Work performance and quality of home and family life of solo family providers in HEIs

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ABSTRACT

Managing work and personal life is a complex task. It involves figuring out how to separate and balance one's work life from personal life. This study looked into how satisfied solo family providers working in higher education institutions (HEIs) in a province in the Philippines were with their job performance and their family life at home. The study focused on 63 solo family providers who were carefully chosen for their crucial roles in four HEIs. The findings showed that these individuals were very pleased with both their job performance and their family life. Additionally, there was a strong and positive link between how happy they were with their jobs and how happy they were with their family life at home. Achieving a balance between work and personal life helps them to do well in their jobs and have satisfying and peaceful personal lives, which is good for both them and their families. Therefore, HEIs should create and offer specific programs to help solo family providers balance their work and personal lives better. These programs could include options for flexible work schedules, the ability to work from home, and access to counseling services.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in solo-parent households in the Philippines (Abing, 2018). This demographic change is marked by an increasing number of families where one parent, often the mother or father, is solely responsible for their children's upbringing and financial support (Nomaguchi and Milkie, 2020). This change in family structure reflects a broader societal shift (Reisch, 2013). It highlights the need for a deeper understanding of individuals' unique challenges and experiences in these solo family provider roles, especially within the specific context of higher education institutions in the Philippines (Alampay, 2014). In the higher education institution (HEI) environment, solo family providers embark on a multifaceted and demanding journey that necessitates a delicate balancing act (Machika and Johnson, 2015). They are resolutely committed to pursuing demanding careers within the academic realm (Reisch, 2013). These careers often involve roles as educators, researchers, or administrators, where the expectations for excellence in teaching, groundbreaking research, and efficient administration are exceptionally high (Dorsch et al., 2019). These professionals are not merely employees but also stewards of knowledge entrusted with shaping the future of the academic landscape (Kamberidou, 2020). On the other end of this tightrope, solo family providers are equally devoted to fulfilling their family responsibilities. These responsibilities extend beyond financial support to encompass a profound emotional and caregiving role within their households (Masterson and Hoobler, 2015). They shoulder nurturing their children's growth, maintaining a harmonious family environment, and providing emotional support during challenging times (Khalid and Singal, 2023). These responsibilities are not just obligations but are rooted in a deep love and commitment to their families' welfare and development.

The complexity of this balancing act cannot be overstated (Wattis et al., 2013). Solo family providers must navigate a demanding professional terrain characterized by rigorous academic standards, tight deadlines, and the relentless pursuit of knowledge and innovation (Kamberidou, 2020). Simultaneously, they are entrusted with the critical task of ensuring the stability and happiness of their families, a responsibility that entails countless acts of care, attention, and sacrifice (Lowe, 2016).

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This intricate interplay between their professional and familial roles can lead to many challenges (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013). It involves the efficient management of time and the emotional resilience to thrive in both domains (Walsh, 2016b). It requires making difficult choices when conflicts inevitably arise between work and family commitments. It involves seeking the support and understanding of workplace and family environments to harmonize these dual roles (Adisa et al., 2017).

Extensive research across various contexts and settings consistently underscores the profound implications of work-family conflict (Moreira et al., 2019; Labrague and Obeidat, 2022). It is a multidimensional and intricate phenomenon that emerges when the demands of one's job clash with the responsibilities tied to family life (Rabenu et al., 2017). Its consequences manifest in various complex ways, including time pressures, emotional exhaustion, and role strain. These repercussions can profoundly impact an individual's psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life (Obrenovic et al., 2020). Understanding the complex interactions between work and family is essential for creating methods to reduce work-family conflict and improve individuals' well-being, which is the focus of this study. By gaining insights into these relationships, we can develop effective policies and support systems tailored for solo family providers who are striving to succeed in both their professional and personal lives. This research aims to evaluate how satisfied solo family providers in HEIs are with their work performance. It also explores their satisfaction with their home and family life. Additionally, the study examines the strength of the connection between work satisfaction and the quality of home and family life among these individuals.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

This descriptive study investigated how satisfied solo family providers in HEIs in a province of Iloilo, Philippines, are with their work performance and their home and family life. This research method is valuable as it can provide new insights and understandings. It helps in gaining a comprehensive view of the factors involved, discovering new causal relationships, and improving how problems are understood (Siedlecki, 2020). Furthermore, this approach is effective for gathering information that can be used to develop hypotheses and identify connections.

2.2. Study respondents

The study focused on 63 solo family providers who hold permanent positions in four selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These individuals were chosen through purposive sampling, targeting only regular or permanent faculty and administrative personnel who are solo family providers. The demographic composition of the group varied: 12.70% (8 individuals) were between 20 and 29 years old, 25.40% (16) between 30 and 39 years, 30.16% (19) between 40 and 49 years, and 31.74% (20) were 50 years and older. In terms of gender, 76.19% (48) were female, while 23.81% (15) were male. The marital status of respondents was also diverse, with 15.87% (10) single, 33.33% (21) married, 20.64% (13) separated, and 30.16% (19) widowed.

Prior to distributing the survey instruments, the researcher performed a brief orientation with the respondents, elucidating the study's aims and purpose. The principles of anonymity and confidentiality were also emphasized. Furthermore, free involvement was highlighted, recognizing their right to withdraw if their boundaries were violated. The participants were also notified about the potential hazards and advantages linked with their participation in the survey. In addition, they received detailed instructions regarding the appropriate protocols for disposing of data.

2.3. Research instrument

Data collection utilized a questionnaire adapted from Marmol (2019), which underwent validation from the three experts to ensure content localization and contextualization. Reliability testing was not conducted as it was adapted from a study conducted in the Philippines. The questionnaire contained inquiries about personal information, work performance satisfaction, and home and family life. The responses for satisfaction with work performance and satisfaction with home and family life were interpreted using a 3-point Likert scale: very satisfied (2.34-3.00), neutral (1.67-2.33), and very dissatisfied (1.00-1.66).

3. Results

3.1. Degree of satisfaction with work performance

Table 1 indicates that the respondents were very satisfied with their work performance in HEIs) with an average score of 2.44 and a standard deviation of 0.54. This high mean score reflects a strong and positive sentiment among the respondents, suggesting they feel content, fulfilled, and gratified with their roles within the institution. The low standard deviation suggests minimal variation in satisfaction levels among the respondents, indicating that most of them share a similar high level of satisfaction. This finding supports the research by Meier et al. (2016), which found that employed single mothers tend to experience higher levels of happiness. However, the study by Van Gasse and Mortelmans (2020) highlighted significant

challenges that single mothers encounter at work, offering a more complex view of their experiences in this context.

The findings suggest a positive professional fulfillment within the academic environment. Primarily, the flexibility that HEIs afford in terms of work hours and remote work options proves to be a pivotal element (Butcher and Rose-Adams, 2015). This flexibility accommodates the exigencies of a demanding academic profession and empowers solo parents. It deftly navigates the intricate balance between their career ambitions and familial responsibilities (Elliott et al., 2013). The ability to tailor work schedules to the needs of their children establishes a conducive environment where solo parents can seamlessly attend to their parental duties while meeting the demands of their professional roles (Kangas et al., 2023).

Furthermore, HEIs distinguish themselves by cultivating an understanding and accommodation, where the unique challenges faced by solo parents are actively addressed (Moreau and Kerner, 2015). The institutional recognition of the responsibilities shouldered by solo parents results in the implementation of supportive policies. Hence, it significantly augments their job satisfaction (Moreau and Kerner, 2015). Parental leave and childcare assistance resonate as tangible manifestations of this support. This facilitates a conducive environment for them to thrive both personally and professionally (Gabriel et al., 2022).

Moreover, the inclusive and diverse nature intrinsic to many HEIs plays a pivotal role in shaping a work environment that actively fosters understanding and acceptance (Gaisch et al., 2020). This philosophy serves as a countermeasure to the prevailing stigma that solo parents might encounter in more conventional workplace settings (Guo and Zhu, 2023). By embracing diversity, HEIs create a supportive atmosphere that transcends societal stereotypes and biases. As a result, it contributes to elevated job satisfaction among solo parents (Arditti et al., 2019). This positive and accepting environment, in turn, catalyzes exemplary work performance (Perrigino et al., 2018).

In a broader context, the pursuit of higher education within these institutions aligns seamlessly with the academic and personal growth goals that solo parents often harbor for both themselves and their children (Mahoney et al., 2021). The educational environment provides a unique platform for solo parents to instill a sense of purpose and fulfillment, not only in their personal lives but also in their professional endeavors (Legarde, 2023). This alignment of personal aspirations with the overarching goals of HEIs serves as a motivational force, propelling solo parents toward achieving excellence in their roles within the academic sphere (Chikoko et al., 2015). In summation, the confluence of flexible work arrangements, supportive policies, an inclusive environment, and alignment with personal aspirations creates a distinctive ecosystem within HEIs that fosters unparalleled job satisfaction

and facilitates exceptional work performance among solo parents (Lin et al., 2023). This equilibrium validates the importance of inclusivity and flexibility in the workplace. It also serves as a testament to the transformative potential of higher education institutions in reshaping professional narratives for solo parents (Boldureanu et al., 2020).

3.2. Degree of satisfaction with home and family life

Table 2 shows that the respondents were generally very satisfied (M=2.53, SD=0.55) with their home and family life. A higher mean score reflects a greater degree of satisfaction. The standard deviation indicates a slight variation among respondents' satisfaction levels. The data points tend to cluster closely around the mean score. It implies a consensus among respondents regarding their high level of satisfaction with their home and family life. This positive outlook contrasts with the findings of Dagupon and Garin's (2022) phenomenological study, which uncovered mental and emotional distress among solo parents. The challenges identified in their research, including heightened responsibilities and feelings of betrayal, paint a contrasting picture to the overall contentment reflected in the current study. Furthermore, Stack and Meredith (2018) noted financial difficulties among solo parents due to a lack of a regular income source, resulting in challenging compromises to meet basic needs.

Findings can be further elucidated by examining the multifaceted nature of solo parents' experiences. Beyond the individual sense of independence and self-efficacy, they often become adept multitaskers, juggling various responsibilities with finesse (Dunn et al., 2022). The necessity to manage both the emotional well-being and practical needs of their children hones their organizational skills, time management, and adaptability (Kapoor et al., 2021). This capability contributes to a heightened sense of control and competence. Hence, it reinforces the satisfaction derived from successful single parenthood (Ng et al., 2014).

Moreover, the strong bond forged between solo parents and their children stems from the shared experiences of triumph over adversity. It is also nurtured by the undivided attention and focus that they can provide (Freeman and Dodson, 2014). In contrast to dual-parent households, where attention may be divided between partners, they often dedicate exclusive time and energy to their children, fostering deeper emotional connections (Adisa et al., 2021). This one-on-one interaction lays the foundation for open communication, trust, and understanding. This goes beyond the conventional parent-child relationship (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2018). The resultant familial harmony becomes a source of joy for both the solo parent and the children. Thus, it contributes significantly to the satisfaction within the household (Stavrova and Fetchenhauer, 2015).

Table 1: Degree of satisfaction with work performance

Work factors	M	SD	Verbal description
Salary or pay	2.40	0.55	VS
Number of hours worked per week	2.37	0.58	VS
Work schedule	2.46	0.50	VS
Flexibility of work schedule	2.49	0.56	VS
Fringe benefits	2.41	0.53	VS
Working conditions/ physical environment	2.44	0.53	VS
Job security	2.60	0.49	VS
Work policies and regulations	2.48	0.50	VS
Meal and break time	2.57	0.59	VS
Parking arrangements	2.40	0.61	VS
Amount of commuting time	2.38	0.58	VS
Work status	2.48	0.53	VS
Amount of energy required on the job	2.44	0.53	VS
Friendships at work	2.57	0.53	VS
Support of supervisor/ management	2.49	0.56	VS
Opportunity to work independently	2.46	0.53	VS
Amount of control over how you do your job	2.37	0.55	VS
Variety of work tasks	2.38	0.55	VS
Opportunities for advancement	2.43	0.56	VS
Challenge of the Job	2.38	0.55	VS
Likelihood of transfer	2.25	0.47	N
Work expectations	2.35	0.65	VS
Composite	2.44	0.54	VS

VS: Very satisfied (2.34–3.00); N: Neutral (1.67–2.33); VD: Very dissatisfied (1.00–1.66)

Table 2: Degree of satisfaction with home and family life

Home and family factors	M	SD	Verbal description
Total family income	2.44	0.53	VS
Housing	2.46	0.53	VS
Household equipment	2.49	0.56	VS
Health of family members	2.62	0.58	VS
Personal health	2.54	0.62	VS
Emotional support from spouse	2.21	0.72	N
Emotional support from children	2.63	0.55	VS
Emotional support from relatives	2.56	0.53	VS
Emotional support from friends	2.48	0.56	VS
Services from community resources	2.40	0.55	VS
Child care	2.59	0.53	VS
Children's behavior	2.60	0.52	VS
Children's school performances	2.68	0.50	VS
Family schedule	2.56	0.53	VS
Time together as a family	2.65	0.54	VS
Amount of recreation and free time	2.46	0.59	VS
Amount of time for self	2.52	0.62	VS
Division of household duties	2.49	0.50	VS
Division of parenting responsibilities	2.48	0.62	VS
Communication among family members	2.54	0.56	VS
Family's ability to resolve conflict	2.57	0.53	VS
Family togetherness	2.62	0.55	VS
Sense of control over life events	2.51	0.56	VS
Family members' personal habits	2.54	0.50	VS
Quality of family's daily meal	2.60	0.49	VS
Method of handling budget	2.56	0.53	VS
Clothing	2.57	0.53	VS
Composite	2.53	0.55	VS

VS: Very satisfied (2.34–3.00); N: Neutral (1.67–2.33); VD: Very dissatisfied (1.00–1.66)

The absence of conflicts or negotiations with a partner further distinguishes solo-parent households. This allows for the establishment of a parenting style and household routine tailored to the specific needs of the family unit (Khalid and Singal, 2023). Their autonomy fosters consistency and provides a sense of personal identity, supporting their role as the primary nurturer and decision-maker within the family (Jacobs, 2023). The harmonious environment becomes a haven of stability, promoting emotional well-being and satisfaction for all family members (Ip, 2014).

In addition, the development of a robust support network is a crucial factor that amplifies the satisfaction of solo parents (Taylor and Conger, 2017). The connections formed with friends, family, and community resources serve as pillars of strength. This offers emotional support during challenging times and practical assistance when needed (Wald, 2020). These relationships create a sense of belonging, alleviating feelings of isolation and reinforcing the notion that they are not alone in their journey (Van Orden et al., 2021). As a result, the collective support from this network enhances their satisfaction and well-being, providing them with a sense of security and resilience (Pöllänen and Voutilainen, 2018).

Hence, community and social organizations should continue to strengthen the existing support networks for solo parents (Elliott et al., 2013). By investing in programs that facilitate the formation of connections among them, a more robust safety net can be established (Coles, 2015). This could involve workshops, peer support groups, or online forums. This provides a platform for sharing experiences, advice, and resources (Walsh, 2016a). Such

initiatives not only alleviate feelings of isolation but also contribute to the resilience and satisfaction of solo parents (McAuliffe et al., 2017).

3.3. Strength of relationship between satisfaction with work and quality home and family life

Table 3 indicates a strong and positive relationship (r=0.529) between the satisfaction with work by the solo family providers and their satisfaction with quality home and family life. This statistically significant relationship suggests that as satisfaction with work among solo family providers increases, there is a corresponding and considerable elevation in their satisfaction with the quality of their home and family life. The positive correlation coefficient implies a moderate to strong linear association between these variables. Several studies in organizational psychology and family studies have delved into similar associations, offering a foundation for comparison. For instance, a study conducted by Haar et al. (2014) on several individual outcomes across cultures reported a positive correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Their findings echoed the notion that contentment in one's professional role is linked to a heightened sense of well-being in one's personal life (Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2014). Additionally, research by Taylor and Conger (2017) on the work-life balance among solo mothers highlighted the significance of a positive work environment in contributing to life satisfaction. Collectively, these studies support the idea that contentment at work positively resonates with satisfaction in personal and family life.

This fulfilling and satisfying work environment promotes a positive mindset (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015). When solo family providers experience satisfaction in their professional roles, it extends beyond the workplace and positively influences their familial interactions (Jyoti and Kour, 2017; Marques and Berry, 2021; Mishra and Bharti, 2023). Moreover, job satisfaction can indicate a sense of accomplishment, self-worth, and financial stability. These are pivotal factors in creating a supportive and nurturing home environment. Furthermore, the skills and coping mechanisms developed can spill over into one's personal life, contributing to effective problem-solving and communication within the family (Putra et al., 2022). The reciprocal nature of the relationship is also plausible – a supportive home environment can enhance job satisfaction by providing the necessary emotional and logistical support (Mas-Machuca et al., 2016). Thus, understanding and leveraging this relationship can inform targeted interventions and policies to support solo family providers in achieving a more harmonious balance between their professional and familial responsibilities.

Table 3: Results of relationship between satisfaction with work and quality home and family life

Variables	r_s	Degree of relationship
Satisfaction with work performance versus Satisfaction with quality home and family life	0.529	Strong

±0.50 to ±1.00: Strong relationship; ±0.30 to ±0.49: Moderate relationship; ±0.10 to ±0.29: Weak relationship; ±0.01 to ±0.09: Very weak relationship; r_s: Spearman's rank

4. Conclusion

The consistent and notably high levels of job satisfaction observed among solo family providers serve as a compelling testament to the HEIs' commendable success in fostering and maintaining a favorable work culture that prioritizes the needs of its employees. This accomplishment highlights the institution's steadfast commitment to prioritizing these workers' welfare and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the contentment observed among this significant group of professionals provides compelling evidence of the organization's profound dedication to fostering a workplace atmosphere that surpasses traditional norms. It encompasses cultivating a comprehensive, nurturing, and gratifying environment that acknowledges the significance of its workforce.

Solo family providers exhibit high satisfaction regarding their home and family life. The prevailing sense of satisfaction and accomplishment demonstrates the ability of these committed individuals to manage the complexities of their work and personal realms. This collective satisfaction is a testament to their ability to maintain a harmonious balance, enriching their welfare and family life. It is a positive reflection of their capacity to excel in their roles within HEIs and to craft and cherish fulfilling personal lives.

Findings establish a high and positive relationship between work satisfaction and quality home and family life. This correlation stresses the vital connection between these two critical dimensions of solo family providers. It affirms that when they experience high job satisfaction within HEIs, it profoundly enhances their overall satisfaction within their homes and families. This symbiotic relationship between work satisfaction and personal fulfillment accentuates the holistic nature of their lives and the importance of fostering a positive work environment that positively impacts their personal lives. Thus, HEIs can leverage this success to refine and expand existing support initiatives tailored for solo family providers. Investing in employee-centric policies, flexible work arrangements, and targeted resources can amplify dedication to maintaining a nurturing and gratifying work environment that continually acknowledges the unique significance of its diverse workforce. Future research could delve into the specific

mechanisms and initiatives that contribute most significantly to job satisfaction among solo family providers. Qualitative studies may uncover nuanced insights, while longitudinal research could explore the evolving dynamics of job satisfaction over time. Additionally, understanding the intersectionality of factors such as gender, socio-economic background, and job roles within this demographic could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of solo family providers. These insights can inform the development of interventions and policies that address the evolving needs of this workforce segment.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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