

Influence of Single Parenting on Senior Secondary School Students' Achievement in Mubi Educational Zone, Adamawa State

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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 students was 8,745. Sample size of 450 was drawn by stratified sampling technique. An adopted instrument titled "Influence of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students" from Fareo (2019). The validity of the research instrument was carried out by two experts. The reliability co-efficient was 0.71 using split half reliability method. Cumulative results of SS 1-111 students were collected to determine their academic performances. Data were analyzed using mean, Standard Deviation and t-test analysis. The study revealed the challenges faced by students in single parents included negative emotional and mental adjustment, and no quality time by parents to spend at home. There was a significant difference between the academic performance of students from single home and two parents' home in Mubi Educational Zone. In conclusion, parenthood is challenging enough even under the best of conditions, and being a single parent is tasking and very demanding. 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 and drop out

Introduction

Education is of great importance to every nation. It therefore attracts considerable attention to the family, community and to all tiers of government; education is discussed, planned and processed (Omolewa, 2001). It is believed that education recreates both the individuals and the nation, influences values and attitudes for a worthwhile living. According to Asiabaka (2010), education is the key to national development, it provides the intellectual capability needed by man to harness the human and material resources for scientific and technological advancement. Furthermore it is the instrument for the realization of a nation's growth and development, because the level of a nation's literacy determines her extent of development. The National Policy on Education (2004) is not wrong with its assertion that education is "an instrument par excellence" and the world at large had keyed into this, by recognizing education as the panacea to development and survival of man itself.

Secondary education occupies a very unique position in the educational system of Nigeria, because it is at that level that determines the academic and professional career of students. Over the years, the investigation of the factors that affects the academic achievement of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, sociologists, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria. Definitely, different factors are capable of affecting the academic achievement of secondary school students, such factors may be the students intrinsic attributes (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety etc) and environmental attributes (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like text book and well equipped laboratories).

The home has a great effects on the student's psychological, emotional, social and economic state, since the parents are the first socializing agents in the life of an individuals. This is because the family background and context of a child can affects the child's reaction to life situations. This could have subsequent effects on the child's level of achievement. The foundation of what a person becomes in the society is laid in the home at the initial stage of life. Parents therefore, have the important role to play in seeing that their youths acquire the appropriate social, psychological, moral and academic development. Generally, it is the responsibility of the family to train and bring up the child in the norms and values of the society.

Divorce, separation of various kinds and death of one spouse, however may leave the roles in the hands of a single parent. According to Salami (2015), single-parenthood can be defined as when one out of two people who is responsible for the nurturing and child rearing is not available, and the work meant for two people, is now been carried out by only one person. The author further added that single parenthood is when the mother or father looks after children on their own, without the other partner. According to Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) finds out a study concerning the well of the 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, 2013a). 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. The aforementioned problems can have negative impact on their education. Single-parenting is a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is being responsible for the upbringing of the child (Whiting & Child, 2013). Single-parenthood may arise when either the male or the female decides to produce and rear a child or children outside wedlock.

Coontz (2017) explains that single-parent families can be defined as families where a parent lives with dependent children, either alone or in a larger household, without a spouse or partner. There was a rapid and drastic increase in the number of single-parent families in the latter half of the twentieth century. He further stated that single parenting as a married couple residing with their dependent offspring with negative effects for children, families and societal. Donkor (2010) examines that single parenting refers to the situation whereby one parent caring for the responsibilities of the child / children instead of both parents. He further states that single parenting has contributed immensely to destruction of lives of many children because of the inability to provide for their needs.

Thomas (2018) states that single parenting is a person who lives with a child or children and who does not have a wife, or husband to live with as a partner. He further states that a single parenting may have either sole custody of the child or joint physical custody, where the child lives part-time with each parent. Reasons for becoming a single parenting include divorce break-up, abandonment, death of the other psarent, childbirth by a single woman or single-person adoption. A single parent family is a family with children that is headed by a single parent.

Some sociologists perceive the prevalence of single parenting as an alternative family form, rather than as Baba, Aliata, and Patrick (2003) state that the death of a partner was a major cause of single parenting and other causes include separation, divorce of a married couple, divorce of children that were in cohabitation and teenage Pregnancy. However, children with single parents are three times more likely to drop out of school than children from two parent families. The demographic of single parenting shows a general increase

worldwide in children living in single parent homes. A child from a home where the father and mother are present will be taken care of and will socialize in the best way possible. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary role in the upbringing of the child, such a child is likely to achieve self-actualization later in life, unlike children from single parent home who are likely to suffer deprivation and denial of some right and opportunities.

Baba, Aliata, and Patrick (2003) asserted that single parenthood is problematic for the children's socialization because many with one receive less economic and social support with practical assistance, less information, guidance and supervision, less role modeling than children in two parent families. Among children in single parent families, those from mother absent homes and mother absent household earn lower grades than children from father absent households. Children from father absent households generally find it difficult to connect with school activities both academically and morally.

Single parenting has become a problem associated with contemporary family institution and the rate at which it occurs in the modern world is very alarming. In a study on causes of single parenting or separation in contemporary West Africa societies, 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, 2013a; Mupfumira, 2017). Single parenting has social, economical, physical and emotional effects on the children and custodian parent. 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 material and school fees; and they sometimes exhibited behavioural problems because of lack of parental guidance (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Fortunately, Abankwa (2013) points out 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). Azuka-Obieke (2013b) 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.

Oke (2016) discovered that infertility and barrenness is a ground for single parenting and separation. Also, adultery does not really lead to single parenting, in that, it is rarely used as a legal ground for separation among couples and it is observed that adultery is involved in less than 20 percent of broken homes. Further studies carried out by Amato and Cheadle (2008) indicated that adultery is more often the symptom of a sick marriage or even an indication that a marriage has already gone through the process of disintegration resulting in single parenting. Shindig (2009) in a study stated that paternal and maternal losses are on the increase worldwide. In the United States of America, for example, approximately 12 percent of the families are single parents. With the findings of Shindig (2009), it does not mean that parental loss only implies the death of a parent. Cotton and Wiley (2005), findings shows the tendency to think that parental loss is only through death, but there are several ways apart from death by which children no longer live with both parents and are permanently separated which includes separation, divorce, institutionalization etc. all these bring about a sense of loss in the student about his/her parent.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary education occupies a very unique position in the educational system of Nigeria, because it is at that level that determines the academic and professional career of students. Over the years, the investigation of the factors that affects the academic achievement of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, sociologists, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria. Definitely, different factor are capable of affecting the academic achievement of secondary school students, such factors may be the students intrinsic attributes (intelligence, state of health, motivation, and anxiety), environmental attributes (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like text book and well equipped laboratories) (Anyakoha, 2016).

The main problem for this study is that a lot of people, educationists and counsellors are complaining on non-challant attitude of students to study and attendance to classes. Reports and observations on students from different family structure and family composition are indication to academic performance.

In spite of the time and resources attached to teaching in Mubi educational Zone, Adamawa State, poor performance of students still abounds. It is no longer new to hear people say that many secondary school students do not perform well. The student's poor achievements has caused a great concern to parents, guidance and stake holders in science education in Nigeria. It is very unfortunate that most families in secondary school education in Mubi Educational Zone, Adamawa state is not intact. The students from such families are prone to deviant behaviors, habitual late comers to school and overall perform poorly in their school subjects. The result of this on the educational aspiration of the student is quite grave. This is because these students from single parent families might not complete primary education or concentrate more on their studies due to lack of adequate care from a single parent who is so occupied in trying to provide the basic needs of the children. Thus, the academic achievement of the student in a single parent family is likely to deteriorate on the long-run. Therefore, this problem requires urgent attention, hence; the study seeks to examine the influence of single parenting on academic achievement of students in senior secondary school in Mubi Educational Zone, Adamawa state.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was find out effects of single parenting on student's academic achievements in biology in senior secondary school in Mubi Educational zone, Adamawa state. Specifically, this study intended to:

1. examine the existing challenges faced by children in single parents' homes;
2. investigate the causes of single parenting;
3. determine the effect of single parenting on student's social and academic lives;
4. examine the difference between the academic performances of students from single and two parents;
5. compare the academic performance between male and female students from single parents.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posited during the research:

1. What are the challenges faced by students in single parent family?
2. What are causes of single parenting?
3. What are the effects of single parenting on senior secondary school students' social and academic lives?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single parent and those from two parent homes.
2. There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students from single parent's home.

Research Methodology

The research design for this research is a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research is usually used as a pre-cursor to quantitative research design. The overview of descriptive survey design gives some valuable pointers as to what variables are worth testing quantitatively. This was to afford the researcher the opportunity of surveying across the sample area as stated. The population of this study comprised all the senior secondary school students in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The Zone comprises Maiha, Mubi North, Mubi South, Madagali and Michika Local Government Areas. These students come from the 56 public senior secondary schools in the zone. A total of around 8,665 students attend these schools on a yearly basis.

There are five local governments in Mubi Educational zone in Adamawa State, three local government area were selected out of five local governments in Mubi Educational Zone by simple random sampling. One school was picked from each of the three local government by simple random technique. The sample size of 450 was selected by stratified sampling technique; 150 students from each of the schools, in the three local government using sex and class as strata.

The Instrument titled "Influence of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of senior Secondary School Students" (ISPAPSSSS) was adopted from Fareo (2019) by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of 21 items structured from the research questions posed in the study and 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 comprise of items relating to causes of single parenting, while Section D comprised of items relating to effects of single parenting on students social academic lives. The respondents were required to respond to each of the items of 'ISPAPSSS on a four point Likert-types scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Cumulative results of senior secondary school students in Mubi Educational Zone were collected to determine the academic performance. Four subjects were used which include Mathematics, English, Economics and Biology.

The content and face validity of the instrument was carried out by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and Test and Measurement. Appropriate suggestion were made to improve the quality of the questionnaire by deleting the in appropriate question items and by modifying some. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted on 30 SS 11 students in Government Secondary School, Mubi. The sample from the pilot test was subjected to split- half reliability method and the reliability co-efficient was 0.71. Cumulative results of SS I-III students for 2019/2020 session were collected from three schools to measure their academic performances. Data were administered to students and collected by the researcher on the spot. The collected data were analyzed using mean, Standard Deviation and t-test statistics.

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 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 on 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 doesn't bother to take care of me.	3.25	0.03	Accepted
10	It's very difficult for me to get necessary support from my father because he never wants to spend his money.	3.38	0.09	Accepted

Note: Discussion (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 include peer group negative influence ($\bar{x}$ =3.21), single parenting presents a real danger to emotional, personality and mental adjustment of adolescents ($\bar{x}$ =3.31), home has been identified as greater factor affecting students' academic performance ($\bar{x}$ =3.46), my father does not bother to buy the necessary school text books for me ($\bar{x}$ =2.94), mother has no time for me at home because she always comes late from work ($\bar{x}$ =3.00), I cannot pay my tuition fees because my mum and dad have separated and they always shift the responsibility on each other ($\bar{x}$ =3.31), my parent always checks my notes and school materials on daily basis ($\bar{x}$ =2.06), I have the freedom to go out with my mate because my father never stays at home ($\bar{x}$ =3.06), I always depend on my friends for financial help because my mother doesn't bother to take care of me ($\bar{x}$ =3.25), it's very difficult for me to get necessary support from my father because he never wants to spend his money ($\bar{x}$ =3.38) Based on the result from this table, it implies that students from single parents face social mental, financial and behavioural challenges.

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

Table 2. Causes of single parenting among senior secondary school students

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I live with my father/mother because they are separated	2.86	0.00	Accepted
2	I live with my father/mother because one of them is dead	2.82	0.00	Accepted
3	My mother gave birth to me while in school, so I know	2.70	0.00	Accepted

	her alone as my parent			
4	I grew up to know only my father as my parent	2.96	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	2.92	0.00	Accepted

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

Table 2 revealed the causes of single parenting are separation of the couple ($\bar{x}$ =2.86), death of a spouse ($\bar{x}$ =2.82), teenage pregnancy ($\bar{x}$ =2.83), divorce ($\bar{x}$ =2.92).

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

Table 3. Effects of single parenting on senior 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

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

Table 3 shows the effects of single parenting on senior secondary school students social and mental lives 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).

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between academic performance of student from single parent and those from two parents' homes.

Table 4. Difference between the academic performance of student from single parent and two parents

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Single parent home	225	42	9.59	397	2.365	1.962	Rejected
Two parent home	225	63	10.66				

Note: *Significant: ($P < 0.5$)

Table 4 reveals that t-cal. (2.365) 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 student from single home and two parents' homes in Mubi Educational Zone.

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

Table 5. Difference between the academic performance of male and female students from single parents' homes

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	235	45	7.07	398	0.158	1.962	Accepted
Female	215	44	5.48				

Note: 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

Research question one investigated 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). Research question two revealed the causes of single parenting include separation, dead, divorce and teenage pregnancy. This finding supports the assertion of Cherlin (2010) and Mupfumira (2017). Research question three showed the effect of single parenting on students' social and academic lives include emotional problems, dropping out from school, keeping bad friends, academic failure and economy hardship this finding is in line with studies from Cherlin (2005) and Azuka-Obiele (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 Educational Zone. This finding was corroborated by 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 student' from single parent home, and this finding supports the work of Eweniyi (2005). Nevertheless, Chukukwa (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 enough, even under the best of conditions, and being a single parent in our society is tasking and very demanding. Parents are primarily responsible for the education and career development of their children. However, children under a single family structure might not receive the necessary attention they required 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 of 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 helping them cope with their studies. Males in single parent homes in particular should receive much attention to enable them improve on their performance.
- Schools 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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