



SINGLE PARENTS' PRACTICES AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN MANDALUYONG CITY

Sandra Mae Asis Vivero

Graduate School, Philippine College of Criminology, Manila, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is influenced not only by individual behavior but also by families' capacity to provide guidance, supervision, and protection. This study examined the parenting practices and protective measures employed by single parents in Mandaluyong City to prevent juvenile delinquency. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, the study explored the lived experiences of 12 single parents raising children aged 12 to 17 years through semi-structured in-depth interviews, field notes, and observations. The interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings showed that single parents viewed guidance as a continuous and demanding responsibility involving communication, discipline, supervision, emotional support, and values formation. Protective measures included household rules and curfews, monitoring of whereabouts, friendships and online activities, academic encouragement, reminders, and appropriate consequences. Participants also described community and family support as important, while identifying adolescent resistance, peer and social media influence, work demands, financial strain, emotional exhaustion, limited time, and limited community support as major challenges. Participants perceived that firm but caring discipline, open communication, and positive role modeling supported discipline, responsibility, respect, self-control, and safer decision-making. Based on the findings, the GABAY-SOLO Community-Based Parenting and Youth Protection Program was proposed to strengthen parenting support, youth development, solo-parent assistance, and coordinated referral.

KEYWORDS: Single Parents; Parenting Practices; Protective Measures; Juvenile Delinquency; Parental Guidance

1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains a concern for families, schools, communities, and government because adolescents may be exposed to behaviors such as fighting, theft, substance use, truancy, and other risky activities. Existing literature indicates that family structure may be associated with youth outcomes, but family structure alone does not determine whether an adolescent will engage in delinquency. Parenting quality, supervision, communication, emotional support, and family relationships are important protective conditions (Kroese et al., 2021; Aazami et al., 2023; Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2022).

Single parents may experience particular pressures because one adult often carries both provider and caregiver responsibilities. Financial strain, work demands, limited time, emotional exhaustion, and reduced access to support may make consistent supervision difficult. At the same time, research suggests that supportive parenting and strong parent-child relationships can help children develop self-control, responsibility, and positive decision-making even when family circumstances are difficult (Cooper & Stewart, 2021; Kuschick et al., 2022; Baral et al., 2024).

In the Philippine context, there is limited research specifically examining how single parents use everyday parenting practices and protective measures to prevent juvenile delinquency. The present study therefore focused on the lived experiences of single parents in Mandaluyong City, particularly how they guide and protect adolescent children, the protective measures and support they use, the challenges they encounter, and the perceived contribution of their practices to children's attitudes and behavior. The study was guided by Social Control

Theory and Social Learning Theory, which emphasize social bonds, parental involvement, modeling, and reinforcement as influences on behavior.

The study also responds to the identified local research gap by providing a context-specific account of single parents' preventive practices. Rather than treating single-parent status as a direct cause of delinquency, the study examined how parents themselves understand and manage risks within their daily family and community circumstances.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study examined the experiences, protective measures, challenges, and perceived effects of parenting practices among single parents in Mandaluyong City. Specifically, it sought to:

- Describe the experiences of single parents in guiding and protecting their children against juvenile delinquency;
- Identify the protective measures and support used to address risks of juvenile delinquency in the community;
- Determine the challenges encountered in implementing protective measures;
- Describe how parents perceived their practices as contributing to their children's attitudes and behavior regarding juvenile delinquency; and
- Develop a community-based program based on the findings.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design and Method

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used to explore the lived experiences of single parents in guiding and protecting their adolescent children from behaviors associated



with juvenile delinquency. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, strategies, and challenges in their real-life context rather than to establish statistical relationships.

3.2 Participants and Locale

The participants were 12 single parents residing in Mandaluyong City who were actively raising children aged 12 to 17 years. Both mothers and fathers were included. The study was conducted across selected barangays in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, and data collection took place from November 2025 to May 2026.

3.3 Data Collection

A semi-structured interview guide was used as the main data-gathering instrument. The guide was developed in line with the study's theoretical foundations and was reviewed and validated by a licensed psychologist for clarity, relevance, and content validity. Interviews used open-ended questions and follow-up probes. With permission, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Field notes and observations were also used to supplement the interview accounts.

3.4 Data Analysis and Ethics

Interview transcripts were read repeatedly and analyzed through thematic analysis. Similar responses were coded, compared, clustered, and refined into themes reflecting the participants' experiences, protective measures, challenges, and perceived outcomes. Ethical procedures included informed consent, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, respectful treatment, and secure handling of recordings, transcripts, and notes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Five major areas emerged from the analysis. The findings are presented as participants' experiences and perceptions and should not be interpreted as a statistical or causal test of parenting effects.

Research Area	Major Theme	Key Findings
SOP 1	Burdened but Persistent Single-Parent Guidance	Parents carried provider and caregiver roles while sustaining guidance, discipline, communication, perseverance, and moral commitment.
SOP 2	Home-Based and Community-Supported Protection	Curfews, rules, monitoring, reminders, consequences, family assistance, government support, and structured youth activities were used.
SOP 3	Challenges That Constrain Protective Measures	Adolescent resistance, peer/social media influence, work demands, financial

		strain, emotional exhaustion, limited time, and limited support affected consistency.
SOP 4	Formation of Responsible Attitudes and Safer Choices	Parents perceived that firm but caring discipline, open communication, understanding, and role modeling supported responsibility, respect, self-control, and safer decisions.
SOP 5	GABAY-SOLO Community-Based Program	Participants' needs informed a program combining parenting support, youth values formation, productive activities, assistance services, and referral coordination.

Single parents described guidance as a demanding but sustained responsibility. Their narratives showed that parenting involved simultaneously earning income, managing the household, making decisions, disciplining children, and maintaining emotional connection. Despite fatigue and limited support, participants reported continuing to talk with their children, provide advice, teach values, and monitor behavior. This pattern supports the importance of attachment and involvement emphasized by Social Control Theory.

4.1 Protective Measures and Support

Protection began within the home. Participants described setting curfews, requiring children to report where they were going, limiting excessive cellphone use and unsupervised activities, giving repeated reminders, and applying consequences after misconduct. Monitoring also included knowing children's companions, checking activities, communicating with other parents, and, in some cases, using location technology. These practices show that parents attempted to identify risks early while maintaining accountability and communication.

Participants also identified support beyond the household. Some received assistance from relatives, while others expressed a need for stronger barangay services, counseling, seminars, and youth activities. Sports, skills activities, study support, and other structured programs were viewed as constructive alternatives to idle time, risky peer interaction, and street exposure. This supports the study's broader view that delinquency prevention involves the family, school, peers, community, and public institutions.

4.2 Challenges in Implementing Protective Measures

The participants reported challenges both within the parent-child relationship and in the wider environment. Adolescent resistance and increasing independence made rules and discipline more difficult to enforce. Peer influence and social



media were described as sources of competing messages and behaviors. Some parents also reported emotional exhaustion when repeated discipline did not immediately produce cooperation.

Work and financial responsibilities further constrained supervision. Participants explained that time spent working was necessary to provide food, schooling, housing, and other needs, yet the same work demands reduced their physical availability. Limited support magnified these pressures. These findings suggest that limited supervision should not automatically be interpreted as parental neglect because it may result from structural pressures affecting the parent's capacity to be consistently present.

4.3 Perceived Influence of Parenting Practices

Participants perceived that their parenting practices contributed to children becoming more disciplined, responsible, respectful, and capable of making safer decisions. Some described children becoming more committed to school, choosing friends more carefully, staying within agreed boundaries, and understanding consequences.

A recurring pattern was the importance of balancing firmness with affection and communication. Parents described explaining why a behavior was wrong, listening to children's views, and combining consequences with understanding. Positive role modeling was also emphasized: parents believed that demonstrating responsibility, respect, honesty, and perseverance strengthened the messages they communicated. These findings are consistent with Social Control Theory through attachment and involvement, and Social Learning Theory through observation and modeling.

Because the study was qualitative, these findings represent participants' perceptions and lived experiences. They do not establish that a particular parenting practice causes a specific behavioral outcome.

4.4 Proposed GABAY-SOLO Program

Based on the identified needs, the study proposed GABAY-SOLO: A Community-Based Parenting and Youth Protection Program for Single-Parent Families. The program is intended to strengthen, rather than replace, the protective role of single parents through coordinated family and community support.

Component	Core Activities	Intended Outcome
Parenting Support and Counseling	Monthly counseling, parenting circles, emotional-regulation sessions, parent-child dialogue.	Improved communication, more consistent discipline, reduced parental strain, earlier identification of concerns.
Youth Discipline and Values Formation	Workshops on peer pressure, digital safety, consequences, respect, self-control, and decision-making.	Improved awareness, self-control, safer peer choices, and reduced exposure to risky behavior.
Sports and Productive Youth Activities	Regular sports, skills workshops, study support,	Reduced idle time and street exposure;

	traditional games, and vacation activities.	increased positive peer interaction.
Solo Parent Assistance Desk	Information on benefits, counseling, referrals, and available family services.	Improved access to practical, counseling, and government support.
Barangay Youth Monitoring and Referral System	Coordination among barangays, schools, parents, social workers, and youth leaders for early identification and referral.	Earlier intervention, better coordination, and stronger community protection.

5. CONCLUSION

Single parents in Mandaluyong City described guiding and protecting their adolescent children as a continuous and demanding responsibility. Despite carrying both provider and caregiver roles, they remained committed to their children's development through communication, discipline, supervision, emotional support, and values formation. Their protective practices included clear household rules and curfews, monitoring activities and friendships, limits on gadget and outside activities, academic encouragement, reminders, appropriate consequences, and open communication.

The findings also showed that the consistent implementation of these measures was affected by adolescent resistance, peer and social media influence, work demands, financial strain, emotional exhaustion, limited time, and limited community support. Participants perceived that firm but caring discipline, open communication, understanding, affection, and positive role modeling supported children's responsibility, respect, self-control, and safer decision-making. Overall, the study indicates that juvenile delinquency prevention in single-parent families is strengthened when parental involvement is supported by accessible family, school, barangay, and community resources.

6. SUGGESTIONS

- Single parents should continue practicing clear communication, appropriate supervision, and consistent discipline, while explaining rules and consequences and maintaining regular parent-child conversations.
- Parents should encourage school commitment and guide adolescents in dealing with negative peer influences and potentially harmful activities through open discussion of friendships, school experiences, and online activities.
- Barangays should conduct regular parenting seminars and youth development activities in partnership with schools and the Sangguniang Kabataan, focusing on discipline, communication, digital safety, peer influence, adolescent development, sports, values formation, and study support.
- Barangays should establish or strengthen Solo Parent Assistance Desks and peer-support activities that provide information, counseling referrals, available benefits, and practical assistance, with schedules accessible to working parents.



- The barangays, City Social Welfare and Development Office, schools, and Sangguniang Kabataan should consider adopting GABAY-SOLO, with periodic assessment to determine whether its services address the needs identified in the study.

7. AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future studies may include larger and more diverse samples of single parents from other cities or regions and may incorporate the perspectives of adolescents, teachers, social workers, and barangay officials. Mixed-method, longitudinal, or comparative studies may also examine how parenting practices and community support relate to changes in adolescent behavior over time. Future research may further evaluate the feasibility and outcomes of the proposed GABAY-SOLO program.

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