

Influence of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Mubi North Local Government Area of Adamawa State

Dorcas Oluremi Fareo, Ph.D
Department of Science Education
Adamawa State University, Mubi
dorkyfareo@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the influence of single parenting on academic performance of junior secondary school students. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study was 11,745 students. Sample size of 400 students was drawn by stratified sampling technique. A self-developed instrument titled "Influence of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students" was used in data collection. The validity of the research instrument was carried out by two experts. The reliability coefficient was 0.81 using split half reliability method. Examination records of JSS II-III students were collected to determine their academic performances. Data were analyzed using mean, Standard Deviation and t-test analysis. The study revealed that the challenges faced by students in single parents included negative emotional and mental adjustment, and lack of quality time by parents to spend at home. There was a significant difference between the academic performance of students from single home and two parent's home. It was recommended that school counsellors should offer necessary help and psychological support for students from single parent homes to overcome their academic and emotional problems.

Keywords: Single, parenting, academic, performance, emotional, adjustment, dropout.

Introduction

One widely held aim of education is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitude and competencies that enable them to render useful services to themselves and to the society. Education is viewed as an indispensable catalyst that strongly influences the development and economic fortunes of a nation and the quality of life of its people. Single parenting can be viewed as a situation whereby the duties that require two parents to carry out on their children are being carried out by a single parent, either the mother or the father. Many of the problems that single parents have are similar to those of two parents' family, but the challenges seem more difficult to manage when the home is being piloted by only one person. For example, all children feel hostile towards their parents as they grow-up and try to be independent. However, in a

situation, where the anger and rebellion are all directed towards one person, it may seem worse, if there is only one to bear it, not for the two to share (Ekpenyong & Lawrence, 2016).

There are some problems that are exceptional, which are only faced by the single parents, which make it somewhat difficult to raise children. These problems include bitterness towards the absent spouse, loneliness, poverty and insecurity about raising children alone without a help. For these and some other reasons, single parents sometimes cling to their children or over-indulge them. Members may unrealistically expect that the family can function like a two-parent family and may feel that something is wrong when it cannot. Children in single parent families face significantly greater problems than those raised in dual parent families. This is a reflection of the findings of Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) that carried out a similar study concerning the wellbeing of a child in the absence of one parent, and the result shows children raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parents.

Children are increasingly socialized by influencers outside the immediate family. As a result of poor parental care and guidance, they are exposed to potentially damaging situations (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010; Azuka-Obieke, 2013). When a mother/father is out of a home, leaving the children under the charity and mercy of neighbours, these children are exposed to many problems such as poor feeding, negligence, inability to study and do home assignments, psychological and emotional disturbance etc. The aforementioned problems can have negative impact on their education.

There are different causes of single parenting such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, desertion and unintended pregnancies (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010; Cherlin, 2010; Azuka-Obieke, 2013; Mupfumira, 2017). Single parenting has social, economic, physical and emotional effects on the children and their custodian. Parents provide an environment needed by children to develop into balanced individuals. However, children from single parent families may fail to get enough educational support in form of learning materials and school fees; and they sometimes exhibit behavioural problems because of lack of parental guidance (Kelly & Emery, 2003). However, Abankwah (2013) points out that those children from single parent families who enjoy the support of sense of self have developed into successful adults with good relationships.

The literature on academic performance among children suggests that children's academic performance improve when both parents are actively involved in their education (Nyarko & Vorgelegt, 2007). In the same vein, Obieke (2013) states that there is a significant difference in academic performance of adolescents raised in single

parent home and those raised in intact home. The explanation for no correlation in the relationship between students from single parent and two parents depends on the environment those students live that have impact on their self growth and academic performance. Parenthood is challenging enough even under the best of conditions; and being a single parent in our society is tasking and very demanding. This is because, with one parent, the challenges are multifaceted. The effect of single parenting are far reaching because it does not only affect the parents, it also affects the children. In fact, the effects are more devastating on the part of the children because single parenthood leaves them with deep scars (Ekpenyong & Lawrence, 2016).

Uwaifo (2008) examined the effects of family structure and parenthood on the academic performance of Nigerian university students. The results showed that significant difference existed between the academic performance of students from single parent family and those from two-parent family structures. Amadu and Moses (2013) investigated the significant difference in the academic performance of children from single and two parents homes in Wa Municipality in Ghana, and reported that children from two parent homes have most of their parents helping them in their academic work as compared to those from single parent families. Contrary to the above finding, Ushie, Emeka, Ononga and Owolabi's (2012) result shows that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students from single parent families and those from two parent families. This might have been so because differences exist despite the single parent's inability to give the child all the necessary care. Also, with time the child is able to adjust in the environment, as such the performance might improve over time.

Eweniyi (2005) examines the impact of family structure on the academic performance of university students and the result show significant differences in academic performance of male and female students compared on two types of family structures (single versus two parent homes). Amadu and Moses (2013) investigated the influence of single parenting on Wa Municipality in Ghana, and the result showed that the female pupils from single parent homes have better academic performance than the male from the same family. Chukwuka (2018) conducted a research on the impact of single parent on child education in primary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. The result showed that there was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female pupils from single parenthood. This implies that both sexes face the same difficulty associated with single parental upbringing.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Examine the prevalence of challenges faced by children in single parents' homes.
- ii. Investigate the causes of single parenting.
- iii. Determine the effect of single parenting on students' social and academic lives.
- iv. Examine the difference between the academic performances of students from single and two parents.
- v. Compare the academic performance between male and female students from single parents.

Research Questions

- i. What are the challenges faced by students in single parent family?
- ii. What are the causes of single parenting?
- iii. What are the effects of single parenting on junior secondary school students' social and academic lives?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single parent and those from two parent homes.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students from single parent's home.

Research Methodology

The study employs the descriptive survey design. This design was chosen because Fajonyomi (2003) says that survey is used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purpose, and this study is descriptive in nature and therefore survey is more appropriate for this study. The target population for the study comprised of students in junior public secondary schools in Mubi North Local Government Area of Adamawa State. Four schools were selected by simple random sampling technique; from the four schools, four hundred JSII-III students were selected as sample by stratified sampling technique using class and sex as strata.

The Instrument titled "Influence of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students" (ISPAPJSSS) was developed by the researcher. It contains four Sections; Section A contained demographic characteristic such as sex, age, name of school, and Local Government Area. Section B comprised of items relating to challenges faced by single parenting. Section C comprised of items relating to causes of single parenting, while Section D comprised of items relating to effects of single parenting on students' social and academic lives. The respondents were required

to respond to each of the items of ISPAPJSSS on a four point Likert-types scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The content and face validity of the instrument was carried out by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and Test and Measurement. Test on reliability of the instrument was conducted on 30 JSSII students in Government Secondary School, Mubi and it was subjected to split-half reliability method. The reliability co-efficient was 0.81. Examination records of JSSII&III students for 2016/2017 session were collected from four schools to measure their academic performances. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to students and collected by the researcher on the spot. The generated data were analyzed using mean, Standard Deviation and t-test statistics.

Presentation of results

Research Question One: What are the challenges faced by students from single parent family?

Table 1: Challenges faced by Students from Single Parent Family

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Peer group negative influence is prevalent in single parenting home	3.21	0.02	Accepted
2.	Single parenting presents a real danger to emotional personality and mental adjustments	3.31	0.00	Accepted
3.	Home has been identified as a major factor affecting students' academic performance	3.46	0.14	Accepted
4.	My father does not bother to buy the necessary text books for me	2.94	0.02	Accepted
5.	My mother has no time to spend with me at home because she always comes back late from work	3.00	0.00	Accepted
6.	I cannot pay my tuition fees because my mum and dad have separated and both of them always shift the responsibility to each other.	3.31	0.05	Accepted
7.	My parent always checks my notes and school materials on daily basis	2.06	1.04	Rejected
8.	I have the freedom to go out with my mates because my father never stays at home	3.06	0.00	Accepted
9.	I always depend on my friends for financial help because my mother does not bother to take care of me	3.25	0.03	Accepted
10.	It is very difficult for me to get necessary support from my father because he never wants to spend his money	3.38	0.09	Accepted

Decision - (Accepted: \bar{x} =2.5 above; Rejected: \bar{x} =less than 2.5)

Table 1 reveals the challenges faced by students from single parent family to include negative influence of peer group, danger to emotional personality and mental

adjustment of adolescents etc. Based on the result (see Table 1), it can be said that students from single parents face social, mental, financial and behavioural challenges.

Research Question Two: What are the causes of single parenting among junior secondary school students?

Table 2: Causes of single parenting among junior secondary school students

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	I live with my father/mother alone because they are separated	2.88	0.00	Accepted
2.	I live with my father/mother alone because one of them is dead	2.82	0.00	Accepted
3.	My mother gave birth to me while in school, so I know her alone as my parent	2.76	0.00	Accepted
4.	I grew up to know only my father as my parent	2.91	0.00	Accepted
5.	My father loves to be with me always because I am the only one with him since my mother divorced him	2.86	0.00	Accepted

Decision - (Accepted: \bar{x} =2.5 above; Rejected : \bar{x} =less than 2.5)

Table 2 revealed that the causes of single parenting are separation of the couple (\bar{x} =2.88), death of a spouse (\bar{x} =2.76), teenage pregnancy (\bar{x} =2.91), divorce (\bar{x} =2.86).

Research Question Three: What are the effects of single parenting on junior secondary school students' social and academic lives?

Table 3: Effects of Single Parenting on Junior Secondary School Students' Social and Academic Lives

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Emotional problems	2.86	0.11	Accepted
2.	Dropping out of school	3.13	0.00	Accepted
3.	Keeping bad gangs or friends	3.43	0.06	Accepted
4.	Academic failure	3.28	0.00	Accepted
5.	Economic hardship	3.42	0.05	Accepted
6.	Behavioural problems	3.02	0.03	Accepted

Decision - (Accepted: \bar{x} =2.5 above; Rejected: \bar{x} =less than 2.5)

Table 3 shows the effects of single parenting on junior secondary school students' social and mental lives to include emotional problems (\bar{x} =2.66), dropping out from school (\bar{x} =3.43), academic failure (\bar{x} =3.28), economic hardship (\bar{x} =3.42), behavioral

problems like smoking, drinking, stealing, absenteeism, fighting and bullying ($\bar{x}=3.02$).

Ho1: There is no significant difference between academic performance of students from single parent and those from two parents' homes.

Table 4: t-test of significant difference between the Academic Performance of Students from Single Parent and Two Parents

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Single parent home	200	40	9.57	398	2.367	1.962	Rejected
Two parents home	200	64	10.68				

*Significant: ($P < 0.5$)

Table 4 reveals that t-cal. (2.367) is greater than t-crit. (1.962) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single home and two parents' home, is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students from single home and two parents' homes in Mubi North Educational Zone.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students from single parents' homes.

Table 5: t-test of significant difference between the Academic Performance of Male and Female from Single Parents' Homes.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	200	45	7.07	398	0.158	1.962	Accepted
Female	200	44	5.48				

Not Significant ($P < 0.05$)

Table 5 shows that t-cal. (0.158) is less than t-crit. (1.962) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between male and female students academic performance from single parents' homes, is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female students academic performance from single parents' homes in the study area.

Discussion of findings

Findings from research question one revealed that the challenges faced by students from single parents include negative emotional and mental adjustment, lack of quality time by parents to spend at home with their children, and financial problem. This is a reflection of the findings of Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) and Ekpenyong and Lawrence (2016). Research question two revealed the causes of single parenting to include separation, death, divorce and teenage pregnancy. This finding supports the assertion of Cherlin (2010) and Mupfumira (2017). Findings from research question three showed the effect of single parenting on students' social and academic lives to include emotional problems, dropping out from school, keeping bad friends, academic failure and economic hardship. This finding is in line with studies by Kelly and Emery (2003) and Azuka-Obieke (2013).

Hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students from single home and two parents home in Mubi North Educational Zone. This finding corroborates the findings of Uwaifo (2008) and Amadu and Moses (2013). However, the finding of Ushie, Emeka, Ononga and Owolabi (2012) shows that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students from single parent families and those from two parent families. Hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students' from single parent home; this finding supports the work of Eweniyi (2005). Nevertheless, Chukwuka (2018) conducted a research on the impact of single parents on children education in primary schools in Oshimili South Local Government of Delta State. The result shows there is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female pupils from single parenthood.

Conclusion

Parenthood is challenging, even under the best of conditions; being a single parent in our society is also tasking and very demanding. Parents are primarily responsible for the education and career development of their children. However, children under a single parent family structure might not receive the necessary attention they require because the single parent might be overwhelmed by many responsibilities which could have negative influence on their wards' academic performances in a school setting.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research the following were recommended:

- Public enlightenment on issues of parental skills, family planning, family values and child discipline could be done regularly, as this would make for intact family. There is also need to keep enlightening the parent on the importance of the home structure on the life of children. This is necessary so that parents can understand

the implications and consequences of parental separation and thus mobilize all resources to curtail the problems arising from the situation.

- Teachers should give remedial lessons to pupils from a single parent home when they are lagging behind in class, thus helping them to cope with their studies. Males in single parent homes in particular should receive much attention to enable them improve on their performance.
- School counsellors should offer the necessary help and psychological support for students from single parent homes to overcome their academic and emotional problems. When the right help is given, they would focus on learning.
- Government should provide free and compulsory education and help the less privileged parents with financial support by empowering them.

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