

A Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experiences of Working Single Mothers Towards A Work-Life Balance Model

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of working single mothers in maintaining work-life balance and developed a strategic framework to address their unique challenges. Six working single mothers employed as Non-Teaching Personnel in college institutions in Cavite province participated in in-depth interviews using purposive sampling. The participants were selected based on specific criteria, including single marital status, current employment, having children aged 10-30 years, minimum six months of continuous employment, and equal distribution between rural and urban areas. The study employed Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological analysis method combined with thematic analysis to examine participants' experiences. Three main research areas were investigated: experiences at work and home, roles as working single mothers, and coping strategies employed. The findings revealed eight themes for work-home experiences including Preparation of Meals for Children, Monitoring of Child/Children's Needs, Manageable Work Environment, Effective Time Management, Quality Family Bonding, Family-Centered Prioritization, Work-Life Integration, and Professional Growth and Financial Stability. Eight themes emerged for role performance: Resilience and Adaptability, Overwhelming Life Challenges, Personal Strength Development, Professional Commitment, Time Constraints with Children, Intentional Family Connection, Strategic Life Planning, and Dual-Domain Goal Achievement. Eight themes characterized coping strategies: Priority Management, Holistic Self-Care Practices, Variable Organizational Support, Self-Awareness of Coping, Support System Utilization, Spiritual Foundation, Meaningful Life Experiences, and Successful Child Rearing. Based on these findings, the researcher developed the THRIVE Model, a strategic work-life balance framework incorporating six core indicators: Practice Effective Time Management, Prioritize Engaging in Self Care, Fostering Resiliency, Child Care/Child Empowerment, Strong Support System, and Job Satisfaction. This evidence-based model provides practical guidance for working single mothers to achieve sustainable work-life balance while promoting family well-being and professional success. Based on these findings, the researcher developed the THRIVE Model, a strategic work-life balance framework incorporating six core indicators: Practice Effective Time Management, Prioritize Engaging in Self Care, Fostering Resiliency, Child Care/Child Empowerment, Strong Support System, and Job Satisfaction. This evidence-based model provides practical guidance for working single mothers to achieve sustainable work-life balance while promoting family well-being and professional success.

Keywords: work-life balance, single mothers, phenomenological study, coping strategies, THRIVE model, Philippines