Cognitive Vulnerabilities and Depression of Children with Single Parents

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Abstract

Cognitive vulnerabilities are beliefs or attitudes thought to make a person vulnerable to emotional disorders whereas depression is a negative affective state, ranging from unhappiness and discontent to an extreme feeling of sadness, pessimism, and despondency that interferes with daily life. A child belonging to a broken family has constant internal conflict. The exploration uncovered that separation of parents has unfortunate results on youngsters like discouragement, stress, depression, crabbiness, and absence of consideration. This study determined the cognitive vulnerabilities and depression of children with single parents through descriptive-correlational design. The data were gathered from 150 children with single parents through purposive sampling technique. The research instrument used to measure the level of cognitive vulnerabilities were attitude toward self, life orientation and hopelessness whereas Beck Depression Inventory was used to measure the level of depression. Based on the findings, children of single parents have high level of attitude toward self, high level of life orientation and moderate level of hopelessness. However, many of them have severe level of depression. It was further disclosed that age and occupation are significantly related to depression. Moreover, it revealed that attitude toward self and life orientation are not significantly related to depression while hopelessness is significantly related. The results proved that children of single parents suffer from emotional trauma. Thus, strong support system is necessary for them to adjust emotionally.

Keywords:
cognitive vulnerabilities, depression, children with single parents

Suggested Citation: Marasigan P.R. (2021). Cognitive Vulnerabilities and Depression of Children with Single Parents. The Research Probe, Volume 1, Issue 2, pp 1 - 20.

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1. Introduction

The family, which consists of parents and children, is very important to human life. Starting from loving and loving the child who comes from within a family develops a healthy personality in accordance with the physical and mental needs. The child, who has completed the socialization and education process with the help and contributions of the parents, gains a successful social life. A child observes a family communication based on mutual love, respect, sharing and solidarity, and gains better relationship with the people around him (Şentürk, 2012). Family is a great institution and parenting is its pillar. However, there were observations nowadays that single parenting is mostly practiced and one individual parent is accountable of nurturing children. Due to multiple reasons, both spouses are unable to practice the same responsibilities together. It seems very strong but has ultimate consequences on children (Ali & Soomar, 2019).

There has been an overall agreement that solitary parent families are in a difficult spot contrasted with more conventional homes (Behere, et al., 2017). The factors associated with worse outcome in single-parent families maybe more complicated than first evident. Single-parent families are also described with less resilience when confronting stress. Single parenthood raises further economic challenges compounding the level of stress, possibly causing more difficulties in parent–child relationships. The prevalence of poverty in single-parent family has been estimated to be as high as 50% compared to around 5% in two-parent intact families (Avison, 2002). Children who grow up in fragmented or single-parent families fail to fulfill their socialization tasks (Uluğtekin, 1991). The vicious clash made by the ineptitude in the family causes the separation by debilitating the connection between the parents, and because of these separations, various anti-social behaviors like high tension, forcefulness and timidity are seen in children (Ulug & Candan, 2008).

A child belonging to a broken family has constant internal conflict. At the end of these conflicts, they accused the family of children and showed an attitude towards them (Wolf, 1998). Without the ability to solve the problem, the child will face deeper problems in the future because he cannot solve his anti-social behavior (Morganett, 2005). The exploration uncovered that separation has unfortunate results on youngsters like discouragement, stress, depression, crabbliness, and absence of consideration (Herwig, et al., 2004; Jackson, 2000).
Albeit numerous kids raised by single parents are composed (Shook, et al., 2010), research has demonstrated that single parent families are almost certain than two-parent families to encounter low financial status (SES) or destitution, neighborhood stress, low enthusiastic help, and expanded job liabilities (Hilton & Devall, 1998; Kendig & Bianchi, 2008). Moreover, children raised by single parents are almost certain than youngsters raised by flawless, two-parent families to encounter a scope of change troubles, including scholastic issues, substance misuse, social shortfalls, and psychopathology (Amato & Keith, 1991; Schleider, et al., 2014). Albeit the danger for youth psychopathology presented by single parenthood has been viewed as more noteworthy for externalizing than disguising manifestations in earlier investigations (Daryanani, et al., 2016; Hilton & Devall, 1998), research reliably has demonstrated that children brought up in single parent families are at raised danger for burdensome indications and issues (Amato & Keith, 1991; Daryanani et al., 2016; Hilton & Devall, 1998). This danger is logical exacerbated during pre-adulthood, a time of improvement described by extraordinarily elevated danger for burdensome manifestations and first beginning of a depressive episode (Hankin, 2006). This intensified danger renders it essential to examine how single parenthood presents hazard for juvenile wretchedness, as uncovering instruments that assist with clarifying the relationship can more readily illuminate clinical intercessions. Be that as it may, there is a deficiency of exploration on the possible systems through which single parenthood gives hazard for youth despondency (Daryanani, et al., 2017).

Developmentally, adolescence marks an ideal period to examine depression and the development of cognitive vulnerabilities to depression. Notably, there is a substantial increase in depression experienced from childhood to adolescence, with prevalence rates during adolescence converging on rates during adulthood (Hankin, 2006). It is well-established that many psychosocial factors more broadly predictive of depression - including life stress, cognitive vulnerabilities, and interpersonal conflicts - are more likely to be encountered by adolescents than children (Hankin, 2006), thus, may help explain the sharp increase in depressive rates. Moreover, although cognitive vulnerabilities such as rumination and negative inferential styles are present during childhood, they often consolidate during adolescence and develop into more robust, stable predictors of depression (Hankin, 2008).
According to APA dictionary of psychology, cognitive vulnerability is a set of beliefs or attitudes thought to make a person vulnerable to emotional disorders such as depression and anxiety. According to Riskind and Black (2005), cognitive vulnerabilities are faulty beliefs, cognitive biases, or structures that are hypothesized to set the stage for later psychological problems when they arise. This term focuses upon a sense of dissonance, meaning discord or conflict, within a person’s mental processes while learning new information but more directly this term focuses upon the learner’s efforts towards using information in new and different ways of understanding (Crawford, 2018). They are in place long before the earliest signs or symptoms of disorder first appear. These vulnerabilities are typically purported to create specific liabilities to particular psychological disorder after individuals encounter stressful events, and to maintain the problems after their onset. Only by addressing these vulnerabilities can long-term therapeutic improvements be maintained, and the risk of recurrences or relapse be reduced. Maladaptive cognitive styles, including dysfunctional attitudes about our self-worth, the tendency to make negative inferences about the causes and consequences of negative events, and the tendency to ruminate about our sad mood, have been hypothesized to provide vulnerability to depression when individuals experience stressful life events (Alloy, et al., 2016).

Cognitive clinical models assume that cognitive phenomena mediate the relationship between events that a person experiences and subsequent emotional responses. That is, between the situation and the individual’s responses comes the all-important step of information processing and cognitive appraisal (Fridja, 1987; Lazarus, 1991; Ortony, et al., 1988; Roseman, et al., 1990). For example, individuals who attribute failures to stable personal defects are likely to become more depressed and exhibit more helplessness. This same guiding principle applies to internal stimuli (e.g., physical sensations, unwanted thoughts or emotions) as to stimuli in the external environment (e.g., criticism from others). Riskind and Alloy (2006) believe that cognitive vulnerability models offer popular ways of understanding the origins and causal factors that contribute to psychological problems. Cognitive vulnerabilities are typically purported to create liabilities to psychological disorders after individuals encounter stressful events, in a vulnerability-stress interaction, and to maintain the problems after their onset. The principle also applies to both “normal” and
“abnormal” responses of individuals. That is, such models are also based upon the precept of a continuity of normal and abnormal cognitive processes.

According to Beck (1991), the [cognitive] model of psychopathology proposes that the “excessive dysfunctional behavior and distressing emotions or inappropriate affect found in various psychiatric disorders are exaggerations of normal adaptive processes” (p. 370). Simultaneously, individuals can display generally constant or stable examples in the ways in which they evaluate feeling inciting boosts (Abramson, et al., 1978; Riskind, et al., 2000; Weiner, 1985). For instance, a few people constantly characteristic disappointments to individual imperfections. Because of these distinctions, individuals can vary in their future danger for creating specific sorts of passionate issues or mental issues.

Most theorists adopt a vulnerability–stress paradigm in which it is recognized that psychological disorders are caused by a combination of predisposing (constitutional or learned) and precipitating (environmental) factors. That is, encouraging occasions (e.g., distressing life occasions, youth injuries, a conjugal conflict) can trigger the advancement of mental issues or passionate issues for specific people (Alloy, et al., 1999), however the degree and even course of reaction can vary colossally starting with one individual then onto the next. Thus, precipitating environmental events are particularly likely to produce psychological problems among individuals who have a preexisting cognitive vulnerability to the disorders. Indeed, most individuals who are exposed to precipitating stressful events do not develop disorders. When disorders or problems emerge, their specific nature differs for different individuals and is not determined just by the precipitating stress alone. For instance, unpleasant occasions are raised in melancholy (Brown & Harris, 1978; Paykel, 1982), bipolar confusion and madness (Johnson & Roberts, 1995), uneasiness problems (Last, et al., 1984; Roy–Byrne, et al., 1986), and even schizophrenia (Zuckerman, 1999). Thus, cognitive vulnerability–stress models are offered to help account for not only who is vulnerable to developing emotional disorder (e.g., individuals with a particular cognitive style), and when (e.g., after a stress), but to which disorders (e.g., depression, eating disorder, etc.) they are vulnerable (Riskind & Alloy, 2006).

In this context, this study aimed to determine the relationship between depression of the children and cognitive vulnerabilities in terms of attitudes toward self, life orientation and
hopelessness. Results of this study will be basis for an intervention program for children with single parents who are suffering from depressive symptoms.

2. Literature review

2.1 Effects of Single Parenthood

The study of Behere, et al. (2017) showed that only 11% of children came from intact families living with biological parents while 89% had some kind of disruption in their family structure. Two-third of the children in the study population had been exposed to trauma with physical abuse seen in 36% of cases while 71% had reported either a parent or a sibling with a psychiatric disorder. Children coming from biologically family were less likely to have been exposed to trauma. Children coming from single/divorced families were less likely to have been exposed to sexual abuse but more likely to have a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) compared to other types of families. Strong association was found between exposure to trauma and certain diagnoses in respect to hospitalization. ADHD predicted a 4 times likelihood of having more than one previous hospitalization, with mood disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and physical abuse increasing the risk by more than twice. The study concluded that significant differences in family structure were demonstrated in children being admitted to inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.

Disruption in family structure can lead to several adverse events impacting both the mental health of children and their parents. Not all disruptions have equal effects. More emotional and behavioral problems occur in families disrupted by divorce than compared to other types of disruptions, for example, death of a parent. Certain characteristics have been identified in caregivers as well as the children themselves that serve as risk factors for abuse. Young age, depression, substance abuse, poverty, and history of mothers being separated from their own mothers during childhood serve as risk factors. Similar risk factors are also seen in male caregivers with unrelated male partner present at home acting as an additional risk factor. Some 30% children are expected to be living with unrelated surrogate father (Oliver, et al., 2006).

The study of Adegboyega (2019) investigated the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by Nigerian primary school teachers. The findings revealed that low self-esteem was the most influencing emotional
development of primary school students. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on the emotional development of primary school students in terms of gender and qualification.

Abubakar and Tambawal (2019) identified parent’s age, education level, level of income generating capacities of the family and family support system could influence how children develop in single parent families. It was found that single-parents’ household (out of wedlock) found to have less income and lacking support tend to have increase in stress and conflict. Also, they often struggle with time management issues due to balancing of many different areas of life on their own.

2.2 Cognitive Vulnerabilities and Depression

Balsamo, et al., (2013) tested whether cognitive vulnerabilities (CV) and the Attitudes Toward Self-Revised (ATS-R), independently discriminate between subjects with different severities of depression. Results showed that the four first-order (BHS Optimism/Low Standard; BHS Pessimism; Generalized Self-Criticism; and LOT Optimism) and two higher-order factors (Pessimism/Negative Attitudes Toward Self, Optimism) were extracted using Principal Axis Factoring analysis. Although all first-order and second-order factors were able to discriminate individuals with different depression severities, the Pessimism factor had the best performance in discriminating individuals with moderate to severe depression from those with lower depression severity.

Hong and Cheung (2014) examined the extent to which six cognitive vulnerabilities associated with depression (i.e., pessimistic inferential style, dysfunctional attitudes, and ruminative style) and anxiety (i.e., anxiety sensitivity, intolerance of uncertainty, and fear of negative evaluation) were related with one another. Results indicated that they were moderately to strongly correlated. Meta-analytic structural equation modelling was applied to evaluate two alternative factor analytic models underlying the associations among the vulnerabilities. A one-factor model provided the best fit to the meta-analytic data, suggesting a common etiologic factor shared among the vulnerabilities. This suggests that the vulnerabilities are not distinct at a broad level and their common core presents an avenue for transdiagnostic interventions.
Hankin (2008) examined the stability of 3 cognitive vulnerabilities--a negative cognitive style, dysfunctional attitudes, and rumination--as well as depressive symptoms as a benchmark to investigate whether cognitive vulnerabilities are stable, enduring risks for depression. A sample of adolescents (6th-10th graders) completed measures of these 3 cognitive vulnerabilities and depressive symptoms every 5 weeks for 4 waves of data across 5 months. Results showed that absolute magnitudes of test-retest reliabilities were strong for depressive symptoms (mean r = .70), moderately high for a negative cognitive style (mean r = .52), and more modest for rumination (mean r = .28) and dysfunctional attitudes (mean r = .26). Structural equation modeling showed that primarily enduring processes, but not contextual forces, contributed to the patterning of these test-retest reliabilities over time for a negative cognitive style and dysfunctional attitudes, whereas both enduring and contextual dynamics appeared to underlie the stability for rumination.

Hamilton, et al., (2013) examined the effects of two theoretically and empirically supported cognitive vulnerabilities to depression (negative cognitive style and rumination) as predictors of dependent interpersonal and achievement events, independent events, and relational peer victimization. In a diverse sample of 301 early adolescents (56 % female; M\text{age} = 12.82 years), it was found that negative cognitive style prospectively predicted the experience of dependent interpersonal stress and relational victimization, and that rumination did not predict stress in any of the domains. Furthermore, the occurrence of intervening stress mediated the associations between negative cognitive style and subsequent depressive symptoms. Additionally, whereas negative cognitive style predicted relational victimization among both boys and girls, girls were particularly vulnerable to developing depressive symptoms following the occurrence of relational victimization. Thus, a negative cognitive style may contribute to the occurrence of stressful events, which in turn increases depressive symptoms. Girls may be particularly reactive to relational victimization, representing one pathway through which sex differences in depression may emerge.

Daryanani, et al., (2016) found that adolescents raised by single mothers, relative to partnered mothers, experienced more childhood stressors and higher rumination levels at 1-year follow-up. Additionally, higher rumination mediated the relationship between single motherhood and greater youth depressive symptoms at the 2-year follow-up.
2.3. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored from Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression. According to Dr. Aaron Beck, negative thoughts, generated by dysfunctional beliefs are typically the primary cause of depressive symptoms. A direct relationship occurs between the amount and severity of someone's negative thoughts and the severity of their depressive symptoms. In other words, the more negative thoughts you experience, the more depressed you will become.

Beck also asserts that there are three main dysfunctional belief themes (or "schemas") that dominate depressed people's thinking: 1) I am defective or inadequate, 2) All of my experiences result in defeats or failures, and 3) The future is hopeless. Together, these three themes are described as the Negative Cognitive Triad. When these beliefs are present in someone's cognition, depression is very likely to occur (if it has not already occurred).

An example of the negative cognitive triad themes will help illustrate how the process of becoming depressed works. Imagine that a person has just been laid off from his/her work. If he/she is not in the grip of the negative cognitive triad, he/she might think that this event, while unfortunate, has more to do with the economic position of his/her employer than his/her own work performance. It might not occur to him/her at all to doubt himself/herself, or to think that this event means that he/she is washed up and might as well throw himself/herself down a well. If his/her thinking process was dominated by the negative cognitive triad, however, he/she would very likely conclude that his/her layoff was due to a personal failure; that he/she will always lose any job he/she might manage to get; and that his/her situation is hopeless. On the basis of these judgments, he/she will begin to feel depressed. In contrast, if he/she was not influenced by negative triad beliefs, he/she would not question his/her self-worth too much, and might respond to the lay off by dusting off his/her resume and initiating a job search.

Beyond the negative content of dysfunctional thoughts, these beliefs can also warp and shape what someone pays attention to. Beck asserted that depressed people pay selective attention to aspects of their environments that confirm what they already know and do so
even when evidence to the contrary is right in front of their noses. This failure to pay attention properly is known as faulty information processing.

Particular failures of information processing are very characteristic of the depressed mind. For example, depressed people will tend to demonstrate selective attention to information, which matches their negative expectations, and selective inattention to information that contradicts those expectations. Faced with a mostly positive performance review, depressed people will manage to find and focus in on the one negative comment that keeps the review from being perfect. They tend to magnify the importance and meaning placed on negative events, and minimize the importance and meaning of positive events. All of these maneuvers, which happen quite unconsciously, function to help maintain a depressed person's core negative schemas in the face of contradictory evidence, and allow them to remain feeling hopeless about the future even when the evidence suggests that things will get better (Retrieved from https://www.mentalhelp.net/depression/cognitive-theories/).

3. Methodology

The study used descriptive correlational design. It is descriptive since it described the behavior of the respondents. It is correlational since the study determined the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable.

The respondents of the study are 150 children with single parents living in San Pablo City, Laguna in the Philippines. It used the purposive sampling technique. The criteria set in choosing the samples are: (1) the respondents must belong to a family with single parent; (2) aged between 15-30 years old; and (3) should have a score of above 30 in the Psychological distress test. Majority of the respondents are young adults (54%), female (70.67%), unemployed (67.34%) and raised by a single mother (66.67%).

The study used the five tests namely Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Test on Attitudes toward self, Life orientation test, Beck Hopelessness Scale and Beck Depression Inventory. The respondents answered the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale first. The children with single parents who have scored 30 and above in the test were oriented and requested to become study participants. Upon the given consent, participants were given the other four (4) tests for them to answer and were retrieved afterwards.
The study made use of the following statistical tools: frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation and multiple regression.

4. Findings and Discussion

Figure 1

*Level of Attitude towards Self*

![Bar chart showing level of attitude towards self with percentages for High, Moderate, and Low levels.](chart)

Figure 1 shows the respondents’ level of attitude towards self. The results of the self-assessment indicated that 50% of the respondents have high level and very few have low level of attitude towards self with 5.33%. The percentages indicate that that many of them are holding overly high standards, have the tendency to be self-critical at any failure to perform well, and have the tendency to generalize from a single failure to the broader sense of self-worth.

The attitude towards self indicates the respondents’ ability to see their value and self-worth. Although raised by a single-parent, the children have high level of attitude towards their own value and worth. This is a good indication that these children still look at themselves with pride. In contrast with most of the cited literature and studies (Behere, et al., 2017; Oliver, et al., 2006; Adegboyega, 2019; Abubakar & Tambawal, 2019; Balsamo, et al., 2013; Hong & Cheung, 2014; Hankin, 2008; Hamilton, et al., 2013; Daryanani, et al., 2016), the results partially neglect the generalization that children of single-parent have low self-esteem and anti-social. However, taking into consideration the number of respondents with
low and moderate attitude towards self, the percentage matter for the determination of problem areas. The number of respondent with moderate attitude towards self may indicate inclination to low self-esteem and self-worth if not given the proper intervention. Taking the case by percentage alone, the results indicate an area of concern.

Figure 2

*Level of Life Orientation*

Figure 2 presents the respondents’ level of life orientation. Majority of the respondents at 54% have a high level of life orientation and no respondent has a low level of life orientation. This implies that although the respondents came from a single parent household still majority of them expect the best even in uncertain times, they are optimistic about their future and overall, expect more good things to happen to them than bad.

As life orientation deals with the self in relation to others and the society, the results clearly indicate that challenges on socialization are visible. While the majority of the respondents have no issues on their social life, a narrow gap exists with those with moderate attitude towards others and the society. The results again contrast most of the cited studies (Behere, et al., 2017; Oliver, et al., 2006; Adegboyega, 2019; Abubakar & Tambawal, 2019; Balsamo, et al., 2013; Hong & Cheung, 2014; Hankin, 2008; Hamilton, et al., 2013; Daryanani, et al., 2016) but also indicate alignment with the rest of the respondents showing indication of moderate healthy relationship with the people around them. The narrow gap on the percentage of respondents with high and moderate life orientation clearly indicate an area of concern on the respondents’ attribution of their value and their role to the society. The
percentage distributions suggest that single-parenting affect the social behavior of the children in a moderate fashion.

**Figure 3**

*Level of Hopelessness*

![Level of Hopelessness](image)

Figure 3 presents the level of hopelessness of the respondents. It shows that majority of them have moderate level of hopelessness with 54.67%, some have severe level with 28.67% and few have low level with 16.66% only. This implies that most of the respondents are sometimes pessimistic and are hopeless of the future. They sometimes develop maladaptive attitudes, or negative attitudes about one self, others, and the world around them.

The results of the assessment are aligned with the studies cited (Behere, et al., 2017; Oliver, et al., 2006; Adegboyega, 2019; Abubakar & Tambawal, 2019; Balsamo, et al., 2013; Hong & Cheung, 2014; Hankin, 2008; Hamilton, et al., 2013; Daryanani, et al., 2016) showing the negative effect of single-parenting to the emotions of the children. The percentage distributions reflect a high level of concern with regards to the hopelessness of the respondents. The moderate and severe level of hopelessness explain the high percentage of the moderate attitude toward self and life orientation. Because the respondents felt hopeless, they tend to look at the negative side of life and tend not to trust the people around them. The severe level of hopelessness clearly associate the attitude towards self and life orientation.
With limited role models growing up, these children develop the attitude of limited socialization thereby affecting how they look at life and the society in general.

**Figure 4**

*Level of Depression*

![Bar chart showing levels of depression](image)

Figure 4 illustrates the level of depression of the respondents. It shows that many of them have severe level with 44% and few have mild and minimal level with 22% and 6.67%, respectively. It can be implied that respondents are often sad, have guilty feelings, think they are worthless and their past failure, have self-dislike, have suicidal thoughts and loss of interest.

The results of the assessment are also aligned with the studies cited (Behere, et al., 2017; Oliver, et al., 2006; Adegboyega, 2019; Abubakar & Tambawal, 2019; Balsamo, et al., 2013; Hong & Cheung, 2014; Hankin, 2008; Hamilton, et al., 2013; Daryanani, et al., 2016) which indicate that children of single-parents develop serious levels of depression. The percentage distributions clearly indicate that more than half of the respondents have some serious levels of depression attributing to their situation at home. The moderate and severe level of depression assert the severe and moderate level of hopelessness as well as the high percentage of the moderate attitude toward self and life orientation. The level of hopelessness severely result to the feelings of depression.

Table 1 presents the test of correlation between profile of the respondents and their depressive behavior. It shows that age, sex of the respondents, occupation, sex of parents and family monthly income have no significant relations on the depressive behavior of the respondents while age and occupation have significant relations to the level of depression.
Table 1

Test of Correlation between Profile and Depression of the Respondents

| Profile                | r-value          | Decision   | Interpretation |
|------------------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| Age                    | 0.141516         | Reject Ho  | Significant   |
| Sex of respondents     | 0.037355         | Accept Ho  | Not Significant|
| Occupation             | 0.16969107      | Reject Ho  | Significant   |
| Sex of parent          | 0.112143         | Accept Ho  | Not Significant|
| Family monthly income  | -0.098858812     | Accept Ho  | Not Significant|

Legend: Critical value = 0.140268

As to age, since $r=0.142$ is greater than CV=0.142, Ho was rejected hence there is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and their depressive behavior. Since the correlation is positive therefore as the age of the respondents increases, the level of their depression also increases. In this study, the young adults who have single parents are more likely to be more depressed than the adolescents. This implies that the young adults are more pessimistic about having a single parent thus would view the world negatively and find fault in themselves for outcome of their family. Moreover, it can be implied that young adults have tougher life since they are struggling with being employed, balancing family and their romantic relationship or simply trying to be independent thus they are more likely to develop depression. This affirms the study of Boyle (2019) that major depression increased by 52% among the teens and 63% among the young adults. As explained by Becker (2020) that young adults ages 19 to 29 sometimes develop depression due to major life transitions, lack of support in new environments, and lack of coping skills.

As to occupation, since $r=0.170$ is greater than CV=0.140, the Ho was rejected and hence there is a significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and their depressive behavior. This implies that the non-employed respondents are more likely to be more depressed than the employed respondents. People lose faith in themselves and become pessimistic the longer they are out of a job. Because of their inability to give support to their single parent, the respondents tend to be more depressed since they are unable to help in easing the difficulties experienced by the family. This affirms the study of Park, et al., (2016) that employed group showed lower late-life depressive symptom prevalence than the non-employed group among older Korean men.
Table 2

Test of Correlation between Cognitive vulnerabilities and Depression

| Factor          | t Stat  | p-value       | Decision | Interpretation |
|-----------------|---------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| Attitude toward self | -1.535882 | 0.1267317     | Accept Ho | Not significant |
| Life orientation | 0.9197124 | 0.3592401     | Accept Ho | Not significant |
| Hopelessness     | 5.6930578 | 6.623E-08     | Reject Ho | Significant    |

Table 2 presents the test of correlation between cognitive vulnerabilities and depression of the respondents. Among the factors which includes attitude toward self with p-value of 0.127, life orientation with p-value of 0.359, hopelessness with a p-value of 0.000, only hopelessness has a significant relationship with depression. This means that the depressive behavior of the respondents may be influenced by their hopelessness. It can be implied that most of the respondents have suffered traumatically due the parents’ separation leading to their hopeless behavior and negative perception on the situations around them. It further shows that they lose hope in ever gaining comfort again due to the separation of their parents along with being unemployed that lead them to feeling depressed. This explains the hopelessness theory by Abramson et al. (1989) that expectation with highly desired outcomes will not occur or that highly aversive outcomes will occur and that there is nothing one can do to change this situation is a proximal sufficient cause of the symptoms of depression specifically hopelessness depression.

5. Conclusion

The study used descriptive correlational design to assess the cognitive vulnerabilities and depression of children with single. The data were gathered from the 150 children with single parents living in San Pablo City, Laguna in the Philippines through the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Test on Attitudes toward self, Life orientation test, Beck Hopelessness Scale and Beck Depression Inventory.

The findings revealed that respondents have high level of attitude toward self, high level of life orientation and moderate level of hopelessness. However, many of the respondents have severe level of depression. It was further revealed that age and occupation are significantly related to depression whereas sex of the respondents, sex of parent and family monthly income are not significantly related. Moreover, hopelessness is significantly
related to depression whereas attitude toward self and life orientation are not significantly related. The results proved that children of single parents suffer from emotional trauma due to the conditions. Thus, strong support system is necessary for them to adjust emotionally.

With the various limitations on the scope and sample of the study, it is highly considered for a follow-up study in other settings using the same variables but including larger samples to test the consistencies of the result and other variables that may influence the depression of the respondents. The results of the study suggest that parents must be aware of the emotional status of their children through providing open communication in order to have deeper understanding of each other. The results also indicate the need to consider and seek advice from parents, friends and professionals. The community or school administrators where the students are enrolled may develop intervention programs through seminars and counseling programs to assists children with single parents.

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