer. The lines which can be heard during the exchanges of vows in marriage.

Erik's support system was found not on his own family but on the family of his wife. His sister-in-law was the one helping him in terms of assisting them financially. He narrated,

"Akon nga support system nga pinaka ma bahoe hay akon nga sister-in-law anang pamilya full support gida sanda ron ag naga tao gida sanda ron sa akong mga unga ga tao ta sanda ron sang unga, ma bahoe gida nga bulig sa manila mata abi sanda ga ubra mag uli sanda ron hay abo ta anda ng ana tao." (My sister-in-law and her family were the ones helping me in raising my children. They help me especially when it comes to the things that they give whenever they come back home from Manila.)

Since Erik did not find support from his own family, Felix was the kind of person who does not want to ask help because he does not want to add burden. But in some cases, he is supported and help especially in a compromising situation. Felix expressed,

"Una gid ro support it pamilya nakon. Pero owa man ako naila nga isalig kanda tanan. Gabulig mat a sanda especially kung indi ko eon kaya." (My family is there to help me but I do not want to depend everything to them.)

Moreover, Daisy only shared the support system she had and that is through her colleagues or co-teachers at school. Her co-teachers offered their services when she brings her child with her at school, and they were the ones who took care of her when they have vacant time. She mentioned,

"Sa akon man nga colleagues man mismo naka isip nga kung may bakante sanda nga oras hay sanda naga libang sang unga. kahit papaano hay na buhinan akong ilisipon nga indi eun mag worry sang unga hay akong na bilinan hay ma saligan." (My colleagues in school support me by taking the turn of babysitting my child during their vacant time.)

Daisy's story of how she was helped by her colleagues transcend in the narrative of Erik where he considered them as friends and willing to help anytime whenever they can.

"Duyon don nga pag consider nanda ro support system it akong mga kaibahan nga maistra hay uwa nanda ako karon na pabayan kung may mga trabaho hay anda gida ako karon ng ana buligan. Importante gida ron sir sanda hay ma bahoe gida nga bulig." (I am not being left out in the circle of my colleagues. They helped me and never felt abandoned.)

Support system is what everybody needs. Not only by single parents' teachers, but everyone who faces different struggles and shortcomings. According to Cheng, 2017, social support plays a critical role in mitigating the financial struggles of single parents. Assistance from extended family, government welfare programs, and community organizations can help alleviate economic pressure and improve overall well-being.

It is good to note that from the experiences laid down by the participants regardless of how they carry their lives without a partner, still there are being sent to ease their struggles and lighten up their crosses. When people have someone to lean on, there is an assurance that they are not alone

Socialization

Hanging out or going out is not only about fun and enjoying the outside world. It is also a way of relaxing and calming oneself from the hustle and bustle of life. Fresh air, good people, healthy conversation, nature trips, and laughter are shared.

Single-parent teachers of this study mentioned these things as part of their escape to their busy life as parents and teachers. For single mother teachers, specific strategies such as weekend getaways, building friendships, and practicing self-management are crucial in recharging and maintaining balance (Manrique, 2024). These methods are consistent with Resilience Theory, which emphasizes the role of adaptive strategies and resourcefulness in enabling individuals to recover and thrive in high-stress contexts (Costantine et al., 2025).

Erik and Alice's form of coping from the stresses and pressures in life are found in their circle of friends where they go out together and do drinking. It is a way of bonding and create memories while trying to escape from the realities of life that affected them.

Erik shared, "*Dati mejo na ila ako mag inom. Owa mata ago ga bueang, nakapanaw malang ngaron kung na sampit ako pero akong na ilaan makara hay sa mga banda banda ngaron sir mag tanaw tanaw ag mag inom inom man mana. Kung ma libang ako hay naga join join ako sa akon ngaron nga mga ka kilala hay ga outing outing kami karon.*"
Alice affirmed, "*Spending time with my friends, shempre ga tagay tagay man ako kung amat kung baga hay duyon lang akon nga stress reliever nga once in a while mag tagay tagay man.*"

When people get along with their friends outside of their comforts, releases their stresses which allowed them to divert their focus on something fun. With their friends, they can talk about life's pressures, disappointment, victories and fears. Their secrets to happy and continued battle to life are also being shared with these groups of people who are in their circle of influence.

Christine also expressed in the same breath that whenever she has the time she goes out with her friends. Beatrice and Daisy offered a different way of hanging out. Compared to Erik and Alice's sharing, attending in mass and participating in religious activities are their ways of forming bonding with their loved ones.

Beatrice answered, "*I see to it that I attend mass every Sunday with my family and mag plan kami it going out bonding kung saan saan kung may time and resource and see to it na everyone is doing well sa family.*" (if there is a time and a resources, I see to it that we attend mass every Sunday with my family.)

Daisy further stated, "*Naga join ako sir sa mga ga pangadi sa baea kahit papaano baea hay na iibsan ang stress, kada domminngo sir kaibahan akong unga.*" (I join in prayer activities with my child every Sunday to reduce my stress.)

In addition to Daisy's narrative, she also does go out together with her child and have the bonding like hair rebonding and making sure that they are not left out in terms of the latest trend. She discussed,

"Ubra ko man kung amat hay ga guwa guwa man, daea ko man ang unga, mas manami nga mag bonding kamo mag ina may time man nga pa unat unat ka man it buhok. Maki ayon sa uso pero not as sobra sobra. Mag motor ag mag pamasyar." (Sometimes I bring my child with me to bond like doing hair rebonding. Activities that would not us feel we are left behind.)

She also does other things with her child like watching TV, playing board games and eating at a famous fast-food chain in town.

"Mga bagay nga maka pang libang kamon like ga hampang chess tanaw it tv, eaha eaha eang mana pero kung may kwarta mata hay gaguwa kami ma Jollibee ma bawi gid sir." (We do play board games, cooking and going to a fast-food chain when there is money.)

It is worthy to understand that single-parent teachers need to recharge themselves by hanging out with people that could help them release their tension and hardships in life. Getting along with others outside the comfort of their responsibilities and workloads is a way of recreation to promote balance in life.

Self-care

Part of being a single-parent teacher are the heavy workloads and unending responsibilities performed inside the classroom and inside the household. To the point that their personal care and how they manage to get out of those situations are being questioned. However, despite of their dual roles performed, participants of this study were able to discuss how they ensure that they have time for themselves and never forget to pamper as well. Single-parent teachers employ a wide range of coping strategies that address both the emotional and practical dimensions of their lives. These include prayer and meditation, careful scheduling, maintaining open communication, and engaging in productive activities such as exercise, baking, online selling, and gardening (Encila & Madrigal, 2021).

Alice and Daisy highlighted the importance of giving time to oneself because true enough that, "You cannot give if you do not have." It is a type of attitude and mindset that focuses on oneself first before others. That a person must allow himself to have time and productivity so that he can present himself to others.

Alice said, "*Yes of course ga tao gid ako it time sa akong sarili, kung indi nimo taw an it time imong sarili maja paano kaman nga maka present sa mga tawo nga gina atubang nimo adlaw adlaw nga kumbaga hay ga tao man ako it me time sa akong sarili.*" (I truly give time to myself first because it is needed first before giving it to others.)

Daisy added, *"Self-care para kakon pag palangga mo sing sarili biska gaano ka ka busy taw-an mo it time ing sarili dahil time will come pag pina bay an mo rong sarili bukon eang it ikaw ka euoy pati ing unga."* (To love oneself is a form of self-care by giving time to yourself so that your children will not suffer.)

Aside from giving time for themselves, Alice also revealed that doing shopping for herself is her form of self-care. While Daisy mentioned that she does exercise and watching TV at home.

On the other hand, Daisy took a different form of self-care. To her, taking good care of the body and watching over one's health is a way of ensuring healthy living so that he/she can buy and enjoy the things in life when healthy. She explained,

"Shempre pag hindi tayo healthy hindi tayo maka move on hindi tayo mag go on with life kaya dapat hay healthy dapat alagaan imong sarili kung ano imong gusto bakea." (If we are not healthy, we cannot do the things we want. We have to take good care of our body so that we can do whatever we want.)

Daisy's advocacy to healthy living as a form of self-care was affirmed by Christine and Erik who are also into promoting healthy lifestyle. To them, if a person is not healthy or sickly, it would be difficult for them to manage the role of being a parent to their children. Christine explained,

"Ay importante ta ron sir hay kung indi kia mag ano sa sarili mag masakit kita, paano kung mag masakit kita paano mga unga ko. Importante nga tatapon nimo imong sarili, paano mo tatapon imong mga unga kung masakiton ka." (It is necessary that we are healthy so that we can still function the roles as a parent when we are not sick.)

Erik added, *"Importante gida kakon nga alagaan nimo imong sarili sir kapin kakon nga single father eun ako kung indi ko alagaan ang sarili hay na euoy eagi ako sang mga unga hay istudyante paeen gabi sanda."* (It is important that you have to take good care of yourself so that children will not suffer.)

Christine then shared that sometimes, she does scroll through social media specifically facebook and playing music. And Erik emphasized that physical features should be given attention to not appear stressed and exhausted.

Felix, on the other hand had a different form of self-care. To him, sleeping is the best thing a person can give to himself to function the responsibilities that await. He shared,

"Sleep gid akon nga need ag na consider nga pag pamper sang sarili." (I consider sleep as a major self-care.)

Moreover, Erik's sharing is a reminder that single-parent teachers must take good care of their body because their children will get affected as well. This was evident to his sharing.

"Importante gida kakon nga alagaan nimo imong sarili sir kapin kakon nga single father eun ako kung indi ko alagaan ang sarili hay na euoy eagi ako sang mga unga hay istudyante paeen gabi sanda. Kung personal mana, indi ako magpa losyang mana." (It is important to take good care of the body so that children will not get affected later or.)

Self-care or Me time is never considered selfishness. Sometimes, people need to have personal time to reflect, regain energy and pause for a moment. These kinds of activities allow them to examine their life's purpose, enjoy life according to their perceived belief and maximize the time spent with their loved ones.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concluded that single-parent teachers navigate complex and demanding responsibilities as they simultaneously fulfill professional obligations and parental roles without consistent partner support. Participants demonstrated strong commitment to both teaching and parenting despite experiencing role conflict, limited time for personal development, and emotional strain associated with balancing competing priorities. Many teachers consciously chose to prioritize their children's needs over opportunities for career advancement, reflecting the depth of their parental commitment and sense of responsibility as sole caregivers.

The findings further showed that institutional understanding and workplace flexibility play a crucial role in supporting single-parent teachers' professional functioning. Consideration from school heads and colleagues helped reduce stress and enabled participants to manage emergency situations and family responsibilities more effectively. However, persistent financial challenges remained a major concern, particularly in relation to children's education, health-related expenses, and long-term economic security. These realities underscore the importance of strengthening institutional and policy-level interventions that address the unique needs of single-parent educators.

Despite the challenges encountered, participants demonstrated resilience through strong family support systems, collegial relationships, social engagement, religious participation, and intentional self-care practices. These coping strategies enabled them to sustain both their personal well-being and professional responsibilities. The study therefore emphasizes the importance of strengthening formal and informal support mechanisms to promote teacher wellness and highlights the need for inclusive educational policies that recognize the lived realities of single-parent teachers in the Philippine context.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.