



WORK - LIFE INTEGRATION OF SOLO PROFESSIONAL WORKING MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT: *The influx of industrial revolution created many changes in society, in the family and the family life. The advent of industrialization coupled with the global economic and social development created rapid changes in the cultural setting. Many activities traditionally performed by the family and the woman in the home have been inevitably superseded by the introduction of labor-saving machines or technologically aided tools thus providing the woman with time to engage in full part-time jobs outside the home. This study focuses on the solo professional working mothers in a rural setting specifically seeking to identify their personal and work profile and describe their life as a solo parent as well the effects of their employment and/or the practice of their profession on the different aspects of their motherhood I. A sample of 45 solo professional working mothers who have at least one or two children and have resided in the place for at least one year were taken as the primary sources of data for the study. A descriptive normative method of research was used. Utilizing the data gathered from the respondents, results of this study showed that the respondents' career beneficially affect their life in all aspects in the sense that the career serves as a deciding factor for them to plan their families. Considering the needs of time, having solo working mothers leaving their homes every day to spend the day at their workplace is but a common and natural. This study proved that there are advantages and benefits being derived in having professional solo mother in terms of the different dimensions mentioned in this study. However, it is important for the solo professional working mothers to grow professionally and personally by ensuring graduate courses and must possess the skill of proper time and resource management to promote smooth family relations.*

KEYWORDS: *solo professional working mothers, motherhood, career life, career women, descriptive-normative method, parent-teacher association (PTA)*

INTRODUCTION

The Philippine social order in today's contemporary system has apparently reached a milestone in transition. The volatile and fluid environment brought about by the influx of



ideas of the Western World and the neighboring Asian countries has sparked tremendous social changes in the Philippine family setting. Foremost among these are the advancement of science and technology, increase in population, industrialization, the idea of universal education and most interestingly, the changed status and role of the Filipino women.

Focused on the impact of the so called modernization of family setting in the professional perspective, it is noteworthy that the Filipino family has to catch up with the process of development as it responds to the demands of society particularly the needs of its members. It has to struggle harder in order to keep pace with the forces and modernization. Undeniably, the need of the family and the individual has increased to a certain extent thereby leaving the main provider in disarray and in a string of financial setbacks. Equally important is the fact that many things considered luxuries a few decades ago have become necessities today. The rise of standard of living, together with the educational standards and career opportunities are vital factors that cannot be discounted which certainly create certain changes in the family's patterns of living.

Not to be left out is the woman in the family. Modernization and the recognition of the changing role of women have pushed the Filipino woman like her counterparts in the world over into the frontiers of the socio-economic sphere. She has to work outside of the home to help her family catch up with an inflationary economy and survive in an increasingly competitive society particularly to support a child in her care.

In the article of Wilkinson, K. et al where they tried to question the dominant understanding of work–life balance or conflict as primarily a 'work–family' issue. They explored the experiences of managers and professionals who live alone and do not have children – a group of employees traditionally overlooked in work–life policy and research but, significantly, a group on the rise within the working age population. Semi-structured interviews with 36 solo-living managers and professionals were carried out in the UK, spanning a range of occupations. In addition to previously identified work–life issues, four themes emerged that were pressing for and specific to solo-living managers and professionals. These are articulated here as challenges and dilemmas relating to: assumptions about work and non-work time; the legitimacy of their work–life balance; lack of support connected to financial and emotional well-being; and work-based vulnerabilities.



Every parent is dreaming for their children to be happy in their lives. This simplest yet challenging desire of parents for their children maybe one of the toughest and most fulfilling jobs in the world and the one for which many individuals might feel the least prepared, there are challenges, needs, adversities, and other stresses that needed effort from parents as the building blocks of a family and of course, there is always an effect to their children and the whole harmony of the family as well.

The role that women perform in the society is complex and integral in almost every aspect of societal concern. The study of Adisa & Osabutey (2016) focused on the reality of working mothers experience and difficulties in achieving work-family balance because of the social restrictions that arise from parenting combined with career goals. The study explored on the various coping styles that are used by working mothers. It revealed findings on various coping strategies used by working mothers because of socio-cultural and institutional differences. The many roles women play in the community have never been gone unnoticed. Their participation in the community building, work progress and development, vital decisions about home, family and child-rearing would always come as part of the challenge women have to face squarely. As Grady, G., & McCarthy, A. M. (2008) puts in their findings of their study, the value of women are shaped despite competing priorities of work, personal and family life which is credited to the complex of work-related dynamics and personal factors.

Most working women's difficulty is juggling time between profession and household management. Lee and Seow (2001) have stressed in their study that as long as women's role in mothering continues to be their sole assignment, the struggle goes on especially when they have businesses to take care of. The work-family conflict in time management makes women's responsibilities getting in-between professional growth, being a spouse, being a mother, and being a homemaker. Many women in profession are faced with difficulties balancing profession and family life. Valk and Srinivasan (2011) emphasized in their study that married women are under great pressure in balancing work and personal lives like being a homemaker, wife, and mother.

In the study of Indian women professionals of Buddhapriya, S. (2009), women professionals always consider the impact of family responsibilities over career decisions. They are inhibited to rise to top positions in work because they always put the welfare of their



families as priorities. In any case these women professionals are taken in, they find out the work-life support they would require from employers to balance work and life in better manner. The women professional who are committed to family responsibilities hinder them from professional advancement. It is a general concept that female spouse should take care of the family responsibility and this greatly affects the career decisions of women professionals. That, it is also expected that women professionals should take responsibilities over their children which hinders them from advancing professionally. Another issue is the pressure for conforming to the societal norms because trading-offs or putting career first before family leads to social disapproval or rejection. Women professionals always consider work support benefits wherein they will be able to work at flexible timings and that they also have the luxury of additional support like child-care centers where they could leave their kids while at work.

The modern Filipino woman is no longer merely the proverbial personality behind man's success story. She has risen to her rightful place alongside men who displayed an amazing ability to manage a household, raise a family and carry on either a full time professional or occupation outside the home at the same time. She has created herself in the performance of her role as wife and mother and still assumes the provider role for the family together with the husband. These changes in the roles assumed by the working woman particularly the working mother in the home and in the world of work, undoubtedly affect her family life.

The aforementioned statistics clearly show that a new era for the Filipino women has begun.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study focuses on the solo professional working mothers in a rural setting. It sought to identify their personal and work profile and describe their life as a solo parent as well as the effects of their employment and/or practice of their professions on the different aspects of their motherhood. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the solo working mothers relative to the following:
 - 1.1 age
 - 1.2 educational attainment
 - 1.3 present occupation
 - 1.4 gross income



2. How do the solo professional working mothers describe their motherhood considering the following aspects:
 - 2.1 family structure/type/composition
 - 2.2 economic life
 - 2.3 children and child rearing
 - 2.4 education of children
 - 2.5 family relations
 - 2.6 social life
3. How do the solo working mother's employment and /or practice of their professions affect their life in terms of the above mentioned dimensions?

METHODOLOGY

The study used the descriptive-normative method of research. The descriptive statistics was used to summarize the profile of the respondents like percentages, frequency counts and mean. A questionnaire was utilized to gather information from the respondents which consisted of two parts: Part 1 on the profile of the respondents and Part II consisted of the questions pertinent to the study being covered such as how do the solo professional working mothers describe their life with regard to different aspects and how do the working mother's employment and /or practice of their professions greatly affect their life in terms of the different dimensions?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1.1: Distribution of respondents' profile in terms of age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	7	15.56
31-35	8	17.78
36-40	6	13.33
41-45	16	35.56
46-50	8	17.77
51-55	0	0.00
61-above	0	0.00
Total	45	100.00



Table 1.1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents profile in terms of age. The table shows that the highest frequency of sixteen (16) or 35.56 percent belong to the age bracket of 41-45 years old while the lowest frequency of six (6) or 13.33 percent of the respondents belong to 36-40 years old. The mean age of 41.27 years implies that majority of the respondents are in their middle age, hence, they are responsible and matured enough in decision-making on matters concerning their life and their work.

Table 1.2: Distribution of respondents' profile in terms of educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
College Graduate	24	53.33
With master's degree units	17	37.78
With master's degree	4	08.89
Total	45	100.00

This table reveals the respondents' profile in terms of educational attainment. As revealed, the highest frequency of twenty-four (24) or 53.33 percent is merely college graduates who finished courses that are greatly in demand today such as business administration and education. The data imply that most of the respondents have not pursued post-graduate courses hindering them to grow professionally.

Table 1.3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of respondents' profile in terms of present occupation

Present Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Government employee	40	88.89
Private employee	5	11.11
Total	45	100.00

The table describes the present occupation of the respondents. The respondents are comprised of forty (40) or 88.89 percent government employees while twenty (5) or 11.11



percent are employees in the private firms which imply that most of the respondents have stable jobs with the government service.

Table 1.4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of respondents' profile in terms of Gross Income

Gross Family Income	:	Frequency	:	Percentage
10,000 -20,000	:	23	:	51.11
21,000 -30,000	:	19	:	42.22
31,000 -40,000	:	3	:	06.67
Total	:	45	:	100.00

The respondents' gross income per month was shown in the table which the lowest bracket of 10,000-20,000 per month has the highest frequency of twenty-three (23) or 51.11 percent while the highest bracket of 31,000-40,000 has the lowest frequency of three (3) or 6.67 percent. This implies that the solo professional mothers can at least meet all their basic needs.

Table 2.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Family Composition/Structure of the Respondents

ITEMS	:	Frequency	:	Percentage
Aside from you and your children, who are the other members in the household?				
None	:	21	:	46.67
Parents and siblings	:	8	:	17.78
Distant relatives	:	7	:	15.56
Helpers	:	4	:	08.89
In-laws	:	3	:	06.66
Grandchildren	:	2	:	04.44
Do you have already married children?				
Yes	:	6	:	13.33
No	:	39	:	86.67
Where do they live?				
With parents	:	2	:	33.33
On their own	:	4	:	66.67



Right after having a child/ren, did you live
independently or with your parents?

With parents	:	24	:	53.33
On my own	:	21	:	46.67

Table 2.1 describes the respondents' family structure in terms of composition/structure. As revealed in the table twenty-one (21) or 46.67 percent do not have extended family members to support while the remaining twenty-four (24) have other members in the household which imply that the Filipino value of close-family ties and extended families are still prevailing among the respondents.

Table 2.2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Matters Concerning Family Economy

ITEMS	: Yes	: Percentage	: No	: Percentage
Do you have any other source of income?	: 20	: 44.44	: 25	: 55.56
Income from property	: 9	:	:	:
Business	: 11	:	:	:
Do you have inherited property?	: 27	: 60.00	: 18	: 40.00
Residential house	: 4	:	:	:
Residential Lot	: 12	:	:	:
Agricultural land	: 11	:	:	:
Do you have unmarried children who are already working?	: 6	: 13.33	: 39	: 86.67
Do you have savings?	: 33	: 73.33	: 12	: 26.67
Have you acquired additional property?	: 20	: 44.44	: 25	: 55.56

Table 2.2 gives information concerning the economy of the respondents' families in terms of income, inherited property and ownership of additional property. It can be gleaned from the table that twenty (20) or 44.44 percent have other sources of income, twenty-seven (27) or 60.00 percent have inherited property, six (6) or 13.33 percent have unmarried children who are already working and twenty (20) or 44.44 percent have acquired additional property. These data imply that most of the respondents, economically speaking, are sufficient enough having their basic and material needs being satisfied because of their income.



Table 2.3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on Matters Concerning Child Care and Rearing Practices

Practices	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Were your children born at home?	24	53.33	21	46.67
Did you allow your babies to crawl on the floor?	41	91.11	4	8.89
Do you allow your children to play with other children?	42	93.33	3	6.67
Do you allow your children to bring play-mates/friends to the house?	42	93.33	3	6.67
Are your children expected to do some household chores?	42	93.33	3	6.67
Do you allow your teen-age daughter to go out with male friends without chaperon?	16	35.56	29	64.44
Do you have certain beliefs in bathing your children such as bathing at night or Friday?	11	24.44	34	75.56

The respondents' child care and rearing practices are revealed in table 2.3 in which twenty-four (24) or 53.33 percent of the babies were born at home. In the process of growing up, most mothers allow their children to crawl on the floor; that they are allowed to play with other children and that they are allowed to bring their playmates to the house as well. Their children are also expected to do some household chores as reflected in table 2.3.

With regard to their children's teen-age life, sixty-four (29) or 64.44 percent do not allow their daughters to go out with male friends without chaperon. Eleven (11) or 24.44 percent have some beliefs about bathing of babies especially on Fridays. The result of this data imply that the child care and rearing practices of working mothers do not differ from the usual practices of other full time housewives/mothers.

Table 2.4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on Matters Concerning the Education of Children

Practices	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
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Do you supervise your child's study hour?	:	34	:	75.56	:	11	:	24.44
Do you know the TV program your children watch?	:	34	:	75.56	:	11	:	24.44
Do you attend Parent-Teachers Association meetings?	:	34	:	75.56	:	11	:	24.44

This table shows the solo parents' support to the education of their children. As shown in the table majority of the respondents have children who are going to school and looking at the data, it is implied that those children are very well supported in their studies having their solo parents being active in attending PTA meetings, supervising them in their study hours and monitoring them in watching TV programs.

Table 2.5: Frequency and Percentage Distribution on Matters Concerning mother and child Relationship

Items	:	Yes	:	Percentage	:	No	:	Percentage
Do your children usually talk to you when something happened nice to them?	:	35	:	77.78	:	10	:	22.22
Do your children enjoy spending most of their time with you?	:	36	:	80.00	:	9	:	20.00
Do you discuss your problems with your children?	:	8	:	17.78	:	37	:	82.22
Do you have domestic helpers?	:	25	:	55.56	:	20	:	44.44
Do you agree in hiring a helper who is related to you?	:	32	:	71.11	:	13	:	28.89

In terms of the solo mother and child relationships, this table 2.5 reveals that a smooth relationship exists between them as exemplified by the data in the table. It is also revealed in the table that the solo mother performs her roles as a mother to her children. The data imply that the respondents find no problem in maintaining a smooth relationship with their despite their being a solo working mother.

Table 2.6-1: Frequency and Rank Distribution of Social Life in terms of Occasions Celebrated by the Respondents



Occasions	Frequency	Rank
Birthdays	38	1
Baptism	19	2
Fiestas	16	3

With whom:

With family, close relatives and friends	33	1
With family only	4	2
With family and close relatives	3	3

Of the occasions celebrated by the families of the respondents, birthdays rank to be the first while fiestas as the least. The occasions are celebrated most often with family, close relatives and friends which implies that such occasions are being celebrated to serve as a reunion among family members, close relatives and friends.

Table 2.6-2: Frequency and Rank Distribution on the Forms of Recreation Indulged in by the Members of the Family

Recreation	Mother	Children	Rank
Viewing TV/Playing with gadgets	32	29	1
Reading books, magazines etc	25	23	2
Going to picnics/outing	14	13	3
Playing musical instruments	7	14	4
Attending concerts/watching movies	6	4	5
Playing indoor/outdoor games	2	5	6

The forms of recreation indulged in by the members of the families are listed in table 2.6-2 above. It reveals that viewing TV/playing with gadgets rank first which implies that such happens because of the presence of these media in almost every home while the last is playing indoor/outdoor games because of the expenses involved in it. This implies that the recreations indulged in by the families are being considered based on financial capacity of the families.



Table 3.1: Frequency and Rank Distribution for the Reasons Why the Respondents' Career Service as a Decisive Factor in Determining the Size of the Family

Items	Frequency	Rank
Time devoted to my work limits my time for my children	28	1
My career provides extra income enabling us to afford to buy some needed things	12	2
My career has nothing to do with the size of our family.	5	3

Table 3.1 gives the reasons why the respondents' career serve as a decisive factor in determining the size of the family. The table ranks "time devoted to my work limits my time for my children" implies that the respondents realize the multi roles that they have to perform, thus, there is a need for them to plan very well the size of their families.

Table 3.1: Frequency and Rank Distribution on the Effects of the Respondents' Career on Family Life in terms of Economic Life

Items	Frequency	Rank
What are the advantages of having your own income?		
Can help provide for the future	34	1
Can send children to good school	23	2
Improved housing	15	3
Can buy appliances	13	4
Can buy good clothes, pieces of jewelry, etc	10	5
Can help parents	7	6
Can give parties, go on picnics	6	7
Which of the following are made possible because of your being a working mother?		
Can help provide for the future	25	1
Can buy appliances	19	2
Can buy good clothes, pieces of jewelry, etc	16	3
Can send children to good school	13	4
Improved housing	12	5
Can go on picnics	10	6
Can afford to give parties on birthdays	8	7



Table 3.2 shows the effects of the respondents' career to the economic life of the families by ranking the advantages of having their own income and being a two-income family. It came out that "can help provide for the future" ranked first as the most beneficial effect which implies that the respondents' careers contribute so much to the economic well-being of the family.

Table 3.2: Frequency and Rank Distribution on the Effects of the Respondents' Career to Childcare Practices

Effects of Childcare Practices	Frequency	Rank
Limiting time with my children	16	1
Prevented me from breastfeeding my babies	14	2
Made me delegate to relative/yaya the care of my baby	11	3
Lessened my time in supervising their study hour	10	4
Prevented me from attending some of their school affairs	9	5
Helped me minimize scolding	8	6
Made me understand children better	7	7
Made me aware of children's rights	6	8

Table 3.2 shows the frequency and rank distribution on the effects of the respondents' career to childcare practices which appears that the most prevalent effect among the respondents in that their careers limited their time with their children which is so because they have to spend the whole day in their respective workplaces thereby preventing them from breastfeeding which imply that some of the childcare practices which are supposed to be undertaken by the full-time mothers are being delegated to the helpers due to time constraints.



Table 3.3: Frequency and Rank Distribution on the Effects of the Respondents' Career towards Education of Children

Effects	Frequency	Rank
Has your career affected the career choice of your children?		
My children are not of career age	16	1
They have pursued careers according to their aptitudes and interest	15	2
They have chosen careers allied to mine as they have been exposed to it	5	3
They have chosen another career as their exposure to my work has developed a dislike for it	2	4

This table contains the effects of the respondents' careers towards their children's choice of career. The table reveals that the mothers' careers have no significant effect on their children's choice of careers as they have pursued careers according to their aptitudes and interests which imply that the respondents' career have no adverse effect towards the education of their children.

Table 3.4: Frequency and Rank Distribution on the Effects of the Respondents' Career towards Family Relations

Effects	Frequency	Rank
Does your work give you problems in fulfilling your responsibilities as a mother?		
Not at all	20	1
Little	18	2
Average	5	3
Very much	2	4
How do you make up for your absence at home?		
Stays at home during vacation	35	1
Takes the children out during vacation	7	2
Do the household chores left by the helpers before retiring	3	3
How do your children feel about having a working mother?		
They feel proud about it	21	1
They like it very much	6	2
They do not care	4	3



Table 3.4 reveals the effects of the respondents' career towards relations particularly with the children. The table tells us that the respondents' being working mothers do not give them problems to fulfill their responsibilities as a mother, instead they find ways to make up for their absence at home by staying home during vacation and doing the household chores left by the helpers before retiring. The table further reveals that the respondents' careers contribute to the fulfillment of the needs of the children and that their children feel proud about it which implies that the respondents' careers have beneficial effects towards the smooth relationship among the members.

Table 3.5: Frequency and Rank Distribution on the Effects of the Respondents' Career to Social Life

Effects	Frequency	Rank
Does your work prevent you from socializing with friends aside from your establishment?		
Not at all	30	1
Little	8	2
Average	4	3
Very much	3	4
Does your career bear directly on your economic and social improvement value?		
Yes	44	1
No	1	2
What benefits do you derive from your work/practice of your profession?		
Self-fulfillment	22	1
Added family income	19	2
Higher level of living	16	3
Wider social circle	5	4
Status and recognition	3	5
More power and authority in the family	2	6
Escape from boredom	1	7

The effects of the respondents' career to social life are presented in table 3.5. The table presents that the respondents' work do not at all prevent them from socializing with friends outside their establishments, instead, it contributed directly to their income and social



improvement and other benefits which implies that the respondents' careers have more beneficial effects to their social life.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the needs of time, the scenario of having solo working mothers leave their homes every morning to spend the day in their workplaces is but already common and natural. The time so demands the solo mothers must be in working/earning a living for the family and the performance of these multi roles of the working mothers can either adversely or beneficially affect the life. However, this study proves that there are more benefits and advantages derived in having professional mothers in terms of the different dimensions mentioned in the earlier part of the study, thus to be working mothers therefore, entails sacrifice on the part of the solo mothers but surely it is for the good of the children and the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings arrived at, it is strongly recommended that the solo working mothers must desire to grow professionally and personally by pursuing graduate courses, must possess the skill of proper time and resource management to avoid conflicts in the performance of the different roles thereby promoting a smooth family relations. Further, the working mothers should be willing to undergo a little sacrifice and all the children should exercise patience, respect and understanding to keep everything in order. Lastly, being working mothers must not be taken advantaged to become authoritative and dominant so as to maintain the respect in the mother and child relationship

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