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## **DISTRESS TOLERANCE OF SOLO PARENTS IN CALAPAN CITY ORIENTAL MINDORO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Solo parents are individuals who raise their children alone. Being solely responsible for the role that supposed to be made by two parent, solo parents may face many difficulties from different factors in upbringing a child. In this study, the researchers observed that solo parents are subjected to distress. Distress pertains to emotional pain that can be felt under a completely negative situation. On the other hand, distress tolerance is the capacity to withstand this emotional pain. This study used a comparative research design to determine how solo father and solo mother respond to distress using five facet model of distress tolerance composed of tolerance of uncertainty, ambiguity, frustration, negative emotion, and physical discomfort. The study was conducted within the municipality of Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro and participated by 62 solo parents' representative from 62 barangays. This study found a significant difference between solo fathers and solo mothers' tolerance of frustration. Results also shows that solo fathers and solo mothers have high distress tolerance, which both scored higher at tolerance of uncertainty and lower at ambiguity.

**Keywords:** *distress tolerance, solo parents, uncertainty, ambiguity, frustration, negative emotion, physical discomfort*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Solo parents are those who raise their children alone or who are solely responsible for all of the child's upbringing. Being solely fulfilling the role that should be made by two, solo parents must be self-sufficient and have a strong emotional foundation. In the current situation of the society today, solo parents face diverse challenges when it comes to emotional and financial support and the same time, the need for them to look closely after their children. Due to overwhelming demand of providing their child's necessities, solo parent has a greater risk of experiencing distress.

Globally, the U.S have rated 23% or 18.5 million children living with single parent families and also the country with highest number of solo parents. The 15.3 million of those children live with solo mothers and 3.2 million of those lived with solo fathers. It is followed by New Zealand with 21% and Soe Tome and Principe with 19% (Andre, 2023). In the 2016 statistics of solo parents in the Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that there are 2, 573, 992 total population of individuals that claimed to be solo parents. In MIMAROPA Region, there are 69, 646 solo parents reported or 2.7 % of the total population in that which was comprised of 19, 722 (28.3%) males and 49, 924 (71.7%) (Alcayde, 2016). However, as soon as the years pass the number of solo parents rises. In the most recent data from World Health Organization (2023), there are 15 million reported solo parents in the whole country, of which 95% or 14 million of those are females (Manila Bulletin, 2023).

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The Philippine Government had addresses solo parents' difficulties and provide the aid to lessen their burdens. As part of this assistance, the government had implemented the Republic Act (RA) 8972, known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000. It provides a complete package of social welfare benefits from several government organizations. The law strives to provide particular advantages to ensure that solo parents have equal chances, as well as legal rights and privileges. On the 4th day of June 2023, the Republic Act No. 11861, or the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act had finally become a law amended for Republic Act No. 8972. This law grants added and expanded benefits for solo parents such as monthly allowance depending on one's income, discounts for some goods such as child's necessities, and exemption from value-added tax for specific needs.

Solo parents seem to have fewer resources in terms of family, time, and finance compared to a two-parent. In different manners, solo fathers and solo mothers have their own ways and capabilities to provide the demands of their families. Several studies claimed that solo fathers tend to provide higher standards of living than solo mothers do (GillespieShields, 2020). On the other hand, some studies suggest that solo mothers have more structured relationships than solo fathers (Brown, 2023). Contrastingly, both parties have different privileges in terms of diverse factors of environmental opportunity and way of living. Solo parents may come in different categories, they might be widowed, separated, unmarried, or someone who just chose to be a single parent. Despite of these differences in situation, solo parents could be similar in problems to deal with. One of the common challenges that solo parents experienced was their problems in finances. Due to

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insufficient or low income, they are having a hard time to meet the budget for the needs and necessities of their family. They might also experience being too much busy with their works that they might spend a little of their time watching over their children that commonly results to difficulty in disciplining their children. Furthermore, most of solo parents felt loneliness from being not just physically alone but being just the one to carry all the responsibility and decision to make all alone.

Negative experiences produce negative feelings and emotions, which might be felt in the presence of situations that can evoke these emotions. People can encounter many difficulties in their lives that cause them pain and emotional suffering. In many cases, solo parents experience loneliness and isolation resulting to more emotional struggles. Therefore, solo parents are subjected to high levels of emotional distress. However, they also tend to have higher distress tolerance than those couple-parents by just imagining how they survive each day trying to meet an overwhelming demand in the hope of providing the needs of their children. Distress tolerance may be associated in solo parents with several factors affecting them in terms of: number of children, years of being a solo parent, employment status, and monthly income.

Distress pertains to the emotional pain that anyone can feel when they are in a negative situation. This might include extreme feeling of stress over a completely negative situation. However, distress tolerance is the ability to deal with this strong emotional pain. Additionally, distress tolerance includes the ability to get through an emotional situation without complicating it. In this manner, people with high distress tolerance tend to overcome

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difficult situation without being negative about it. In a 2010 study of Michael Zvolensky, he developed a five-factor model of distress tolerance which is the Global Hierarchical Experiential Distress Tolerance Construct. It is a five-facet model composed of tolerance of uncertainty, tolerance of ambiguity, tolerance of frustration, tolerance of negative emotion, and tolerance of physical discomfort.

In the global scale, vast studies support the connection between solo parents and distress tolerance. According to Im (2020), parents with low distress tolerance tend to intrigue avoidance behavior in negative situations. Thus, these parents might not get into adaptive parenting practices because they perceived distress as aversive. However, other studies suggest that low distress tolerance might be associated with maladaptive parenting behaviors, on the other hand, higher distress tolerance might be associated with positive parenting behaviors. There is none of the actual studies that say who have a higher or lower distress tolerance between solo fathers and solo mothers, however, Turchi (2018) claimed that both solo father and solo mother have experienced equal level of stress and distress yet they take counterpart in advantages and disadvantages they possess in upbringing their children.

In the Philippines studies, there are limited resources to be found regarding the distress tolerance of solo parents. However, the researchers believe that solo parents here in the Philippines face higher demand and double pressure due to low economic growth causing inflation and resulting in poverty. In that manner, it causes another source of distress.

In local scale, there is a lack of study to support this research. Distress Tolerance is not well-studied here in MIMAROPA and its locality. Though it is assumed that there is an

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existing connection between solo parents and distress tolerance, the researchers believe that there is a need for evidence to support the claim that solo fathers and solo mothers have greater and lesser distress tolerance. The researchers have observed solo parent families that urged them to conduct this study as a way to deeply understand their distress and the factors that causes this emotion. By means of this study, the researcher aims to provide an output or program that will be beneficial for the solo parents in according with the result of the study. The researchers also believe that it is essential to conduct this study to be able to understand the struggles of solo parents as well as to generate and suggest a solution in favor of them. The unavailability of resources pushes this study to fill that gap and determine the difference between solo fathers and solo mothers' distress tolerance.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a comparative research design to determine the difference between solo father and solo mother distress tolerance. This study was conducted within the municipality of Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro. The respondents of this study were the solo parent in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro. Specifically, the members of Calapan City Solo Parent Federation Incorporated. It is a non-profit organization, composed of 62 members as representatives and presidents of solo parents in each 62 barangays of Calapan. The researchers used purposive sampling technique to ensure that the respondents meet the criteria needed in this study. This study used self-made questionnaires as the main instrument for data gathering to determine the level of distress tolerance of solo father and solo mother.

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It is a 25-item questionnaire with five questions for each indicator: uncertainty, ambiguity, frustration, negative emotion, and physical discomfort. The researcher used a 4-point Likert Scale method. The internal reliability of the self-made test questionnaire was tallied in MS Excel and scored using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. Results showed the reliability of the instrument used. However, the data gathered from the respondents were interpreted through the use of the Mann-Whitney U Test as the statistical tool. This statistical tool was used by the researchers to determine the difference between the of level of distress tolerance between solo fathers and solo mothers in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *I. Distress Tolerance of Solo Fathers in terms of:*

##### *1. Uncertainty*

As shown in table 1, all items are ranging from 3.13-3.81 with an interpretation of very high distress Tolerance and high distress tolerance. It can be highlighted that item no.1 acquired the highest mean of 3.81. This demonstrates that when faced with a difficulty, solo fathers usually prioritize their children when taking action or making a decision. This could also mean that solo fathers have strong affection toward their children. This item was interpreted as very high distress tolerance level; therefore, it shows that family always comes first for solo fathers when uncertain situation occurs. This might be connected to the old belief that blood is thicker than water since their children are their own blood while their wife is not. As stated in National Institutes of Health study (n. d.) as cited by Wainwright & Cummins

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(2021), there is no clear gap in the emotional connections that are formed between solo fathers and their children not as much to single mothers. Single fathers provide a caring and loving environment for their children.

On the other hand, item no.5 has the lowest mean of 3.13. Given that it acquired the lowest score, it is still interpreted as having a high level of distress tolerance. This implies that solo fathers are capable of planning, implementing and trusting themselves to be able to carry out their plans effectively. Solo fathers were generally viewed as secondary parent, despite that fact that their roles as head and provider of the family are very crucial in their children's growth. According to Shorey and Pereira (2022), solo fathers face unique challenges because of in need to improve their relationship with their children.

To sum it all, uncertainty had the average mean of 3.35 which was the highest average mean among all indicators. This indicates that solo fathers can cope with distress during times of uncertainty. In an unpredictable circumstance, having precise plans and strong techniques may help, but the fact that it is for the greater good of your family may be a larger cause. According to Haas and Cunningham (2014), threatening an environment makes uncertainty have a milder influence on tolerance; while a situation is safe, uncertainty increases tolerance, but when it's threatened, it decreases it. This claim only demonstrates that, yet feelings of threat and uncertainty may exist independently of one another, it is equally important to understand how they interact.

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**Table 1. Extent on the Solo Fathers in terms of Tolerance of Uncertainty.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	In state of uncertainty, I prioritize my children's sake above anything else.	3.81	Very High Distress Tolerance	1
2.	I tend to solve my problems on my own even I hardly can't figure it out.	3.35	High Distress Tolerance	2
3.	As a solo parent, I make sure that I always choose the right decisions for my kids.	3.29	High Distress Tolerance	3
4.	Being the sole provider in the family, I believe I can successfully raise my kids.	3.16	High Distress Tolerance	4
5.	I have my full trust on the plans and actions that I make.	3.13	High Distress Tolerance	5
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.35</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	

## 2. Ambiguity

As demonstrated in table 2, item no. 5 has the highest mean of 3.10 interpreted as high distress tolerance level. It shows that solo fathers are considering first the perspectives of their children before making any decisions for the family. This result could indicate that in times of ambiguity, solo fathers prefer to consult the opinion of their children's beforehand of making decisions for the family. It also displays a high distress tolerance level when solo fathers tend to rely on their children's viewpoint on deciding for ambiguous situation.

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According to Long (2014), the connection between families and significant individuals in their lives is the source of this support. Support of these various relationships has been dealt with in the following subtopics, a. fathers' support for other people, b. children's support from their parents and c. the fathers' support from their children. Emotional support, time management, childcare, physical and gender related issues were also supported.

However, item no. 4 got the lowest of 2.87 interpreted as high distress tolerance. At this point, solo father may not be as concerned on asking for other people opinion as much as they are taking time to put more effort on having the best decision for their children. This could mean that solo fathers may have strong self-sufficiency. According to Zapata (2020), single fathers have the same capacity as any parent to take on parenting challenges. Society's perception of single dads must change because the solo fathers are capable, competent, and also needs support.

Generally, ambiguity scored the average mean of 3.01 which is also the lowest among all indicators. This can also be interpreted as a high distress tolerance level, indicating that single fathers can deal with stress when they are in an ambiguous situation without confirming actions to be taken on other people. This demonstrate that they are capable of managing their distress. Similarly, Li et.al. (2023) suggest that anxiety is associated with distress tolerance. People with low distress tolerance often experience anxiety and depression. According to Chen et.al. (2020), instead of uncertainty, ambiguity is a powerful effect of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

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**Table 2. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Fathers in terms of Ambiguity.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I am willing to seek help from others in raising my children.	2.97	High Distress Tolerance	4
2.	I can make decisions for my family without knowing all of the information.	3.3	High Distress Tolerance	3
3.	I can provide precise solution in ambiguous situations.	3.06	High Distress Tolerance	2
4.	I prefer to consult others before making a move.	2.87	High Distress Tolerance	5
5.	I consider my children's perspective before making my decisions.	3.10	High Distress Tolerance	1
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.01</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	

### 3. Frustration

Table 3 shows the distress tolerance of solo fathers in terms of frustration. Based on the table below, item no.2 got the highest mean of 3.19 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance. It means that solo fathers stay calm and regulate their emotions to avoid feeling frustrated on certain situations that triggers them. Having a calm emotion enable them to avoid being frustrated and can contribute to their distress tolerance. According to Azara et.al. (2022), emotion regulation is associated to resilience on single parents.

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Meanwhile, both item no.1 and no.4 received the lowest mean of 3.03 which can be interpreted as high distress tolerance. This means that despite having a lot of responsibilities, tasks, works, and roles to fulfill both inside and outside their home, solo fathers have effective and organize strategies that make them feel less pressured. This implies an effective and good balance from doing work and raising a family alone at the same time. Having such established procedures helps them to prevent backlogs and incomplete tasks, allowing them to spend more time with their families According to Chanda & Pujar (2019), unique challenges are faced in a solo parenting like balancing from work and family responsibilities and adjusting to new lifestyle.

Generally, frustration is averaging 3.10 mean score. It is interpreted as high distress tolerance. Solo fathers are in high tolerance when experiencing frustrations in different situations. They do not let their frustrations limit their ability to provide the needs of their children. This can be supported by Morin (2022), he stated that individuals with a higher frustration tolerance can deal with setbacks efficiently.

**Table 3. Extent Distress Tolerance of Solo Fathers in terms of Frustration.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I don't get easily feel pressured despite the number of responsibilities that I have.	3.03	High Distress Tolerance	4.5
2.	I stay calm and regulate my emotions to avoid feeling frustrated on certain situations that triggers me.	3.19	High Distress Tolerance	1

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3.	I typically require specific plans beforehand to keep myself on track with the things I have to complete.	3.10	High Distress Tolerance	3
4.	I organized my task accordingly to prevent backlogs and have the rest of my time with my family.	3.03	High Distress Tolerance	4.5
5.	I always make sure that things will turn out the way I plan it to be.	3.13	High Distress Tolerance	2
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.10</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	

#### 4. *Negative Emotion*

Table 4 shows the distress tolerance of solo fathers in terms of negative emotion. As indicated, item no.4 has the highest mean of 3.26 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance. This means that negative thoughts have less of an influence on how solo fathers manage their goals for themselves and their family. Thus, focusing on their family especially on their family's goals contributes to their distress tolerance as a solo parent. Lestari et.al. (2020), stated that as single parents, males prioritize their family objectives by serving as caregivers, motivators, mentors, study partners, and child discipline reinforcers.

On the other hand, items no.2 and no.5 obtained the lowest mean of 3.06 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. Despite being the lowest mean among the five questionnaires, it also has an interpretation of high distress tolerance the same with the highest mean. This means that solo fathers avoid situations that causing them having negative thoughts and give themselves a break to gather and process their thoughts to keep away from negative emotions. On the study of Jones et.al. (2022), fathers' replies revealed that

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they got both good and negative reactions on being a solo parenthood, however they judged the majority of encounters to be favorable.

In summary, the average mean of negative emotion is 3.13, which indicates a high level of distress tolerance. As a result, solo fathers project distress tolerance in situations where they have negative thoughts or are in a negative situation. According to Williams et.al. (2013) on their study, avoiding sadness can be a factor for an individual to increase distress tolerance. Also, it shows that increased distress tolerance may lead a person to reduce depression symptoms and especially psychological distress.

**Table 4. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Fathers in terms of Negative Emotion.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I try to keep myself filled with positive thoughts as often as possible.	3.13	High Distress Tolerance	4.5
2.	I tend to avoid people and situations that are causing me negative emotions.	3.06	High Distress Tolerance	1
3.	When things got out of hand, I don't let my emotions get the best of me.	3.13	High Distress Tolerance	3
4.	Negative thoughts do not stop me from focusing on myself and my family's goals.	3.26	High Distress Tolerance	4.5
5.	I always give myself a break to gather and process my thoughts to keep myself away from having negative emotions.	3.06	High Distress Tolerance	2

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Overall Mean	High Distress 3.13 Tolerance
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## 5. *Physical Discomfort*

Table 5 shows the distress tolerance of solo fathers in terms of physical discomfort. As demonstrated, item no.2 has the highest mean of 3.42 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. Thus, being physically fit to avoid health problems that can impede their ability to care for their children in the future helps solo fathers on their distress tolerance as a solo parent. Kozachuck (2020) highlighted the importance of proper and good healthy lifestyle such as sport can prevent non communicable diseases. In addition, on the study of Lollgen (2017) he states that regular physical activity lowers the risk of all-cause mortality, cardiovascular morbidity, and death, while also enhancing quality of life and longevity.

In contrast, item no.5 had the lowest mean of 3.03 demonstrating a high distress tolerance. This indicates that solo fathers experience feeling of tiredness from raising his family and working alone. As like anybody else, it is completely fine to feel exhausted from work, but then having to endure it alone implies high tolerance. According to Chanda & Pujar (2019), as the single parent has the double responsibility of running the family and parenting the children alone. It is causing them to experience physical tiredness because of balancing work and responsibilities to their families.

All in all, physical discomfort has an average mean of 3.21. It is interpreted as high distress tolerance level. Solo fathers can tolerate physical discomforts like being sick for their family. Having a physical discomfort do not limit them to function well for their family and raise his child alone. According to Kilesica et.al. (2015), physical harm was associated from

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distress tolerance. Individual with who has experiencing physical discomfort like pain, is nearly in experiencing distress tolerance.

**Table 5. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Fathers in terms of Physical Discomfort.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I feel physically exhausted from working too hard for my family.	3.16	High Distress Tolerance	3
2.	I keep myself physically fit to avoid health problems that can impede my ability to care for my children in the future.	3.42	High Distress Tolerance	1
3.	I manage to go to work even I am not feeling well because I have to provide for my family.	3.35	High Distress Tolerance	2
4.	I have received comments from others about how stressed I look and how my body has changed since I became a solo parent.	3.06	High Distress Tolerance	4
5.	I often feel tired from balancing work and raising a family alone.	3.03	High Distress Tolerance	5
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.21</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	
6.	<i>Overall Mean</i>			

Table 6 presents the mean extent of the solo fathers in terms of distress tolerance. As indicated, uncertainty obtained the highest mean of 3.35. Thus, for solo fathers, in times of

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uncertain situations are in high distress tolerance level. This means that they are strong enough to handle situations that are from uncertain instances.

Furthermore, ambiguity obtained the lowest mean score of 3.01 which can still be interpreted as high distress tolerance. This also means that despite the low score, solo fathers are able to tolerate distress during ambiguous situations. In the data presented in respondents of the study, twenty-eight out of thirty-one solo fathers' respondents are being solo fathers for less than ten years. This finding could indicate that years of being a solo father can be a factor affecting to frustration tolerance of solo fathers. Moreover, twenty-three of them are self-employed and sixteen of them have monthly income ranging below five thousand pesos which could also be a factor to lower frustration tolerance.

**Table 6. Summary of Mean Level of the Solo Fathers' Distress Tolerance.**

Distress Tolerance	Mean	Rank
1. Uncertainty	3.35	1
2. Ambiguity	3.01	5
3. Frustration	3.10	4
4. Negative Emotion	3.13	3
5. Physical Discomfort	3.21	2

## ***II. Distress Tolerance of Solo Mothers in terms of:***

### *1. Uncertainty*

Table 7 presents the mean extent of solo mothers in terms of uncertainty. Based on the table, item no.1 obtained the highest mean of 3.68 with an interpretation of very high distress tolerance level. This means that solo mothers prioritize first their children's sake above

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anything else. Their families especially their children are one factor of their distress tolerance.

This is similar to the study of Mundo et. al. (2019) in which they suggest that solo mothers insist well to guarantee they can properly parent their children. In addition, according to the study of S. Graham (2018), choosing to be a sole parent challenged their perception of what it takes to be a 'good' mother, someone who prioritizes their child's interests over their own. On other hand, item no.5 got the lowest mean of 3.23 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. This means that solo mothers trust the plans and actions that they make. On the study of Werner et.al. (2020), to feel more comfortable as a single parent and to have control over the process, the majority of single moms created thorough plans for parenthood. To sum it all, the average mean score of uncertainty is 3.45 which falls under high distress tolerance. Solo mothers' projects high distress tolerance during uncertain situations. According to Michel et.al. (2016), poor distress tolerance is associated with negative emotion, stress, intolerance of uncertainty, and anxiety. These factors are more relevant than any other factors of distress tolerance.

**Table 7. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Mothers in terms of Uncertainty.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	In state of uncertainty, I prioritize my children's sake above anything else.	3.68	Very High Distress Tolerance	1
2.	I tend to solve my problems on my own even I hardly can't figure it out.	3.55	High Distress Tolerance	2

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3.	As a solo parent, I make sure that I always choose the right decisions for my kids.	3.48	High Distress Tolerance	3
4.	Being the sole provider in the family, I believe I can successfully raise my kids.	3.32	High Distress Tolerance	4
5.	I have my full trust on the plans and actions that I make.	3.23	High Distress Tolerance	5
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.45</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	

## 2. *Ambiguity*

Table 8 presents the extent mean of solo mothers in terms of ambiguity. Item no.5 obtained the highest mean of 3.23 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. Solo mothers consider the perspective of others before making any decisions. In the study of Lechtman (2022), solo motherhood confronts gender ideology by complying to standards of femininity and procreation and comply to the expectations of the society.

Meanwhile, item no.2 obtained the lowest mean of 3.10 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. Solo mothers make decision without knowing all the information for their family. Solo mothers are strong enough to make decisions without knowing all the information. According to Chason & Ben-Ari (2020), the findings emphasize the possibility for single moms to grow personally throughout the shift to parenting and the critical role that support from a significant other play in making this happen. As they grow from shifting to single parenting, they can make decisions independently for their family.

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Generally, the average mean score of ambiguity is 3.09 which falls under high distress tolerance. Solo mother projects high distress tolerance in an ambiguous situation. According to Li et.al. (2023), anxiety is associated with distress tolerance. People with low distress tolerance often experience anxiety and depression. And according to Chen et.al. (2020), instead of uncertainty, ambiguity is a powerful effect of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

**Table 8. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Mothers in terms of Ambiguity.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I am willing to seek help from others in raising my children.	3.68	Very High Distress Tolerance	1
2.	I can make decisions for my family without knowing all of the information.	3.55	High Distress Tolerance	2
3.	I can provide precise solution in ambiguous situations.	3.48	High Distress Tolerance	3
4.	I prefer to consult others before making a move.	3.32	High Distress Tolerance	4
5.	I consider my children's perspective before making my decisions.	3.23	High Distress Tolerance	5
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.45</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	

3. *Frustration*

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Table 9 presents the mean extent of solo mothers in terms of frustration. Based on the table below, item no.2 obtained the highest mean of 3.39 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. Solo mothers stay calm and regulate their emotions to avoid feeling frustrated on certain situations that triggers them. Staying calm in a situation where they feel frustrated help are one factor of their high distress tolerance. According to Azara et.al. (2022), emotion regulation is associated to resilience on single parents.

Nonetheless, item no.1 obtained the lowest mean of 3.23 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance also. Solo mothers don't feel pressured despite the numbers of responsibilities that they have. They can do their responsibilities without any frustrations and pressure. According to Chanda & Pujar (2019), unique challenges are faced in a solo parenting like balancing from work and family responsibilities and adjusting to new lifestyle.

To summarize, the average mean score of frustration is 3.30 which falls under high distress tolerance level. Solo mothers' projects high distress tolerance in times of frustrations that they are experiencing. This can be supported by the study of Morin (2022), he stated that individuals with a higher frustration tolerance can deal with setbacks efficiently.

**Table 9. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Mothers in terms of Frustration.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I don't get easily feel pressured despite the number of responsibilities that I have.	3.23	High Distress Tolerance	5

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2.	I stay calm and regulate my emotions to avoid feeling frustrated on certain situations that triggers me.	3.39	High Distress Tolerance	1
3.	I typically require specific plans beforehand to keep myself on track with the things I have to complete.	3.26	High Distress Tolerance	4
4.	I organized my task accordingly to prevent backlogs and have the rest of my time with my family.	3.32	High Distress Tolerance	2
5.	I always make sure that things will turn out the way I plan it to be.	3.29	High Distress Tolerance	3
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.30</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	

#### 4. *Negative Emotion*

Table 10 presents the extent mean of solo mothers in terms of negative emotion. The table below shows that item no.1 obtained the highest mean score of 3.42 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level. Thus, solo mothers keep themselves filled with positive thoughts as often as possible. Positive thoughts help them to avoid distress from being alone raising their family. According to Octavia et.al. (2022) single mothers' negative sentiments are impacted by elements such as family size, stress, and emotional coping mechanisms.

However, item no.2 obtained the lowest mean score of 3.13 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance level also. Solo mothers tend to avoid persons and situations that causing them negative emotions. This indicates that they need the positive thoughts and

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ambiance to function well as they raise their family alone. On the study of Octavia (2022), applying rules, instilling values and standards, and setting an example of positive attitudes and conduct for their children can help single mothers steer clear of trouble.

Generally, the average mean score of negative emotion is 3.27 which falls under high distress tolerance. Solo mothers show high distress tolerance when experiencing negative thoughts and emotions. According to Bardeen et.al. (2015), emotion control can be a good influence on the distress of an individual. Control of emotion is one factor to have a high distress tolerance for the mothers.

**Table 10. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Mothers in terms of Negative Emotion.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I try to keep myself filled with positive thoughts as often as possible.	3.42	High Distress Tolerance	1
2.	I tend avoid people and situations that are causing me negative emotions.	3.13	High Distress Tolerance	5
3.	When things got out of hand, I don't let my emotions get the best of me.	3.19	High Distress Tolerance	4
4.	Negative thoughts do not stop me from focusing on myself and my family's goals.	3.32	High Distress Tolerance	2
5.	I always give myself a break to gather and process my thoughts to keep myself away from having negative emotions.	3.29	High Distress Tolerance	3

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Overall Mean	High Distress 3.27 Tolerance
5. <i>Physical Discomfort</i>	

Table 11 presents the mean extent of solo mothers in terms of physical discomfort. The table below indicates that no.2 and no.3 obtained the highest mean of 3.52. This indicates that solo mothers take a good care of themselves to avoid health problems that can impede their ability to provide for their children. Also, solo mothers able to manage to go to work even they are not feeling well because they must provide for their family. Thus, physical fitness is essential for them to be able to meet their demands and raise their children on their own. According to the study of Dlugonski & Mot (2016) single mothers who are physically active are mostly to overcome barriers as a single motherhood compared to low-active.

On the other hand, item no.5 obtained the lowest mean score of 2.90 with an interpretation of high distress tolerance. Solo mothers feel tired balancing their time from work and raising their family alone but their tolerance of experiencing it is in a high level. Mundo et.al. (2019), solo mothers balance their time through problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies and prioritize themselves for better care of the family.

All in all, the average mean score of physical discomfort is 3.21 which falls under high distress tolerance. Solo mothers' projects high distress tolerance in times having a physical discomfort. According to Kilesica et.al. 2015, physical harm was associated from distress tolerance. Individual with who has experiencing physical discomfort like pain, is nearly in experiencing distress tolerance.

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**Table 11. Extent of Distress Tolerance of Solo Mothers in terms of Physical Discomfort.**

Item No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	I feel physically exhausted from working too hard for my family.	3.13	High Distress Tolerance	3
2.	I keep myself physically fit to avoid health problems that can impede my ability to care for my children in the future.	3.52	High Distress Tolerance	1.5
3.	I manage to go to work even I am not feeling well because I have to provide for my family.	3.52	High Distress Tolerance	1.5
4.	I have received comments from others about how stressed I look and how my body has changed since I became a solo parent.	2.97	High Distress Tolerance	4
5.	I often feel tired from balancing work and raising a family alone.	2.90	High Distress Tolerance	5
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.21</b>	<b>High Distress Tolerance</b>	
6.	<i>Overall Mean</i>			

Table 12 presents the extent of solo mothers in terms of distress tolerance. Based on the table, uncertainty obtained the highest mean score of 3.45 among the 5 indicators. This means that solo mothers have a high distress tolerance in times of uncertain situations which do not affect them in raising their children alone.

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On the other hand, ambiguity obtained the lowest mean score of 3.09 among the five indicators. Despite being the lowest it is interpreted as high distress tolerance level. Solo mothers find themselves having a distress tolerance in an ambiguous or unclear situations. In the data presented in respondents of the study, 18 out of 31 solo mothers' respondents are being solo mothers for less than 10 years, 17 out of 31 are self-employed, and 15 out of 31 have monthly income of below ₱5000. These results can add up on the factors why they have lower score in ambiguity. This could mean that they might have to consider all of these before making decision resulting to difficulty on dealing with ambiguous situation.

**Table 12. Summary of Mean Level of the Solo Mothers' Distress Tolerance.**

	<b>Distress Tolerance</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1.	Uncertainty	3.45	1
2.	Ambiguity	3.09	5
3.	Frustration	3.30	2
4.	Negative Emotion	3.27	3
5.	Physical Discomfort	3.21	4

### ***III. Difference between Solo Mothers' and Solo Fathers' Distress Tolerance.***

Table 17 shows the comparative analysis between the solo fathers and solo mothers distress tolerance by the use of Mann Whitney U test.

As indicated, Frustration scored higher p-value among all the indicator ( $w=611.500$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). The results show that solo fathers obtained a 3.10 average mean, while solo

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mothers obtained 3.30, demonstrating that both have a high level of distress tolerance. This implies that there is significant difference between solo mothers' and solo fathers' tolerance of frustration. Looking back at the average mean of both groups, it can be noted that solo mothers scored higher compared to solo fathers. This result can argue that solo mothers tend to be more open about their frustration while, solo fathers tend to keep it to themselves. This claim can be supported by Costa et. al. (2021), their findings highlighted that woman perceive stress at higher level. However, the awareness that different people react and handle stress differently because of a variety of contextual and individual factors-factors that can be challenging to capture in observational studies.

On the other hand, Physical Discomfort resulted lowest out of five indicators ( $w=495.500$ ,  $p=0.651$ ). Solo mothers and solo fathers scored the same in average mean resulting 3.21 therefore, there is no significant difference between solo mothers and solo father tolerance of physical discomfort. This means that both groups have the same tolerance in coping physical discomfort. According to Cherry (2023), if parents are unable to deal with the demands of single parenting, they are vulnerable to burnout. This is a common problem among single parents, and it can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and physical health problems.

Overall, Frustration appears to obtained the higher p-value while physical discomfort appeared to be the lowest. However, it can be noted that negative emotion obtained ( $w=588.500$ ,  $p=0.059$ ) which almost came out to be statistically significant but falls short somehow. Looking at the data from the questionnaire used, solo mothers and solo fathers

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varies responses in item no.1 and no.5. This finding shows that solo mothers tend to think positively most of the time and takes a break to process their thoughts. On the other hand, solo fathers scored lower yet still considerable to be interpreted as high distress tolerance. At some point, solo fathers might not give too much emphasis on thinking positively and takes time to ease off to gather thoughts or relax in state of having negative emotion. In the study of Jones et. al. (2022), they indicated that there were no differences observed in the mental health or perceived social support of single mothers and fathers, and both groups accessed the same kinds of support and had comparable reasons for becoming single parents. However, it stated that the findings regarding fathers' experiences of social reactions to the type of family they had revealed that the fathers faced both social approval and stigma at the same time. Still, they exhibit resilience in the face of others' unfavorable responses.

**Table 17. Comparative Analysis between the Solo Fathers and Solo Mothers**

**Distress Tolerance.**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Uncertainty	557.000	0.178	Not Significant
Ambiguity	499.000	0.608	Not Significant
Frustration	611.500	0.025	Significant
Negative Emotion	588.500	0.059	Not Significant
Physical Discomfort	495.500	0.651	Not Significant

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## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, solo fathers exhibited high distress tolerance with uncertainty ranking highest and ambiguity being the lowest. They can handle situations with one specific direction, rather than having multiple options. However, even they ranked low in ambiguity, this suggests a high level of tolerance for ambiguity, suggesting that children's best interests are the priority above seeking other's viewpoint, indicating a strong sense of independence within their decision. The reason for these may be due to the fact that solo fathers often have to rely on their own resources and coping mechanisms to manage the challenges of solo parenting. As a result, they may develop a strong sense of self-sufficiency and resilience, which enables them to handle uncertain and ambiguous situations effectively. Additionally, the importance of prioritizing their children's best interests may also play a role in their decision-making process, leading them to make decisions that are in the best interest of their children, even if it means going against the opinions of others.

On the other hand, the study found that solo mothers had a higher distress tolerance, with uncertainty scoring highest and ambiguity as lowest similar to solo fathers. This implies that solo mothers might find it difficult to make decisions with no clear path. Making decisions with multiple alternatives may be more difficult than having one particular option. Additionally, the finding that solo mothers struggle with decision-making when there is no clear solution may suggest that they lack access to resources or support that can help them navigate difficult situations. It is also important to note that physical discomfort tolerance was second to the lowest, possibly due to females being weaker physically than males. Additionally, solo mothers

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reported a lower tolerance for physical discomfort compared to other groups, which may be due to the fact that women are generally physically weak. This suggests that physical discomfort is a factor contributing to solo mother's distress.

This study shows that solo mothers had higher distress tolerance compared solo fathers. Findings revealed that solo fathers and solo mothers varies differently in handling frustration. This indicates that solo mothers are more emotionally expressive and have more positive viewpoint on life, making them less vulnerable to frustrating circumstances. Therefore, it can be concluded that having a healthier perspective helps reduce frustration. Future researchers may give emphasis on ambiguity intolerance of solo parents. They could create more studies about the factors affecting tolerance of ambiguity among solo parents and generate solution to improve distress tolerance.

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