

Alone Yet Connected: Digital-Age Solo Parenthood

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ABSTRACT:

The life of solo parents can be taxing yet increasingly mediated by digital connectivity. Solo parenthood carries turning points for individuals raising preschool-aged children. This phenomenological-qualitative study investigated the first-hand experiences of solo parents in an increasingly digital society. In-depth, unstructured interviews were conducted with five solo parents of preschool-aged children, selected through purposive sampling in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Thematic analysis revealed four themes: (1) paths to solo parenthood, encompassing personal choice, migration, abandonment, or loss; (2) encounters in solo parenting, which emphasized difficulties in balancing work and parenting, along with emotional and physical exhaustion; (3) coping strategies and digital-age support systems, which accentuated the role of family support, emotional resilience, self-care, and the use of technology as survival and coping tool, where solo parents utilized digital platforms for remote work, virtual support networks, online learning, and parenting apps to adapt to their circumstances; and (4) reflections on solo parenthood, where participants found strength in parenting and embraced acceptance and moving forward. Technology surfaced as a means of handling isolation and encouraging connectedness. The findings have implications for the program implementer of the Solo Parents Welfare Act and the Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives of the government in collaboration with other sectors.

Keywords: solo parenthood, preschool-aged children, technology

1. Introduction

Parenting has traditionally followed gendered roles. Mothers attend child-rearing and psychological support. Fathers provide security and rules (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023, as cited in Gezova, 2015). Higher education, joint-income households, increased earnings, and equality have reshaped family dynamics. These resulted in more gender-inclusive parenting roles (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023, as cited in Fagan et al., 2014). Alongside industrialization and globalization, these shifts have contributed to the rise of solo parents.

Internationally, the United States of America, with twenty-three percent, and the United

Kingdom, with twenty-one percent, hold the highest percentages of children in the category of solo parents. About seven percent (6.8%) of kids worldwide reside in solo-parent families (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). The World Health Organization survey disclosed that the country, Philippines has fifteen million solo parents. Over ninety-five percent (14 million) of this population were women. Balancing work, child-rearing, and responsibilities in the household presented challenges. These circumstances prevented many solo parents from achieving economic stability. Most female solo parent in the Philippines struggle to meet daily necessities or make savings for their offspring's future (Pinugo, 2024). Despite the enactment of the Solo Parents

Welfare Act or the Republic Act No. 8972 and other relative laws and jurisprudence, many solo parents still face barriers to accessing adequate financial support, healthcare, and emotional well-being.

Life in a household of solo parents can be taxing for the parents and their offspring yet increasingly mediated by digital connectivity. Solo parents often face balancing childcare, employment, and household responsibilities. These situations lead to feelings of overwhelm. Financial resources decline after the separation of parents. It may strain the psychological being of the family (American Psychological Association, 2019).

The obligation of raising a child alone and during their formative preschool years presents exceptional struggles. Resiliency, adaptability, and support systems are much needed. The early childhood developmental phase is a period for cognitive (Jain, 2022), emotional (Haimi & Lerner, 2016; Chavda & Nisarga, 2023), and social growth (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023) for preschoolers. The weight of child-rearing, financial constraints, and the absence of a co-parenting partner could impact the life of solo parents. Research studies and literature investigated the psychological and economic struggles of solo parents. However, limited studies explored the first-hand experiences of solo parents with preschoolers in the local context. The experiences of solo parents with preschoolers are essential in formulating and amending policies, interventions, and community support programs adapted to their needs. With this research gap, the primary objective of this endeavor was to probe the first-hand experiences of solo parents with preschool-aged children in the local setting, Negros Occidental, Philippines. Specifically, this study intended to ascertain the situations that led to solo parenthood in this digital age.

2. Methodology

This descriptive study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design to investigate the lived experiences of solo parents with preschool children in Negros Occidental,

Philippines. Phenomenology was used to obtain an immersed understanding of how solo parents make sense of their parenting journey. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Creswell and Poth (2018) identified four philosophical perspectives that guide qualitative research: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions. These philosophical assumptions guided the researchers in understanding the contexts of the phenomenon.

Purposive sampling was utilized to recruit the participants of this study. Five solo parents were identified as participants. The inclusion criteria for this study were: (1) solo parents, (2) raising at least one preschool child as of December 31, 2023, (3) residing in Negros Occidental, Philippines, (4) willing and able to share their experiences, and (5) not experiencing severe psychological conditions. The sample size is determined by saturation (Gerard, 2019) in a qualitative research design (Fugard & Potts, 2015). In the qualitative method, data collection should continue until redundancy is attained (Mason, 2010). In this study, the data collected continued up to six months in 2024.

This study utilized in-depth, unstructured interviews for each participant. Participants were identified through referrals from the church and colleagues. Prior to the conduct of the face-to-face interview sessions, rapport was established. The study's purpose was explained to the participants. Participants were reassured of their privacy. The overview of the ethical considerations we provided to the participants. These include confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and permission to record the conversation. The informed consent instrument was translated into the local dialect, "Hiligaynon," and thoroughly explained before obtaining participants' signatures. During the interview sessions, the researchers remained neutral. It allowed the participants to share their narratives freely. Participants were not interrupted. The responses were recorded verbatim. The non-verbal cues were also noted. Each interview session continued for 45 minutes

to 1 hour. After the interview sessions, the responses of the participants were reviewed and clarified to make sure they were correct. A short debrief conducted by a psychologist followed to offer support, especially if any upsetting memories came up.

Thematic analysis was employed to investigate the first-hand experiences of solo parents with preschool children in Negros Occidental, Philippines, by evaluating their stories and narratives to identify patterns of meaning. The responses during the interview sessions were transcribed and organized into categories based on participants' accounts. A structured process was observed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Phenomenological research intends to uncover and illustrate the structure and meaning of such experiences, revealing the "essence of things" beyond ordinary observation (Moustakas, 1994). The structure provided transparency and credibility and excluded the need to restrict results to broad themes through thematic analysis. In the data validation and verification, Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained qualitative validity and reliability as the means a researcher or author takes to review and verify the accuracy of the results by establishing certain procedures. The study employed member-checking, documentation of an audit trail, and thick descriptions in data analysis.

Ethical considerations were observed during the study. The participants were given an informed consent form before the interview sessions. Confidentiality was guaranteed by anonymizing their identities. The pseudonyms used were Alexa, Smile, Judy, Paul, and Marko. The study ensured that the participation of the solo parents was voluntary.

3. Results

Solo parents come from different backgrounds. They were molded by their upbringing, community, nature of work, and the circumstances that led them to raise children independently. Behind every solo parent is a story. One that involves struggle and resilience. Often unseen or simplified in everyday conversations.

3.1. Case Vignettes

In this study, five participants shared their experiences as solo parents of preschool-aged children. Their stories reflected their journey through uncertainty, responsibility, and hope. These case vignettes extended a window into their lives. These narratives revealed how the participants cope, adapt, and care for their children despite various personal and social challenges.

Case Vignette 1: Alexa

Alexa is 38 years old. She works as a medical doctor. She has a daughter who is 3 years old. The long hours of work make it hard to care for her child. She often feels guilty and tired because she does not always have enough time at home. To manage, she gets help from her family. She still feels lonely and emotionally drained at times.

Case Vignette 2: Smile

Smile is 42 years old and stays home to care for her three children, including a five-year-old. Her husband works in another country, so she handles everything at home by herself. She receives the money to sustain their family through banking apps and payment center remittances. The burden of managing the home alone can be dreadful. The absence of a co-parent often leaves her physically exhausted and emotionally drained. She finds relief in community support and seeks guidance from extended family members. She tries to provide stability for her children.

Case Vignette 3: Judy

Judy is 28 years old and works as a tutor. She has one preschooler who is 5 years old. Her husband works abroad, just like Smile's. Her tutorial job allows some flexibility. However, she struggles to balance work and caring for her child. She carries the full weight of household chores, parenting, and finances. She tries to keep a routine. There are times when she feels lonely and tired. She relies on the support of her family and makes sure to spend time with her child.

Case Vignette 4: Marko

Marko is 39 years old and works as a teacher. He has four children, including a four-year-old preschooler. His wife abandoned him because of a third party. He was left to raise their children alone. As a father, he struggles with societal expectations. Society assumes solo parenthood as primarily a mother's role. It is a daily challenge for him to balance his teaching career with child-rearing. For him, solo parenting requires good time management and emotional resilience. He faces difficulties in providing emotional support to his children and dealing with his feelings of rejection and loneliness. He copes by staying close to his children. Leaning on his friends and relatives, whom he trusts, also helps him.

Case Vignette 5: Paul

Paul is 43 years old and works as a virtual assistant (VA). He has two children, including a four-year-

old. After his partner passed away, he was left to raise them on his own while working from home. Being at home lets him be there for his kids. However, dealing with grief and trying to keep things steady is difficult. His biggest struggle is managing both work and parenting without anyone else at home to help. He copes by finding comfort in his children, maintaining a structured routine, and seeking emotional support from friends and community groups.

The five case vignettes of Smile, Alexa, Paul, Judy, and Marko unfold the multiplicity of the participants' experiences as solo parents. Their lives and stories disclosed how their job demands, financial aspects, emotional stability, and support influence their journey as solo parents. Participants were able to share common themes of resilience, sacrifice, and commitment towards the overall well-being of their children. Table 1 depicts the profile of the respondents.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Pseudonyms	Age	Sex	Occupation	No. of Children	Preschoolers' Age	Solo Parenthood Circumstance
Alexa	38	Female	Doctor	1	3	Single by personal choice
Smile	42	Female	Housewife	3	5	Husband working abroad
Judy	28	Female	Tutor	1	5	Husband working abroad
Marko	39	Male	Teacher	4	4	Abandoned by partner
Paul	43	Male	Virtual Assistant	2	4	Widowed

3.2. Emerging Themes

When describing their experiences as solo parents raising preschool-aged children in this digital era, participants revealed themes that provided context to their daily struggles, coping mechanisms, and digital-age support systems. Participants shared the following emerging

themes based on their stories and experiences, as follows: (1) paths to solo parenthood, (2) encounters in solo parenting, (3) coping strategies and digital-age support systems, and (4) reflections on solo parenthood. Table 2 illustrates the emerging themes and sub-themes of the study.

Table 2: Emerging Themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1. Paths to Solo Parenthood	Choosing Single Parenthood
	Absence Due to Migration
	Abandonment by Partner
	Loss of a Partner
Theme 2. Encounters in Solo Parenting	Balancing Work and Parenting
	Emotional and Physical Exhaustion
Theme 3. Coping Strategies and Digital-Age Support Systems	Seeking Family Support
	Emotional Resilience and Self-Care
	Technology as a Coping and Survival Tool
Theme 4. Reflections on Solo Parenthood	Finding Strength in Parenting
	Acceptance and Moving Forward

The participants' narratives demonstrated diverse pathways to solo parenthood, challenges encountered in daily life, strategies used to cope, and reflections on personal growth and resilience.

4. Discussion

Theme 1. Paths to Solo Parenthood

The first theme was the “Paths to Solo Parenthood.” This theme explored the reasons why participants become solo parents. Some made a deliberate choice. Others were left in their situation due to abandonment, migration, or the loss of a partner. The first theme was substantiated by the studies of Jain and Mahmoodi (2022). They found that high divorce rates and separation were common causes of single-parent households (Jain & Mahmoodi, 2022). The literature revealed that divorce and parental separation could lead to economic hardship and distress for the parents and children. More so, the increasing rates of premarital fertility contributed to the growth of

solo parents’ households. This instance can be due to unplanned pregnancies or personal choices (Jain & Mahmoodi, 2022).

Sub-theme 1. Choosing Single Parenthood

The first sub-theme under the first theme was “choosing single parenthood.” Based on the narratives, some participants consciously become solo parents. Some decided to become solo parents due to personal beliefs. Some preferred to be independent from their partner. Others shared that they did not have a suitable partner or the "right person." This sub-theme captured the participants' experiences and beliefs in making this decision, being a solo parent by choice.

“I decided to remain single. I did not want to depend on someone else. I wanted to have a child, but I never found the right partner, so I continued as a solo parent.” – Alexa

“My family supported my decision. Some people looked down on me due to my life choices and

profession as a doctor. They think I need a husband to balance everything.” – Alexa

Sub-theme 2. Absence Due to Migration

The second sub-theme under the first theme was the “absence due to migration.” This sub-theme disclosed that the reason for being a solo parent was the migration of a partner. Some participants shared that their partners work abroad to provide for their families. The absence of their partners left them to handle the responsibilities alone in the household and other responsibilities relative to rearing. The narratives under this category disclosed the hardships of child-rearing without a physical partner. Participants shared that migrant workers’ partners provide financial support but leave a gap in their parenting.

“When he was here, I had someone to share decisions with. Now, I have to do everything alone.” – Judy

“He sacrifices his presence for us, but it’s still hard not having him around all the time.” – Judy

“My child always asks for his father. I don’t know how to explain that he won’t be home soon.” – Judy

“It’s really hard raising the children while my husband is away. He works abroad to support us, but I handle everything here. It’s difficult, but I have to stay strong.” – Smile

“There are nights when I cry. I feel so exhausted. But I have to be strong for my children.” – Smile

Sub-theme 3. Abandonment by a Partner

The third sub-theme under the first theme was the “abandonment by a partner.” The reason for abandonment was either voluntary or challenging circumstances. The participants disclosed that the remaining parents faced unexpected single parenthood when their partner left. This sub-theme addressed the emotional, financial, and psychological challenges that follow abandonment. Some solo parents were left behind by their partners due to a paramour.

“She abandoned us. I could not find the best words to utter while explaining to my kids.” – Marko

“I prayed she would come back. Now, I realized that I could do this alone.” – Marko

“When my wife left me, I felt lost. How could I raise my four kids alone?” – Marko

“My job as a teacher provides some stability for my family. It still feels like it is not enough. Being a solo parent is tough.” – Marko

Sub-theme 4. Loss of a Partner

The fourth sub-theme under the first theme was the “loss of a partner.” Death could bring unending pain of grief. The loss of a partner or spouse could lead to solo parenting. This sub-theme captured how the participants cope with the loss of their partners. It also includes the experiences of transition to the dual role of mother and father. One of the participants disclosed that losing a partner increases the psychological burden of solo parenting.

“I was not prepared for this situation. In a blink of an eye, everything changed.” – Paul

“The hardest part is trying to keep life normal for my kids as if nothing happened” – Paul

“When my wife passed away, I doubted if I could handle this. I had never experienced raising kids on my own.” – Paul

“I did everything to make sure my children wouldn’t feel less love and care than when their mother was still alive.” – Paul

Theme 2. Encounters in Solo Parenting

Solo parenting arises with distinctive encounters. These struggles include financial constraints and emotional and physical exhaustion. This theme delves into the day-to-day encounters of solo parents and their multiple responsibilities. Sub-themes include balancing work and parenting, and physical and emotional exhaustion.

Sub-theme 1. Balancing Work and Parenting

Solo parents often struggle to juggle employment and childcare without the support of a partner. This sub-theme focused on the time constraints,

work-life balance challenges, and sacrifices made to provide for their children and was substantiated by the literature of Leonard et al., 2023 and Lareu, 2015.

"I feel trapped between work and raising my child." – Paul

"I have no choice but to find a way to balance everything." – Marko

"Sometimes I feel like I have no time for myself. But for my child, I'll do everything." – Judy

"It's like one person can't do both—work and take care of a child. Sometimes I have patients to attend to, but I don't want to neglect my child either." – Alexa

"I work from home, but sometimes just being present isn't enough. I need to make quality time for my child despite my work." – Paul

"I once hired a house helper to take care of my child. I regretted it. She neglected my child. My child was always hungry and had bruises every time I came home from work. Now, it is difficult for me to trust others to take care of my daughter." – Alexa

Economic instability, such as unemployment or low income, can exacerbate the encounters faced by solo parents. These situations could make it difficult for them to provide for their children's needs (Leonard et al., 2023). Solo parents often struggle with a lack of personal time due to the constant pressures of childcare and responsibilities at home and work. The consuming need to manage these tasks alone leaves little room for self-care, contributing to high stress levels and impacting their well-being and mental health. Studies revealed that it is important to find ways to recharge oneself. These include scheduling personal time, seeking support from family or friends, and prioritizing self-care (Leonard et al., 2023, cited in Lareu, 2015).

Sub-theme 2. Emotional and Physical Exhaustion

The stress of single-handedly raising children can lead to burnout. This sub-theme explored the overwhelming mental, emotional, and physical toll on solo parents, as well as their perseverance

in providing for their families, supported by the studies of Abaniel et al. (2024) and Kareem et al. (2024).

"I just want to rest, but I can't because I still have a child to take care of." – Alexa

"At first, I didn't know how I would get through this, but I have to stay strong." – Paul

"It's not just physical but also emotional exhaustion. Even when you just want to rest, you can't because you have children to care for." – Marko

"Sometimes I cry out of fear that I can't do this. But I need to be strong because my kids have no one else to rely on." – Judy

"I always remind myself not to break down. This is for my children." – Smile

Single parents often face financial instability, making it difficult to meet their children's basic needs (Kareem et al., 2024). With the responsibilities of two parents falling on one, solo parents often prioritize their children's needs over self-care. Balancing work, household chores, and childcare can lead to chronic fatigue, disrupted sleep, and physical strain. The absence of support further exacerbates these challenges, affecting their overall well-being (Abaniel et al., 2024).

Theme 3. Coping Strategies and Digital-Age Support Systems

Solo parents rely on different coping mechanisms, such as family support and self-care. This theme delves into how solo parents manage stress, adapt to their circumstances, and seek support to navigate their parenting journey.

Sub-theme 1. Seeking Family Support

Many solo parents rely on extended family for emotional, financial, or childcare support. This sub-theme discussed the role of family members in alleviating the burdens of solo parenting.

"If not for my family, I wouldn't be able to handle this." – Judy

"I ask for help from my parents and siblings. I'm not ashamed to ask for support because I need it." – Marko

"My parents help babysit my child when I have classes." – Judy

"Without my mother, my situation would be difficult. She helps me in taking care of my child when I am doing my rounds at the hospital." – Alexa

"I thought I could do everything alone. I realized how important a support system is. I am grateful for my sibling, who helps take care of my child when I have work." – Paul

"I am thankful to my parents. Even though they don't live with us, they support me financially and emotionally. They give me guidance when I have problems with my child." – Judy

Sub-theme 2. Emotional Resilience and Self-Care

To sustain their well-being, solo parents develop coping mechanisms such as self-care, emotional resilience, and community engagement. This sub-theme focused on the approaches they use to preserve their psychological health.

"I have to be strong for my kids, even if I'm falling apart inside." – Marko

"I have to stay strong, even on nights when I feel like giving up. Knowing that my children need me gives me strength." – Smile

"I make sure to find time for myself, even if it's just a little. Listening to my favorite music or taking a walk helps me avoid burnout." – Marko

"I find hobbies that help relieve my stress. Exercising and even crying, when necessary, help me cope." – Paul

"I realized that if I don't take a break, even for a little while, I get sick faster and feel worse. It's hard, but I have to make time for myself." – Smile

"I teach myself to find joy in small things. Drinking coffee in the morning, listening to music. These feel like therapy to me." – Paul

Despite these challenges, many single parents demonstrate resilience and seek support from family and friends to ensure the overall being of their children (Leonard et al., 2023).

Sub-theme 3. Technology as a Coping and Survival Tool

Solo parents integrate technology into their daily lives to juggle parenting, work, and financial responsibilities. From online consultations to remote work and digital financial tools, technology has significantly helped them cope and stay connected.

"As a doctor and a solo parent, balancing my profession and childcare is tough. However, with telemedicine, I can consult with patients from home. I earn while still being present for my child." – Alexa

"I do not have a permanent job since I am a full-time housekeeper. Through online selling, I help with household expenses while taking care of my three kids. My husband sends support, but at least I have extra income." – Smile

"As a tutor, online platforms help me find students. I can set my schedule, so I have time for my child. Even though I take care of my child alone, I don't feel too pressured because my job is flexible." – Judy

"I struggled a lot when my partner left us. Raising four children alone is difficult. But through online resources, I learned how to manage finances and create classroom-friendly online tutorials for extra income." – Marko

"I'm grateful that VA (virtual assistant) jobs exist. Because of this, I don't have to leave home for work. After losing my wife, I've raised our two children alone. With online work, I can earn while focusing on them." – Paul

"With mobile banking and GCash, I can now manage our finances more easily. I no longer have to leave the house just to pay bills or send money." – Marko

"Parenting apps are a huge help. They remind me of my child's vaccines, track my budget, and even offer advice for solo parents like me." – Judy

Theme 4. Reflections on Solo Parenthood

Beyond the struggles, solo parents reflect on their journey and the personal growth that comes with raising children alone. This theme revealed their realizations, resilience, and outlook on the future.

Sub-theme 1. Finding Strength in Parenting

Despite the difficulties, solo parents draw strength from their children, finding fulfillment in the responsibilities of parenthood. This sub-theme revealed the moments that inspire and empower them.

"The path of a solo parent is not an easy road. I realized that I have become stronger and a complete parent." – Paul

"All the sacrifices are worth it." – Marko

"No matter how hard it gets, my child gives me strength. I keep in mind that I will not let her down." – Alexa

"My children give me the reason to keep going." – Judy

"Solo parenting is hard, but I see a mother's strength in myself. When my child goes to school with a smile, I know I've done something right." – Smile

Sub-theme 2. Acceptance and Moving Forward

Over time, many solo parents learn to accept their situation and start focusing on building a better life for themselves and their children. This sub-theme looks at how they began to heal, grow, and find new hope.

"Every day, I remind myself that I need to move forward. My husband is not here. I should take care of my child alone." – Judy

"It was hard to accept that I had to raise my child alone. Looking ahead is better than holding on to the past." – Paul

"Before, I did not know how to start over. Now, I kept a positive mindset." – Marko

"What matters to me now is what I can still do to help my child succeed." – Marko

"There were nights that I cried due to exhaustion. I must be strong for my children."
– Smile

5. Conclusion

Solo parenting presents situations that demand considerable emotional, financial, and social adaptation. This study revealed that the participants experienced economic instability, emotional distress, and difficulties in managing childcare at home and work responsibilities. Despite these encounters, solo parents showed strength and regained ways to cope. The value of social support, personal perseverance, and access to community and technological resources were evident in this study.

Concerns about economic aspects were prevalent among the participants. Solo parents strained to afford the basic needs of their offspring and hold stable employment. Emotional distress was another significant theme, with participants reporting feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and exhaustion due to the absence of a co-parent. However, strong support networks, including extended family, friends, and government assistance, helped mitigate some of these difficulties.

Technology emerged as a coping and survival tool for solo parents. Digital platforms gave them ways to find work, earn money from home, manage finances, and get parenting advice. Things like telemedicine, online selling, freelance jobs, mobile banking, and parenting apps helped them handle daily life and responsibilities more effectively.

From the conclusions of the study, the researchers proposed the following recommendations to be initiated and undertaken. Solo parents need stronger support through financial and livelihood programs. Services like accessible daycare, flexible employment, and affordable housing may help assist in their financial burden. More so, all sectors in government, and non-government organizations may provide or impart practical financial literacy programs. This literacy program may benefit solo

parents and other individuals in managing their financial resources wisely.

Teaching solo parents how to use digital tools may help them find online jobs and start-up small businesses. Affordable internet, gadgets, and apps may make it easier for solo parents to earn, save, and get medical help online or at the tip of their fingers.

Community-based counseling and support groups may be a benefit to solo parents in dealing with distress and emotional struggles. Seminars and workshops on mental health may also help them in coping with social judgment and expectations. Online support groups and accessible mental health services may give solo parents a safe space to share and get help.

Employers should treat solo parents fairly when hiring and give them equal chances to grow in their careers. Flexible work hours, work-from-home options, and the implementation of special leave for solo parents can help them manage work and childcare. The government and private groups can support workplaces that offer functional setups for solo parents and their children.

Government offices, workplaces, and schools should include programs that support solo parents in their Gender and Development

(GAD) efforts. These can include pushing for better policies. A training that respects gender differences and raises awareness to fight stigma and support solo parents and their families.

Schools and childcare centers should create welcoming spaces for children of solo parents. Workshops and learning materials about solo parenting should be easily accessible to help parents support their children's growth. Online learning tools and parenting apps can also help solo parents look after their kids.

Future research can investigate how solo parenting affects both parents and children over time, especially in terms of emotions, relationships, and ideas about gender roles. It would also help to study how well current programs and policies are working in supporting solo parents.

Solo parents raising preschool-aged children encounter challenges that call for holistic and inclusive responses. Their needs require coordinated support from government programs, community services, workplace policies, and educational initiatives. When solo parents are surrounded by support and treated fairly, solo parents and their children have a better chance at a stable and healthy life.

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8. Author Declaration

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study. The content of this manuscript is original.