



Journal of Advanced Research in Business and Management Studies

Journal homepage:
<https://karyailham.com.my/index.php/arbms/index>
ISSN: 2462-1935



Empowering Single Mothers in People's Housing Program (PPR) by Unlocking Life Satisfaction in Johor

Sabrinah Adam^{1,*}, Siti Nurhafizah Soid² Rozzaliana Mison³

¹ Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

² Centre for Community and Industry Network, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

³ Yayasan Pembangunan Keluarga Darul Ta'zim, 79603, Iskandar Puteri, Johor, Malaysia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 May 2025

Received in revised form 15 May 2025

Accepted 25 July 2025

Available online 31 July 2025

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship; social support; economic empowerment; single mothers; People's Housing Program Johor

ABSTRACT

The number of words should not exceed 350. The number of single-parent households has been steadily increasing, and divorce has emerged as a common way for people to find ultimate resolution to marital issues. According to the 2010 census, 831,860 single mothers were counted. According to the 2020 Population and Housing Census, the number increased to 940,735 ten years later, or nearly 3% of Malaysia's 32.4 million population. This number is in line with the current global trend for single mothers. In Johor respectively, single mothers living in People's Housing Program (PPR) communities suffer a few socioeconomic obstacles, such as a lack of reliable sources of income, insufficient support systems, and difficulties becoming financially independent. This study will investigate how these women can be empowered to enhance their quality of life using economic empowerment, social support, and entrepreneurship skills. In PPR Johor, 100 single mothers will participate in this study. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating focus groups and qualitative interviews to gain insight into lived experiences with quantitative surveys to gather demographic and economic data. A stratified random sample technique will be used to collect several important features in line with the objectives of the study. To better the lives of single mothers in Johor, the study promotes the development of an all-encompassing framework for empowerment that combines social support, economic empowerment, and entrepreneurship. By tackling poverty and inequality and promoting community development, this study hopes to support sustained economic empowerment. The study aims to improve the economic resilience and general well-being of single mothers by providing them with entrepreneurial resources and strengthening social support systems.

1. Introduction

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: sabrinah@utm.my

<https://doi.org/10.37934/arbms.39.1.113120>

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In a worldwide context, such as the United States (US), women without a spouse present who have co-resident children under the age of 18 are considered single mothers. Mothers who have never married, are married but have an absent husband, or are separated, divorced, or widowed and do not live with a cohabiting partner are all included in this category. The size of the single mother population is significant; in 2023, there were almost 7.3 million of them in the US. These women frequently deal with financial difficulties while juggling the demands of caring for their families without a spouse. Addressing the structural obstacles that restrict their financial stability, and general well-being requires an understanding of their economic situation, as noted in the report *The Economic Status of Single Mothers* (American Progress, August 7, 2024).

Malaysia has placed a strong emphasis on the family as a key component of its socioeconomic growth. According to the National Family Policy, a "family" is a fundamental social unit that provides human resources for growth and ensures that people will continue to exist as future generations. In its Single Mother Empowerment Action plan (2015-2020), the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (KPWKM) considers single mothers according to the following standards [1]:

1. Women who are the breadwinners of the family, widowed or divorced, have separated with their partners permanently, and those whose children are not yet married.
2. A woman who has a husband, but they need to take on the role of a breadwinner due to the husband's sickness or disability and has children who are living with them.
3. Women who has never gotten married but has a foster child or a child out of wedlock.

Compared to partners, their families have greater challenges and responsibilities as single mothers. To nurture and educate children and meet the demands of the family, they must fulfil their own responsibilities [2-5]. As a single mother, they also have a responsibility to the family. According to data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia [6], 831,860 single mothers were counted in the 2010 census. According to the 2020 Population and Housing Census, the number increased to 940,735 ten years later, or nearly 3% of Malaysia's 32.4 million inhabitants.

Work-family balance has been the subject of several recent studies by professionals and scholars who have examined its definitions, traits, and difficulties [7-10]. Due to their situation, single mothers find it especially difficult to balance the demands of job and family. They frequently experience role strain, role ambiguity, and role conflicts, which makes work-life balance challenging [11]. Lack of appropriate solutions to resolve these conflicts further exacerbates the tension between professional obligations and family goals [12]. However, these work-family tensions can be lessened with the support of supportive work environments and professional growth possibilities [13].

According to Abbas *et al.*, [14], social support is commonly understood to be aid or support given to people to lessen the difficulties they encounter. Social assistance is essential for single moms to overcome obstacles and meet their fundamental requirements. Additionally, it has a big impact on their parenting support and psychological health. Social support and ties to the community work as a buffer to help mental health recovery [15]. Key elements of societal support for lone mothers include financial, moral, and psychological assistance [16]. Formal support, which includes aid from governmental institutions, agencies, and community groups, and informal support, which originates from friends, family, neighbours, and coworkers, are the two primary categories of social support [17-19].

Economic limitations, a lack of social support, and obstacles to entrepreneurship are some of the difficulties faced by single mothers, all of which can affect how satisfied they are with their lives. Through the provision of tools, knowledge, and assistance to enhance their general well-being, empowerment initiatives are essential in reducing these difficulties. The study investigates how social support, economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, and life satisfaction among single mothers are mediated by empowerment programs.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Empowering single mothers in Johor

Life can be difficult for single mothers everywhere, especially those who are underprivileged. Spousal death, abandonment, or divorce are the main causes of suffering for single mothers in Malaysia. Many people struggle financially, and most single mothers in rural areas lack the skills necessary to obtain an education and a good job. Many of these single mothers are forced to accept low-level, low-paying jobs with usually unfavorable working conditions; however, few turn to sex trafficking to get around these obstacles. According to unofficial data, Malaysian single mothers in rural areas typically have five or more children. In addition to being homeless, even more single mothers are also burdened with the additional duty of caring for extended family members and are compelled to spend meagre government assistance to buy food for their children. Mothers work hard to become financially independent, and those women rarely have any savings at all. They were totally dependent on their husbands' money. They must bear the burden of battling for their lives when they are single mothers. Since most of these single mothers were married at a relatively young age, they had never worked before, making it extremely difficult for them to enter the official job. They seem a little adrift and unsure of how to find employment, especially if the experience, skills, and training needed to make them workable were missing.

1.2.2 Entrepreneurship skills and life satisfaction

Entrepreneurship creates employment opportunities and economic development. Entrepreneurs launch and coordinate businesses that offer crucial answers to the problems of poverty in rural places around the world [20-23]. The literature has noted a rise in entrepreneurial activity, which assist reduce poverty. Poverty alleviation remains a difficult global challenge [23-27] will have challenges, particularly if they are separated or if their husband passes away. If they never engaged in activities that generated income, their condition would worsen. However, if some of them receive income in the form of transfer payments, like their husband's pension, or perhaps with the help of the zakat department, insurance companies, etc [28,29]. However, the lady who had a career and a steady income prior to becoming a single mother could not be affected by her husband's absence or death. To ensure their children's survival, many of these single mothers are willing to put themselves in numerous dangerous situations. Since the economic climate is more accessible now, people think that starting a firm or doing entrepreneurial endeavours is an easy method to raise money [30]. To enhance and boost their income, numerous training programs have been implemented, with a focus on women's entrepreneurship and skill development. Numerous government training programs are also part of this drive to assist individual mothers in finding employment [31].

By providing them with self-reliance and financial independence, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in empowering single mothers. Single mothers can launch and maintain small enterprises with the help of programs that offer training, finance, and mentorship, greatly enhancing their financial security and quality of life [32].

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and the life satisfaction of single mothers.

1.2.3 Social support and life satisfaction

An important factor in empowering single mothers is social support. According to Chan *et al.*, ([15], formal and informal social support networks are crucial for improving the mental health of single mothers. Some of the challenges faced by single moms are lessened by formal support, such as government assistance programs, which offer access to daycare services and financial aid. Informal support from friends, family, and neighbourhood organisations provides both practical help and emotional support. Networks of assistance for single moms have been established in Johor thanks in large part to community-based organisations. Idris [33] asserts that these networks support a sense of belonging and lessen social isolation, both of which are critical for social integration and mental wellness.

Trauma, anxiety, and prolonged depressive symptoms are among the mental health issues that arise when a woman becomes a single mother. These problems frequently show up as loneliness and poor social functioning, including decreased confidence when interacting with others, difficulties sleeping at night, and appetite loss [34]. Dharatun Nissa [35] asserts that single mothers who are dealing with mental health concerns frequently lack the self-assurance to confront obstacles, whether they be related to their social obligations or their jobs.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between social support and the life satisfaction of single mothers

1.2.4 Economic empowerment and life satisfaction

One of the most important ways to improve the lives of single mothers is through economic empowerment. Due to their dual roles as carers and breadwinners, single moms in Malaysia frequently experience financial instability [29]. Programs for entrepreneurship and microfinance have been found to be useful instruments for helping single mothers become financially independent. For example, initiatives such as Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) give single mothers microloans so they can start small companies and raise their standard of living [32].

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that local job market-specific vocational training programs improve single mothers' employability. According to a study by Noor and Abdullah [36], skill-based training programs are beneficial because they increase resilience and self-confidence while also enhancing income-generating capacities.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between economic empowerment and the life satisfaction of single mothers.

Thus, the conceptual framework of this study as follows:

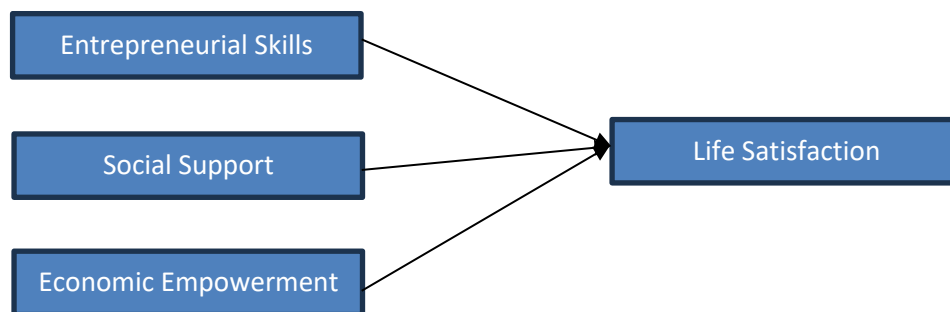


Fig. 1. Research framework

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

A mixed method approach based on sequential design will be used in this study. The quantitative data from the first step were explained or elaborated in the second phase, which strengthened the findings. The primary goal of using this qualitative approach is to investigate the quantitative findings in further detail. The second step is to make sure that the individuals who contributed to the quantitative data set share the same qualities as the appropriate participants for the qualitative phase. Therefore, although qualitative data and its analysis enhanced and explained quantitative results by delving deeply into participants' perspectives and understandings, quantitative data and results gave a broad overview of the research problem. When the interview protocol was created, the quantitative and qualitative phases were linked. The focus group participants for the qualitative phase were chosen based on the findings of the statistical test conducted in the first phase. Additionally, when discussing the findings of the full study, the results from the quantitative and qualitative stages were combined.

2.2 Sample Size

The total sample size will be focused based on this research is 100 single mothers in Johor using stratified random sampling and the data of the single mothers are obtained from Yayasan Pembangunan Keluarga Darul Takzim (YPKDT) Johor. This research will focus on total 100 Single Mothers in Johor as a pilot study. If this pilot study successful, the same model will be applied to other PPR in other state. This program will be conducted in 4 phases. Phase 1 Introduction, Phase 2 Implementation and Phase 3 Monitoring, Phase 4 Sustainability and Impact.

2.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

To obtain the necessary information, this research instrument uses quantitative methods through questionnaires. The questionnaires will be distributed to the 100 single mothers after the program to measure the empowerment effectiveness program that integrates entrepreneurship, social support and economic empowerment towards life satisfaction of single mothers in Johor. This data shall undergo SPSS analysis (descriptive analysis, T-Test analysis) to measure analysis and SEM approach to identify the integration between the relationship. The second stage of this research applies the qualitative method, and it is designed to meet the rigor and trustworthiness of the

research, and then a thick and rich data could be deemed important. For the qualitative method, a semi-structured interview is conducted to get as many explanations and feedback as possible pertaining to the input, output and outcome to strengthen the findings on the program. For this purpose, the semi-structured interview will be analysed using "thematic analysis" by Miles and Huberman [37]. This method involves three components which are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification and this analysis will start after the interview take place.

3. Expected Findings

The outcome of this research is to ensure that all the 100 single mothers able to independently run their business based on the designed programs and able to generate sales and income from the business to support their household income. In addition, this research will help on program improvements and the continuous research with the collaborative partners to achieve the objectives of the study whereby the 100 single mothers in Johor able to generate sales, income and successfully be an entrepreneur towards achieving the Envision 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded by a grant from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM R&D Fund) (R.J130000.7709.4J692). We also want to thank the Research Management Centre of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia through vote numbers V29000 (B29000) for this research (R.J130000.7709.4J692).

References

- [1] KPWK (2015). Pelan Tindakan Pemerkasaan Ibu Tunggal 2015-2020. Retrieved from <https://www.kpwkm.gov.my/kpwkm/uploads/files/Dokumen/BUKU%20PELAN%20TINDAKAN%20PEMERKASAAN%20IBU%20TUNGGAL.pdf>
- [2] Zakaria, Siti Marziah, Norehan Abdullah, Noremy Md. Akhir, Aizan Sofia Amin, Asila Nur Adlynd Mohd Shukry, Mohd Radzniwan Abdul Rashid, and Wan Nurdiyana Wan Yusof. "Perceptions of quality of life during the pandemic: a case study on B40 single mothers." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 19 (2022): 12219. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191912219>
- [3] Bte Abd Ghani, Faizah, and Hazirah Binti Hashim. "Challenges and locus control among single mothers in Muar, Johor." *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 4, no. 5 (2013): 760-765.
- [4] Mgt, Zanalisa, and Mat Isa. "Keberkesanan Pelaksanaan Program Latihan Kemahiran (I-KIT) Terhadap Ibu Tunggal di JPW Negeri Johor." PhD diss., Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2012.
- [5] Mohamad, Zakaria, Melati Sumari, Patricia Fenner, and Siti Aishah Mohamad Noor. "Understanding emotional experiences of single mothers using narrative group therapy." *International Journal of Management (IJM)* 11, no. 6 (2020): 1687-1697.
- [6] Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2020). Marriage and Divorce Statistics, Malaysia 2020. Retrieved from https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=453&bul_id=d1BZVzBZYXVwOTBPdXhGV EJTQWI4dz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09
- [7] Azrinaz, M. H. (2017, October 1). Fahami cabaran, kesukaran ibu tunggal. Berita Harian.
- [8] Single-Mother, L. C. O. A., and O. N. Its'impact. "Cabaran hidup ibu tunggal: Kesan terhadap kesejahteraan emosi." *International Journal of Education* 4, no. 24 (2019): 69-84.
- [9] Sing, Irene Cheing Sing, and Masarah Mohamad Yusof. "CABARAN HIDUP GOLONGAN IBU TUNGGAL DI DAERAH KUCHING, SARAWAK: SATU KAJIAN KES DI PERSATUAN KELUARGA IBU TUNGGAL: Life Challenges of Single Mothers in Kuching District, Sarawak: A Case Study in a Family Association of Single Mother." *Asian People Journal (APJ)* 7, no. 1 (2024): 60-74. <https://doi.org/10.37231/apj.2024.7.1.557>
- [10] Siti Marziah, Z., Noremy, M. A., & Faradillah, I. O. (2018). Kesejahteraan psikologi ibu tunggal: cabaran sebagai ibu tunggal dan tekanan hidup. E-Prosiding Persidangan Antarabangsa Sains Sosial Dan Kemanusiaan 2018.
- [11] Iztayeva, Aimzhan. "Single fathers and work-family conflict in white-and blue-collar jobs." *Community, Work & Family* 27, no. 4 (2024): 417-432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2022.2144136>

- [12] Ramadhani, Aqila Dwi Ananda, and Anna Rozana. "Pengaruh Work-Family Conflict terhadap Subjective Well-Being pada Single Parent." In *Bandung Conference Series: Psychology Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 5-13. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsps.v2i1.164>
- [13] Radcliffe, Laura, Catherine Cassell, and Fatima Malik. "Providing, performing and protecting: The importance of work identities in negotiating conflicting work–family ideals as a single mother." *British Journal of Management* 33, no. 2 (2022): 890-905. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12472>
- [14] Abbas, Jaffar, M. Aqeel, Jaffar Abbas, B. Shaher, J. Sundas, and W. Zhang. "The moderating role of social support for marital adjustment, depression, anxiety, and stress: Evidence from Pakistani working and nonworking women." *Journal of affective disorders* 244 (2019): 231-238. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2018.07.071>
- [15] Adamczyk, Katarzyna, and Chris Segrin. "Perceived social support and mental health among single vs. partnered Polish young adults." *Current psychology* 34, no. 1 (2015): 82-96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-014-9242-5>
- [16] Wakai, Himawari, Nobutoshi Nawa, Yui Yamaoka, and Takeo Fujiwara. "Stressors and coping strategies among single mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic." *Plos one* 18, no. 3 (2023): e0282387. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282387>
- [17] Liao, Hui, Sangsang Li, Dan Han, Mei Zhang, Jie Zhao, Yunyi Wu, Ying Ma, Chaoyang Yan, and Jing Wang. "Associations between social support and poverty among older adults." *BMC geriatrics* 23, no. 1 (2023): 384. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-023-04079-7>
- [18] Lu, Shan, Yupan Wu, Zongfu Mao, and Xiaohui Liang. "Association of formal and informal social support with health-related quality of life among Chinese rural elders." *International journal of environmental research and public health* 17, no. 4 (2020): 1351. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17041351>
- [19] Shiba, Koichiro, Naoki Kondo, and Katsunori Kondo. "Informal and formal social support and caregiver burden: The AGES caregiver survey." *Journal of epidemiology* 26, no. 12 (2016): 622-628. <https://doi.org/10.2188/jea.JE20150263>
- [20] Sutter, Christopher, Garry D. Bruton, and Juanyi Chen. "Entrepreneurship as a solution to extreme poverty: A review and future research directions." *Journal of business venturing* 34, no. 1 (2019): 197-214. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.06.003>
- [21] Meyer, Camille. "The commons: A model for understanding collective action and entrepreneurship in communities." *Journal of business venturing* 35, no. 5 (2020): 106034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2020.106034>
- [22] Bruton, Garry, Christopher Sutter, and Anna-Katharina Lenz. "Economic inequality–Is entrepreneurship the cause or the solution? A review and research agenda for emerging economies." *Journal of Business Venturing* 36, no. 3 (2021): 106095. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2021.106095>
- [23] Castellanza, Luca. "Discipline, abjection, and poverty alleviation through entrepreneurship: a constitutive perspective." *Journal of Business Venturing* 37, no. 1 (2022): 106032. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2020.106032>
- [24] Fafchamps, Marcel, and Agnes Quisumbing. "Assets at marriage in rural Ethiopia." *Journal of Development economics* 77, no. 1 (2005): 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2004.02.003>
- [25] Karnani, Aneel. "The mirage of marketing to the bottom of the pyramid: How the private sector can help alleviate poverty." *California management review* 49, no. 4 (2007): 90-111. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41166407>
- [26] Mair, Johanna, and Ignasi Marti. "Entrepreneurship in and around institutional voids: A case study from Bangladesh." *Journal of business venturing* 24, no. 5 (2009): 419-435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2008.04.006>
- [27] Chatterjee, Ira, Joep Cornelissen, and Joakim Wincent. "Social entrepreneurship and values work: The role of practices in shaping values and negotiating change." *Journal of Business Venturing* 36, no. 1 (2021): 106064. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2020.106064>
- [28] Halim, N. A., Ahmad, N. H., & Zainal, S. R. M. (2019). Entrepreneurship as a driver of life satisfaction among women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 26(3), 441-458.
- [29] Zakaria, S., & Abdullah, R. (2019). Economic empowerment through entrepreneurship: A study of single mothers in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science*, 15(7), 122-135.
- [30] Mahmood, S., & Hanafi, W. N. W. (2013). Entrepreneurial intentions of aspiring entrepreneurs in Malaysia: The impact of entrepreneurial education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 130, 634-640.
- [31] Rai, Shirin M., and Georgina Waylen, eds. *New frontiers in feminist political economy*. London: Routledge, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315884745>
- [32] Ismail, R., Hamid, A. A., & Abdullah, S. (2017). The role of microfinance in empowering single mothers: Evidence from Malaysia. *Asian Economic Review*, 62(3), 456-472.
- [33] Idris, N.H.I. (2018). *Pemeriksaan ekonomi ibu tunggal* (1st Ed.). Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

- [34] Zakaria, S., & Abdullah, R. (2019). Economic empowerment through entrepreneurship: A study of single mothers in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science*, 15(7), 122-135.
- [35] Dharatun Nissa, P. M. K. (2017). Strategi daya tindak dalam kalangan ibu tunggal kematian pasangan [Doctoral dissertation, University of Malaya].
- [36] Noor, A., & Abdullah, N. (2021). Vocational training and economic empowerment of single mothers in Johor. *Journal of Economic Development*, 34(2), 67-84.
- [37] Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications.