

WORKING SINGLE MOTHER CHALLENGE WITH DISABLED CHILDREN: WORK-FAMILY BALANCE AND PARENTING

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ABSTRACT

Single mothers encounter plenty of difficulties in attaining a balance between job duties and family responsibilities, especially if they have children with disabilities. This study aims to investigate the psychological mechanisms underlying work-family balance among single mothers, with a particular focus on their parenting practices. This study employs a qualitative method, utilizing case study techniques and thematic analysis, to analyze the data from four single mothers aged 25 to 60 years old. We obtained the data by conducting comprehensive interviews that included open-ended questions regarding factual information, events, activities, and opinions. Additionally, we observed the interaction process and activities using non-participatory observation of single moms with their children to enhance the quality of the data. The research demonstrated that individuals organized their daily routines in order to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between their work and parenting duties. Single mothers who have kids with special needs rely on social support from their family and relatives to assist with caregiving responsibilities while they are going to work. Single mothers derive satisfaction from fulfilling the dual tasks of parenting because they experience joy and gratitude for their lives. This result implies that gratitude, involvement in daily routines, and social support from family are important for single mothers with disabilities children with disabilities.

Keywords: single mother; children with disabilities; work-family balance; parenting.

INTRODUCTION

Right now, employment is not exclusively reserved for men; it is also available to women. A significant number of women in modern times serve as the leading providers of financial support for their families. The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2022) According to reports, Indonesia's population is currently 274.20 million. Among this population, 69.16% of males and 69.08% of women are in the productive age group. According to the proportion of women of working age, 54.74% of employees are distributed across different industries. The women in these job classifications hold various positions, such as sellers (28.44%), farm labor (24.6%), workers in plantations, power production, and manual labor (20.24%), professional workers (10.53%), service industry workers (9.05%), implementing officials (6.2%), leaders in power-related roles (0.78%), and other field workers (0.16%). This information indicates that women predominantly fill Indonesia's overall employment. Based on this data, it is evident that several women are either single or married.

Married women may encounter difficulties that single women do not, such as balancing their working hours between work duties and family responsibilities, limited access to inexpensive and reliable childcare services, and a high dependency on assistance from family members, which can occasionally result in unfavorable circumstances (Barsoum, 2019). and Al-Bassusi (2004) claim that unmarried young women will engage in employment to accumulate funds for their wedding

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Article History
Received: 9-11-2024 Accepted: 30-06-2025

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expenses. In contrast, married women will relate their work to the necessity of meeting family expenses. The decision to engage in employment is consistently linked to the needs of a child, such as their educational requirements, childcare, and other necessities (Marphatia et al., 2017a). As a result, mothers face a dilemma when deciding to work and balance their responsibilities and demands as mothers. This situation may arise if they merely serve as an extra source of income for the household. Suppose individuals had assumed the responsibility of being the primary breadwinner in their household. In that case, their condition may have deteriorated due to the added pressure of providing financial support for their spouse or in the event of becoming a widow.

As single mothers, they are now responsible for fulfilling the roles traditionally assigned to their husbands, while simultaneously assuming the responsibilities of a housewife. A significant obstacle faced by single working mothers is the limited availability of resources that facilitate "economic self-sufficiency." (Stephens, 2017). According to Hooks (2000) Achieving economic independence is crucial for women to liberate themselves from male dominance. One successful method of doing this is through gainful employment, such as casework with adequate compensation. Working single mothers not only have to deal with financial necessities but also have more substantial obstacles in maintaining a balance between job and family life, sometimes referred to as work-life balance.

Work-life balance refers to the ability of a workforce to maintain engagement in various aspects of life, including friendships, hobbies, sports, religious community membership, and volunteering. (Lee et al., 2009). To achieve a well-rounded life, a single mother must effectively integrate various dimensions, including physical, mental, social, emotional, economic, and spiritual well-being. The myriad challenges faced by single mothers in achieving work-life balance include the pressures of a job, the obligations of managing a household, the needs of childcare, inflexible work schedules, and a lack of support both within and outside the family. (Bianchi, 2011). Bakker & Karsten (2013) Research shows that single mothers frequently encounter substantial challenges while attempting to balance their employment, household duties, and affect their physical and psychological health.

Ciabattari (2006) Found that low-income single moms are most susceptible to experiencing conflict, which harms their health. The presence of high levels of stress among single moms can lead to the development of depressive symptoms, which in turn can hurt their parenting behavior and eventually affect their treatment of their children. (Jackson et al., 2003). According to a study conducted by Masita et al., (2019) Women who have a poor work-life balance experience a deficiency in the quality of education they provide for their children, which has negative implications for their parenting. Greenhaus et al., (2003) Defined work-life balance as how an individual engages in both work and family responsibilities and experiences fulfillment in both areas. This situation suggests that an individual experiences a sense of ease and contentment in their work environment, while also having sufficient time to devote to both their family and professional responsibilities. However, this varies for persons who have an inadequate equilibrium between their professional and personal lives. Typically, individuals experience discomfort at work due to the increased time and focus required, which in turn allows for better management of household tasks, especially parenting tasks. (Wardani & Firmansyah, 2021). According to Arumugam (2023) Stress can have a substantial effect on the work-life balance of a single mother. Unequal conditions may lead to decreased productivity, health issues, and difficulties in managing multiple responsibilities. Managing the demands of both job and family can be difficult for individuals. However, the presence of a single stressful event can initiate a response that exacerbates the illness. The combination of financial management, single parenting, and career maintenance can lead to feelings of overwhelm, fatigue, and dissatisfaction.

Parenting can be defined as the process and activity of interaction between parents and children, focusing on care and education, to enable children to grow optimally (Virasisi et al., 2011). Moreover, single parenting means that all the responsibility will be imposed on the remaining parent, in this case, on the mother. Parenting encompasses three essential components: the

parenting process, parenting activities, and interactions within the parenting context. Parenting can be considered optimal, increasing the likelihood of survival and optimal development, if parents provide a positive environment through caring and nurturing parenting activities and warm interactions between parents and children. Therefore, based on existing research, it can be concluded that the primary focus of parenting is on responsibility, guidance, and parental care (Draper, 1983). Parenting is not a single process; several things can influence it.

Bigner & Gerhardt (1979) Explain several factors that can influence the parenting process. The first is about the influence of culture, especially on the social class of the family. The second aspect is related to the parents' personality, as they are the parties with full authority regarding the way they raise their children. The third is the attitude of parents towards the task of parenting, because if parents have a negative attitude towards parenting, then the child can be raised with a neglectful parenting pattern. The fourth is about the environment or situational factors that can influence the parenting process. Ultimately, the purpose of having children is that, in some cultures, they are viewed as an investment in the future. The existing definitions provide an overview of how challenging the parenting process can be, but this difficulty is even greater when it involves parenting children with special needs. This situation will become more complex if the children being looked after require additional support or have specific needs.

The process of caring for children with special needs must be considered separately from everyday parenting, because basically, parents have a heavier burden, their social pressures, and challenges. Some factors that must be considered are the ability of parents to maintain their sanity, as they must continue to care for their well-being, reduce stress, and protect themselves against emotional burnout, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and paralysis. (Singer et al., 2007). The second is building an alliance with a partner to share tasks and roles, and still be able to provide attention, care, and affection. (Feinberg & Kan, 2008). Next is the demand to "fix" the child, but of course, this is not an easy thing. What parents can do is make cognitive changes about how they see problems in their children. (Kosiowitz, 2019). The next problem is how to prepare children to interact with others, because in some exceptional cases, such as ADHD, they have difficulty interacting with others and are judged negatively by their friends. (Mikami & Normand, 2015). On the other hand, what are the things that parents must prepare for when raising children with special needs? The first is to prepare children socially to interact with other children. (Kennedy-Moore, 2015). The second is to understand that special education is not only a classroom, but also a series of training for children to be able to approach people without special needs. Furthermore, parents must also be able to recognize the characteristics of depression in children because if not recognized, the child's desire to no longer bother their parents can lead to the desire to commit suicide. (Escalante, 2019).

Children with special needs have physical, mental, and behavioral barriers that necessitate intensive treatment, as determined by the nature of their disabilities. (Nuryati, 2022). Children often struggle to articulate their desires or emotions, which can lead to the manifestation of maladaptive behavior. Parenting is a challenging task, especially when it comes to raising children with special needs. (Ambar, 2005). Multiple comparable studies indicate that single mothers face significant difficulties in providing exceptional care to satisfy the demands of a child with special needs. Acquiring sufficient knowledge about the child's condition poses a formidable task for single mothers. (Octavia & Himam, 2019). According to Bashir et al., (2023) Research indicates that single moms who have to take on many duties and obligations experience adverse effects on their psychological well-being. This is especially the case for those who must also manage the financial burden of caring for their child's health, which includes expenses related to doctor's appointments, specialized therapy, and medications. Furthermore, women have to deal with the societal pressure and stigmatization associated with being single mothers. Mothers have substantial difficulties, including depression and hypertension, which are very prevalent in eight mental health subcategories and six physical health subcategories. Additionally, they have concerns regarding the development of children with special needs. (Jafree & Burhan, 2020).

Several policies have been implemented regarding improving work-life balance in general, especially for single mothers with children with special needs. The first is several implementations of leave in work, which are given for 12 days a year. (Cipta Kerja, 2022). The second is flexible working hours, which allow parents to alternate in caregiving. (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Third, an increasing number of companies are implementing work-from-home arrangements. (Felstead et al., 2002). The last is an employee welfare program that can support the physical and mental health of employees. (Bintang & Imsar, 2024). Ultimately, with various existing policies in place, it is hoped that they will be able to support work-life balance for single mothers with children with special needs.

This study is a development of research conducted by Zahra & Hendriani (2022). Her research focuses solely on women who work and have children with special needs. The role of husbands in caring for these children is the most significant contributor to their ability to achieve a work-life balance. Additionally, the study did not specify the field of work for each respondent. We suspect that if the role of the husband as a co-parenting partner is lost in single parents with various types of jobs, achieving a work-life balance will be even more difficult. According to the description indicating the potential of psychological dynamics, single mothers have many difficulties, particularly those who have children with special needs. I am intrigued by the phenomenon of how single mothers navigate the difficulties of raising their children with special needs while still striving to achieve a work-life balance; moreover, this research hasn't been widely studied in the Indonesian context.

We aim to investigate the work-life balance experienced by single mothers who have children with special needs. Not all single mothers can manage two careers simultaneously. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the psychological mechanisms employed by these mothers to effectively manage their professional and social obligations. This research aims to provide a comprehensive psychological analysis of the work-life balance experienced by a single mother who also faces specific parenting challenges, thereby adding another level of complexity compared to that of a typical single mother. In addition to highlighting the balance between work and family, this study also focuses on the parenting strategies employed by single mothers in shaping the character of children with special needs.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative instrumental case study design to reveal work-life balance issues among single mothers who have children with special needs (Nengrum et al., 2021; Poerwandari, 2007). The study included four participants with varying work statuses and educational backgrounds, as we aimed to control for several factors that may have affected the results. All of whom were single mothers and working mothers between the ages of 25 and 60, and all the respondents are Malang Residents, but one of the participants works in Surabaya and returns home on weekends. Each participant had at least one child with special needs under their care, had sought consultation with a therapist, and had at least one child with special needs. This study employs in-depth interviews and observation techniques. The researchers employed a semi-structured interview approach to specifically investigate and describe the work-life balance experienced by the children of single mothers. During the analysis phase, the author employs theme analysis methodologies, along with thematic analysis, triangulation, and member checking, to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

Table 1: Informant identity.

No	Name	Age	Last Education	Work Status	Engagement Moment
1	AN	60	Junior High School	Household Assistant	Early morning and Evening
2	BN	47	Undergraduate degree	Preschool Teacher	Wholeday
3	CN	43	Undergraduate degree	Employee	Weekend
4	DN	58	Elementary School	Babysitter	Wholeday

RESULTS

The findings indicate that single mothers who have children with special needs possess strategies for effectively managing both their professional responsibilities and their caregiving duties. In terms of time balance, Subject AN said that she found it difficult to divide her time between work hours and parenting because her working hours as a domestic helper could not be left, and she had relatively long working hours, from 6 am to 4 pm. So that AN could only take care of her child after work. Subject BN's efforts to balance her time were made by making a schedule at night before going to bed. The schedule made by subject BN included the child's needs, such as food menus and household needs, so that they were more planned and did not interfere with her work. Subject CN determined the time to be with her child on weekends. Subject DN had a way of dividing her time, namely from morning to evening, the mother worked, then continued with parenting after work. This was done by giving special attention to things such as asking about schoolwork and other needs.

In terms of involvement balance, subject AN expressed difficulty because the conditions and workplace did not allow her to bring her child, and there was no one else who could be asked to help look after her child while working, so AN left her child at home unsupervised. Sometimes, AN's family members would come to AN's house to make sure her child was okay. Subject BN's involvement in caring for her child always involved her child while working or in the activities she participated in, such as training, community, or her child's activities at school, and the ABK community. This shows subject BN's concern for caring for her child, balancing her busy work and activities outside of work, while also considering her child's development by incorporating activities that support her child's potential, such as dance courses. CN's involvement was by handing over childcare to the nanny during weekdays and accompanying her child on weekends. In addition, CN and her child are in different cities. However, this does not mean that during the weekdays, subject CN does not accompany her child. She utilizes technology, including video calls, video recordings, and CCTV, to monitor the child's activities while away and provide a nanny facility who happens to be a relative of CN. On weekends, the subject takes the time to get involved by taking the child for a walk, so that the child is not afraid of crowds and can focus on choosing the right therapy for them. The involvement of the subject DN is relatively good because he tries to accompany the child in every activity and always supports all the child's activities, such as batik and painting Malang masks. This fosters direct involvement between mother and child, where the mother consistently makes time for the child's activities and interests. Additionally, the involvement of family members in the care process also benefits the subject, DN, who lives under the same roof as the subject.

In the balance between work satisfaction and parenting, each individual has their way of striking a balance. People have principles and commitments that guide their lives and shape their acceptance of the living conditions they currently face. Subject AN experiences dissatisfaction with parenting due to limited working hours and the absence of family members who can assist with parenting. However, subject AN chooses to live life with happiness and gratitude as a way to balance her life. Subject BN initially found it difficult because the parenting she had done with her husband was now being done by herself. Subject BN has a way, namely by planning all the needs of her child at night. Where this helps subject BN balance the needs of work and parenting, she also feels more at ease and can focus on both. While subject CN chooses to live life according to what is determined, and is always grateful for every situation that exists, this approach avoids subject CN's dissatisfaction with life. It reduces stress triggers in both work and parenting. Likewise, the subject DN chooses to live life as has been determined by trying to meet all existing needs. Family support in this case also greatly helps balance satisfaction for the subjects.

This study identified several successful factors in achieving a balance between work and parenting. In terms of work hour management, subject AN has a time that cannot be left as a housewife, namely from 6 am to 4 pm. Parenting can only be done when he comes home from work. Meanwhile, subject BN has a flexible schedule as a preschool teacher with a location close to home, so that, in terms of parenting, it can still be managed because it can be done between work. Subject CN, as a BUMN employee, has a busy time from morning to night. In terms of involvement, it is only done via cellphone, and the caregiver handles all supervision of the child. Subject DN has flexible time, allowing the subject to accommodate activities such as the child's school meeting between work. In terms of economic factors, subject AN has a poor economy, so he is unable to send his child to school and take him for therapy. In his daily needs, the government assists subject AN through PKH funds. Subjects BN and DN both have sufficient economic means so that they can provide facilities in the form of schools and support the child's potential needs, such as courses and pursuing hobbies. Subject CN has a strong economy, enabling it to provide facilities in the form of the best therapy and schools to support the child's potential. Social support factors also play a crucial role in achieving a balance between work and care. Subject AN does not have family members who can replace them in terms of care, so they decide to leave the child unattended while working. Although the child's closest family members sometimes visit, this does not provide sufficient daily supervision for subject AN. Subject BN has a close family, specifically his older sibling, who can provide temporary care when Subject BN engages in activities that the child cannot perform. Subject CN provides complete care to the closest family member, namely the child's aunt, which has been a joint decision between Subject CN and his aunt, as is the case with Subject DN, who lives under the same roof as his younger sibling. Subject DN feels immensely helped in terms of care while working to pick up the child and provide care during the workday.

DISCUSSION

This study found that single mothers often engage in employment to meet their children's needs, including educational expenses, therapy, and other necessities. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Marphatia et al., (2017), which shows that the choice to engage in employment is consistently influenced by the financial requirements of a child, such as covering their educational expenses and childcare costs. According to the data analysis, all interviewees were employed on a full-time basis, working an average of 8 hours per day. Subjects AN, BN, and DN reported that their husbands were in favor of their decision to work. Meanwhile, the individual referred to as subject CN was already employed before they got married. Therefore, in this particular scenario, they share a commonality: fulfilling multiple responsibilities of work and caregiving for an extended duration before becoming single mothers. A significant obstacle faced by single working mothers is the requirement for increased access to resources that facilitate economic self-reliance (Stephens, 2017). Therefore, in this particular scenario, the individuals involved decided to collaborate to meet the child's requirements.

Subject AN demonstrated a low level of engagement in childcare responsibilities while also working. The subject's disengagement began with her decision to entrust the care of the child to others during her employment. She believes it is OK to leave her child unattended at home, despite the youngster having mild indications of autism. However, her older children occasionally check on the youngest child's contentment. There was very little participation in caring for the child while working. The involvement balance in the subject BN encompasses the child's participation in various domains, including work, training, community, school, and community activities. This exercise demonstrates the ability to prioritize the well-being of BN subjects even amid hectic work and non-work activities, while also considering the child's growth and development by incorporating activities that foster their potential. CN's interaction with her child

was limited to weekends, during which CN made an effort to engage with the child by taking them for walks. This was done to prevent the youngster from getting bored and to ensure their focus on selecting suitable therapy. In DN, the subject actively participates in every kid activity, consistently providing support for their endeavors, such as engaging in batik-making and painting Malang masks. These activities foster greater engagement between the mother and the child, with the mother consistently accompanying the youngster in their activities. Regarding social involvement, such as family and government support, all the subjects stated that this was one of the factors in achieving a life balance. Each subject has its way of balancing work satisfaction and parenting. The subjects have principles and commitments in their lives, as well as in accepting their living conditions.

Everyone had their methods of maintaining a balance between their professional responsibilities and their time spent raising children. Based on the themes AN, BN, and CN, it is challenging to allocate work attention between professional responsibilities and the care of children with special needs. The process of human development in children with special needs differs significantly from that of typically developing children. Children with this condition typically achieve fewer developmental milestones compared to normally growing children of the same age, making it challenging for them to succeed in social, personal, and academic activities. (Zablotsky et al., 2017). Numerous similar studies indicate that single mothers face significant challenges in providing exceptional care and fulfilling the requirements of a child with special needs, and at the very least, possessing knowledge of the child's condition poses a formidable challenge for single mothers. (Octavia & Himam, 2019). BN, CN, and DN subjects ensure that their children receive a comprehensive education from special education institutions (SLB) that is tailored to their individual development needs. This educational support allows the parents to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

They strive to maintain a balance between their work on subjects AN, BN, and DN, and their commitment to parenting. This includes taking care of all the child's needs in the morning and after work. Regarding this matter, BN consistently arranged all the necessary provisions for the child during the evening, including the food menu, the schedule of activities for the following day, and all other requirements of the child. Subject DN effectively manages his time by simultaneously overseeing the group of parents at school and fulfilling his work responsibilities. However, the CN subject effectively manages the distance by regularly monitoring the child with a cell phone and dedicating time on weekends to be with them. Women can achieve a favorable work-life balance by effectively managing their obligations as both employees and mothers. (Huda & Firdaus, 2020).

The findings of the participation analysis are consistent with the research conducted by Lee et al., (2009) That work-life balance involves the capacity of individuals in the workforce to sustain engagement in friendships, activities, sports, membership in religious communities, and volunteer work. These characteristics are evident in subjects BN, CN, and DN, who consistently engage in their child's activities, including pursuing hobbies and dedicating time to their child. Subjects BN and DN disclosed their consistent and engaged participation in their child's activities both within and beyond the school environment. Meanwhile, subject DN consistently dedicates time to the child, engaging in activities such as strolling, attending therapy sessions, and participating in the child's weekend activities.

Subject AN perceived a reduced sense of personal engagement in comparison to other subjects, mainly due to economic circumstances and a lack of knowledge, resulting in a lack of social engagement for her child outside of the home. The presence of pressure among single moms can lead to the development of depressive symptoms, which in turn can harm their parenting abilities and subsequently result in behavioral issues for their children. (Jackson et al., 2003). A single

mother must effectively manage and harmonize several dimensions of her life, encompassing her well-being in terms of physical, mental, social, emotional, economic, and spiritual aspects.

According to Armstrong & Taylor (2023) Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium that employees establish between their job responsibilities and their non-work obligations, such as parenting, other essential tasks, and personal interests and hobbies. According to the analysis results, the level of engagement of single mothers in activities outside of work appears to be satisfactory. Similarly to AN, individuals actively participate in societal affairs through regular engagement in community activities such as *tahlil* (Quran recitation) and monthly Program Keluarga Harapan (social welfare program) meetings. BN is highly engaged in workplace training and actively participates in supporting the education and development of youngsters in the Down syndrome community. The DN subject demonstrates active engagement in both the community and workplace, actively participating in employee training to enhance work skills and contribute to community activities. Meanwhile, as per subject CN, social engagement takes a backseat to engagement with children, resulting in infrequent occurrences, only happening sometimes when they have leisure time to socialize with colleagues.

The obstacles faced by single mothers in achieving work-life balance are numerous and persistent. These challenges include the demands of work, managing household obligations, being the primary earner, taking care of childcare responsibilities, dealing with restrictive work schedules, and lacking support both within and outside the family. (Bianchi, 2011). According to the research findings, participants AN and CN chose to delegate the responsibility of caring for their child to their sister. Nevertheless, subject AN chose to leave the youngster exhibiting mild autism signs unattended while working. According to a study conducted by Bakker & Karsten (2013) Single mothers often face significant challenges in balancing their employment and household responsibilities. Subject AN disclosed that this action was necessary to fulfill the child's financial requirements. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Ciabattari (2006), which indicates that single mothers with poor income are more susceptible to experiencing conflict and health issues. The AN subject faces challenges in providing care facilities for the child due to financial constraints and a lack of support from the family. According to Maşita et al. (2019) Women who have a poor work-life balance exhibit unfavorable characteristics when it comes to parenting.

An underlying issue is the limited number of cost-effective and dependable daycares that accept children with special needs, compelling women to rely on assistance from family members, which can sometimes result in unfavorable circumstances. (Barsoum, 2019). The investigation revealed that CN participants had access to high-quality childcare services provided by their families as a substitute for temporary care during their job hours. Subjects BN and DN remained in care while working due to their ability to prioritize their children's needs, such as integrating their children into their work environment, attending to their children's needs, and participating in their children's activities during demanding work hours. Therefore, in this particular scenario, it is impacted by variables such as employment arrangements. McDonald et al. (2005) Found that flexible working hours enable people to effectively manage their responsibilities both at work and in their personal lives.

Furthermore, the level of support from one's family has a considerable influence on achieving a balance between work and personal life. One can employ various tactics to achieve a harmonious balance between personal and professional life, such as delegating household responsibilities to a trusted individual or arranging for more flexible working hours. According to the research findings, the individual can only attain a state of equilibrium between work and personal life by relying on family support aspects that facilitate parenting. According to Aprilia (2013), social support is an effective means of mitigating the factors that contribute to psychological stress in challenging circumstances. The participants reported that familial support significantly aided

them in their work and other endeavors. In addition to receiving help from their families, individuals with AN and BN disorders also receive financial assistance from the government to bolster their economy. Therefore, this instance highlights the importance of social assistance for single mothers in achieving balance in their lives.

Single mothers are responsible for both providing for their families financially, as their partners would, and managing household duties, similar to those of a traditional housewife. A significant obstacle encountered by single working mothers is the limited availability of resources that facilitate financial independence. (Stephens, 2017). This study discovered that the process of transitioning into single motherhood was challenging for divorced individuals, AN, BN, and DN. Previously, the woman consistently received aid and guidance from her spouse, but now she was compelled to assume full responsibility for all matters. According to a study conducted by Başır et al. (2023) The psychological well-being of single moms is negatively affected by the various duties and obligations they have to undertake, as well as the financial burden of caring for their child's illness, which includes expenses such as doctor visits, specialized therapy, medicine, and so on.

In general, they decided to lead a life characterized by gratitude and happiness. According to the subject CN, it is advised not to have excessive ambition in life, as it can lead to stress. According to Arumugam (2023) Study and stress can have a substantial effect on the work-life balance of single mothers. In this scenario, the individuals realized that balancing a professional life with caring for a child with special needs was challenging. However, they found consolation and a sense of ease when they were able to reconcile with themselves and fully accept their child's condition. Subjects CN and DN reported experiencing high levels of satisfaction in both their professional and personal lives. Meanwhile, subjects AN and BN faced challenges in parenting due to their husbands' absence of involvement. Nevertheless, the individuals possess methods of attaining a state of equilibrium in terms of happiness.

The BN subject minimized the subject's disability by consistently facilitating the child's growth and development activities to meet his care requirements. In contrast, the AN subject is committed to always being grateful and living a happy life while adhering to principles. According to Greenhaus et al. (2003), this stage refers to the point at which an individual can effectively manage both work and family responsibilities, indicating a significant level of work-life balance. During the satisfaction stage of their dual duty as single mothers, the respondents exhibited a shared dedication to abstaining from seeking a life partner once again. This was primarily driven by their heightened focus on their child's well-being and their endeavor to cultivate a sense of gratitude towards life. Greenhaus et al. (2003) Defines work-life balance as the ability of individuals to effectively handle and distribute their work responsibilities, family life, and other responsibilities.

This study confirms Arumugam (2023) Findings that single mothers require substantial assistance and resources to effectively cope with the stress associated with their employment, household responsibilities, and childcare duties. According to the research findings, receiving social support from both family and government is essential for individuals to effectively manage the financial aspects and level of commitment to their caring responsibilities. According to Zahra and Hendriani (2023), working while caring for a child with special needs is made easier with the assistance of a spouse. According to the research findings, the involvement of family and husbands during that period could facilitate the ability of single mothers to effectively manage the demands of both jobs and the care of children with special needs.

A limitation of this research was that unequal work characteristics of the subjects may have impacted the results of this study. AN, the only one who has blue-collar work characteristics, while the other have white-collar work characteristics. So, it's pretty standard for AN to struggle more to involve her son in receiving more reasonable treatment. Undoubtedly, my research has yielded novel discoveries. Successfully managing work and caring for single mothers who have children with special needs depends on aspects such as sustainability and favorable economic conditions. This study demonstrates that single moms experience economic, regulatory, and social support challenges when trying to balance their employment responsibilities with caregiving duties. Single mothers employ many strategies to manage the delicate equilibrium between their professional and personal lives.

CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, the main result is that single mothers who have children with special needs experience various mental health challenges that have some effect on their ability to nurture their children. Researchers have identified several characteristics that contribute to difficulties for single mothers in fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities. The first issue is the economic aspect, wherein a financially stable single mother may afford to give her child specialized education, therapy, extra support, and daycare services. On the other hand, single mothers who have limited financial resources are unable to offer adequate care services for children who have special needs. The second determinant is the organization of working hours, whereby single moms with flexible working hours will have greater engagement in the upbringing of their children. Conversely, single mothers with limited working hours will lack the necessary time to care for their children. Social support, as the third aspect, helps single women effectively manage the responsibilities of parenting and employment. This study demonstrates that single mothers employ distinct techniques to manage the demands of both their professional and parental responsibilities.

Furthermore, the psychological dynamics of single mothers who have children with special needs reveal unique characteristics when it comes to attaining a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and personal lives. Single-mother status considerations have an impact on psychological dynamics in this situation. This study demonstrates that divorced single moms encounter challenges during the initial phase of transitioning into single motherhood, as they navigate the process of sharing parental obligations with their former spouses. Divorced single mothers possess a preexisting sense of dedication and values that facilitate the fulfillment of various responsibilities. This study discovered that single mothers can effectively manage their participation in society despite having a child with special needs. Undoubtedly, this state is appealing to single mothers who face diverse problems and challenges in life. Through this study, it was discovered that single mothers with children with special needs demonstrate a dedication to maintaining a sense of contentment by refraining from pursuing new relationships and instead choosing to embrace their current circumstances.

The implication of this research is that assistance and facilitation from the community, family, and workplace for single moms who have children with special needs, for example, giving some extra time for the mother to engage more with their kids. Researchers anticipate that future studies will focus on economic considerations, job arrangement factors, and social support factors to accurately forecast their impact on work-life balance among single mothers who have children with special needs on a broader scale.

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