

Familial, Educational, and Economic Values and Experiences of Single Parents

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Abstract- This study employed a descriptive-analytical design using both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Its main objective is to analyze the familial, educational, and economic values and experiences of single parents. The instruments used were researcher-made questionnaire, focus group discussion guide and in-depth interview guide. The questionnaire was disseminated to 393 respondents. Eleven single parents attended the focus group discussion and 12 single parents were in-depth interviewed in their residence and work places. Based on the result, single parents view familial, educational and economic values as moderately important values for them to exercise. However, they consider familial values as the most pressing among the three. Single parents prioritize the welfare of their children before anything else. Single parents also have fair and balanced experiences in terms of child rearing practices, time management, financial management and self-image perception. Among the four, the highest rated experience where they struggle the most is on financial management and self-image perception. Their usual coping mechanism is spending quality time with their children followed by keeping themselves busy at work or at home. In conclusion, single parents view familial, educational and economic values as important values to imbue. Their family is their major concern and providing for their needs is a primary priority. Single parents strive to sustain the education of their children to make them self-sufficient. Most of the single parents are still in deep pain and longing, but they remain positive in life.

Keywords- economic values, educational values, familial values, single parents.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study employed a descriptive-analytical design using both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Its main objective is to analyze the familial, educational, and economic values and experiences of single parents in the province of Capiz. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of the single parents in terms of sex, age, place of residence, religious affiliation, educational attainment, occupation, estimated monthly family income, number of children, number of years as single parent and classification as a single parent?

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2. What are the familial, educational and economic values of the respondents?
3. What are the experiences of the respondents as single parents in terms of child rearing practices, time management, financial management and self-image perception?
4. How do the respondents cope with the problem of being a single parent?

This study hypothesized that socio demographic characteristics are significant predictors of familial, educational, and economic values and experiences of the respondents; and, there is a significant difference in the values and experiences of the respondents when they are classified according to their place of residence.

This study is anchored on the Symbolic Interactionist theory as explained by Klein and White (1996). The theory focuses on the idea of how value systems are shared. It explains the phenomena of how things or events are interpreted by actors, in other words, people do what they do based on their beliefs. Thus, from a Symbolic Interactionist point of view, one's value of things, such as education, money or family, is highly influenced by their environment and experiences.

Statistical Tools

The statistical tools used to analyze the data are frequency, percentage, mean, stepwise multiple regression and t-test. The level of significance for statistical result was set at alpha 0.05. All statistical data were computer processed.

II. METHODOLOGY

The instruments used were researcher-made questionnaire, focus group discussion guide and in-depth interview guide. The questionnaire was disseminated to 393 respondents all throughout the province. Eleven single parents attended the focus group discussion and 12 single parents were in-depth interviewed in their residence and work places.

III. FINDINGS

Socio-demographic and Values of Single Parents

Based on the result, it has been found out that most of the single parents are female, middle aged (34 – 49 years old), rural dweller, Roman Catholic, high school graduate, employed, has low monthly family income, with few children (1 - 3 children), has been a single parent for ten years or below and a widow.

Single parents treat familial values as a moderately important value including its indicators which are parenting,

family ties, spirituality and respect. Among the indicators, parenting is seen as the most important area to be practised and enhanced by single parents.

Educational values is also deemed as moderately important value by the respondents including its indicators in terms of aspiration, self-esteem, outlook towards education and decisiveness. Respondents strongly believe that these are moderately important areas to be considered by single parents in terms of education. Among the indicators, outlook towards education is rated as the highest due to the fact that single parents view education as a necessity in uplifting their social economic status and gain a respected reputation in the community.

Single parents also consider economic values as another moderately important value to be possessed including its indicators in terms of lifestyle, work ethic, security and social status sensitivity. Single parents believe that they have to place a thorough consideration on the following area so as they could practice wisely necessary values toward the improvement of their economic status.

Single parents view familial, educational and economic values as moderately important values for them to exercise. However, they consider familial values as the most pressing among the three. Single parents prioritize the welfare of their children before anything else. They are their motivating reason to work and to live. Giving them the best in life such as good education, food and shelter have become their passion since they are the focal point of their lives. Table 1 shows this result.

TABLE 1

VALUES OF SINGLE PARENTS

Values	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Familial Values		
Parenting	3.92	MI
Family Ties	3.83	MI
Spirituality	3.91	MI
Respect	3.49	MI
Grand Mean	3.79	MI
Educational Values		
Aspiration	3.62	MI
Self-esteem	3.62	MI
Outlook Towards Education	4.11	MI
Decisiveness	3.65	MI
Grand Mean	3.75	MI
Economic Values		
Lifestyle	3.55	MI
Work Ethic	3.97	MI
Security	3.98	MI
Social Status	3.63	MI
Sensitivity	3.63	MI
Grand Mean	3.78	MI

Legend: MI – Moderately important

Table 1. Mean scores of the values of single parents
Experiences of Single Parents

Single parents also have fair, even and balanced experiences in terms of child rearing practices, time management, financial management and self-image perception. They stand on a balanced ground of not too poor and not too excellent experiences. Among the four, the highest rated experience is on financial management and self-image perception. However, the reported lowest rated case of experience is on time management. Table 2 shows this result.

TABLE II

EXPERIENCES OF SINGLE PARENTS

Experiences	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Child rearing practices	3.38	Fair
Time management	3.19	Fair
Financial management	3.40	Fair
Self-image perception	3.39	Fair

Table 2. Mean Scores of the Experiences of Single Parents

Coping Mechanism of Single Parents

Single parents also employ varied coping mechanism suitable to their personal preference in order to recuperate and recover from their painful experiences. The highest noted coping mechanism is spending quality time with their children followed by keeping themselves busy at work or at home. The least favored coping mechanism is playing mah-jong and other card games and taking anti-stress medicine. Table 3 shows this result.

TABLE III

COPING MECHANISM

Statement	Mean	Rank
Spending quality time with my children	4.16	1
Keeping myself busy at work or at home	3.64	2
Praying and attending church activities	3.63	3
Raising pets/animals	3.15	4
Day dreaming	2.73	5
Socializing with friends	2.69	6
Reading pocketbooks, magazines, comics, etc.	2.53	7
Going to the parlor/spa	1.87	8
Playing mah-jong, card games, etc.	1.18	9
Taking anti-stress pills	1.06	10

Table 3. Ranking of the coping mechanism employed by single parents

Predictors and Differences of Values and Experiences of Single Parents

In answer to the postulated first hypothesis, the result implied that only socio-demographic characteristics in terms of place of residence, occupation and estimated monthly

family income are the predictors of familial values. Results also indicate that occupation, estimated monthly family income and number of children are significant predictors of educational values. As for the economic values, only occupation and number of children are significant predictors. As for experiences, data shows that sex, place of residence and number of children are the significant predictor of the experiences of the single parents.

On the second hypothesis, results showed that there is significant difference on the familial values of single parents residing in urban and rural areas and none on educational and economic values and experiences as shown in the table below. This result could indicate that single parents from the urban and rural possess varied belief in familial values. Urban dwellers might be more immune or indifferent to the situation since it is already a rampant situation in the city. Table 4 presents this result.

TABLE IV
DIFFERENCE IN THE VALUES AND EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS
WHEN CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Variables	Mean	Mean	
(2tailed)	Sig.	Difference	t-value
Probability			
Familial Values			
Urban	3.68		
2.319	0.024*	0.11	s
Rural	3.80		
Educational Values			
Urban	3.77		
0.093	0.926	0.00	ns
Rural	3.77		
Economic Values			
Urban	3.76		
0.353	0.726	-0.02	ns
Rural	3.78		
Experiences			
Urban	3.36		
0.826	0.413	-0.05	ns
Rural	3.42		

Legend: * s = significant @ alpha 0.05
ns = not significant

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, single parents view familial, educational and economic values as important values to imbue. Findings in this study made us realize that familial values is the most

pressing and prioritized value of a single parent. Their family is their major concern and providing for their needs is a primary priority. Single parents view their family as their refuge and they exert all effort to protect and prevent it from encountering another painful experience. Single parents strive to sustain the education of their children to make them self-sufficient. This could be their means of safeguarding their own future knowing that their children would someday take care of them. Single parents experienced difficulties in raising the children especially in time management. Learning to adjust and taking up both the role of the both parents is the hardest part that they have to endure. Most of the single parents are still in deep pain, guilt and longing, but they try to make the most by looking at the positive side of life.

With the ever increasing number of single parents in the present society, it is high time for our government to extend relief and grants in them just like in other countries. They are, after all, an integral part of our society. Social stigma attached to single parenthood should also be dissipated if not totally eliminated by providing sensitivity awareness to the schools and communities through gender and development programs.

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