



Effects of Single Parenting on Secondary School Students Academic Performance in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the Effects of Single Parenting on Secondary School Students Academic Performance in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study was guided by four specific objectives which were translated into research questions. Literatures related to the study were reviewed accordingly. The descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. 50 respondents mainly teachers in five (5) public primary schools in Afijio Local Government Area were selected for the study sample. Data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed using the mean score method of data analysis. The findings of this study revealed that: pupils of single parentage perform lower in academic activities in the school. It was also indicated that pupils of single parentage are habitual late comers to school and that pupils of single parentage engage in deviant behaviours in the school. However, the result of the study indicated that counseling, supporting and encouraging distressed families show love to their children were the solutions to the negative effect of single parenting on the pupil's academic performance in primary school. Based on these findings, it was recommended amongst others that parents, especially those who are single parents should apportion their time in such a way that they would be able to aid their children in doing their homework, give them tidbits on becoming academically successful, visit their children's school to finding out their performance in class as well as give them all the materials they required for their studies. This is important as it shall complement the efforts of the teachers.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Time has really changed many of the old customs and traditions which were taught and practiced for several years are becoming obsolete now. The modern culture has changed and outgrown the values and beliefs that were thought to be the core beliefs and values of our society. Even though, moralist and conservations are experiencing disgust over the currently evolving belief and cultural systems. The truth is, what has been unacceptable in the olden days, is now becoming fast and rapidly rising trends. Nowadays, single-parent families have become even more common than the so-called "nuclear family", consisting of a mother or father and the children.

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. 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 (Whitting, 2013). Single-parenthood may arise when either the male or the female decides to produce and rear a child or children outside wedlock.

In Nigeria, the existence of single-parenthood was unknown and where they existed they are ignored as exceptional cases. However, nowadays, they are fast growing family patterns both inside and outside Nigeria. In Nigeria, the parental roles are culturally determined and distributed. The maternal roles are

that of child-rearing, home training and playing of complimentary roles, while the paternal roles are that of economic responsibilities and disciplines of children. The child is morally, mentally upright and emotionally balances when the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents.

According to Nwachukwu (2008), children from single parent homes are more hostile, hyperactive and aggressive in nature. Many of the problems that single parents have are similar as those for two parent's family, but these problems seem more difficult to bear or manage when the home is being tutored by only one person. For example, all children feel hostile towards their parents as they grow-up and try to be independent. But 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.

The studies on academic performance among children suggest that children's academic performance improve when both parents are actively involved in their education (Nyarko, 2007). Some studies seem to neglect the issue of single-parenting as a variable. Generally such studies have tied academic performance of children to socio-economic status, parents' educational level, student attitudes to learning, school environmental factors, housing and residential experience (Bowen, 2013).

Walker (2012) see academic performance as referring to "the index of general mental abilities which are responses to test of different kinds" so, in societies like Nigeria where standardized test of different kinds exist, the academic performance of the students is represented by the individuals response to standardized scholastic aptitude tests; and the level of response given to such scholastic aptitude tests can help in determining success. This scholastic aptitude test should embrace the students' general school performance in various school subjects. For instance, in Nigeria secondary schools at WASC examination level, the students are tested on the subjects offered in West African School Certificate Examination this also applied to tertiary institutions.

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, Oke (2016) discovered that infertility and battery 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 (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. The UNESCO (2006) Courtier reported that, regarding the situation in Europe that since 1965, there has been a big increase in the number of divorces throughout the continent, and also there has been an increase in the number of single parents and their resultant families with evidence that something is radically wrong with the family and it can be found all over the world.

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 Shindi, 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 child, about his/her parent.

Educators, parents and policy makers are continuously searching for the solution that will reform educational system and in making pupils perform better academically (Edward 2012). Smith (2005), in this study emphasizes that good academic performance of pupils is a primary function of supportive parents.

It is however said to notice that majority of the children in Nigeria perform poorly in their academic activities dues to single parenting.

Fadeiye (2005) pointed out that both parents have their own roles to play in child's education. The father is to provide every necessary tools for the educational advancement while the mother is expected to supplement the efforts of the father. But in the case where the father is absent and the mother is not privilege enough to cater for all the necessary and basic needs as well as supervising the academic

performance of the child, by checking the academic records of the child or by going through their class and lesson notes or books every day. Also giving of counseling supports when needed, these will affect the educational state or level of the child. So also, if a child is not well nurtured and contrary to the above findings, 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. 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 if it was poor might now improve.

Achi (2012) stated that single parenting has been mostly associated with children delinquency. Although some other factors such as lack of parental control and ineffective parental behaviour have been attributed to the rise in children delinquency, most of the literature on children delinquency returns to the ultimate breakdown of the family as the main causative factor.

Mullens (2004) has it that juveniles from unstable families are more likely to run away from their family than children living in stable families. The core assumption is that single parenting has an imbalance and as a result is detrimental to a child's socialization, upbringing and personality adjustment. As a result, a child may be more susceptible to negative peer pressure and may ultimately commit acts delinquency not committed by children from stable families where there is a balanced structure of man and woman who act as good role models in the child acquiring more law abiding roles.

Alemika (2011), in their study of child delinquency behaviour administration in Nigeria averred that there is no significant relationship between single parenting and child delinquency. This assertion contradicts Kimani's (2010) findings from a study of family influence on child delinquency. Kimani found a negative relationship between single parenting and child delinquency. This contrast may be as a result of differential focus of research and the methodologies adopted in the research.

The secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State are nonetheless the most fragile because they are still in their formative years meaning any disruptions could have everlasting result on them academically. This makes it necessary to investigate effects of single parenting on student's academic performance in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

The main problem for this study is that a lot of people, educationists and counselors are complaining on non-chalant 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. It is very unfortunate that most families in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State is not intact. The students from such families are prone to deviant behaviours, habitual late comers to school and overall perform poorly in their school subjects. The result of this on the educational aspiration of the child is quite grave. This is because these children 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 performance of the child in a single parent family is likely to deteriorate in the long-run. Therefore, this problem requires urgent attention hence the study seeks to examine the effect of single parenthood on academic performance of students in secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this is to investigate the effects of single parenthood on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. Specifically, the research work intends to find out whether:

1. Students of single parentage perform lower in academic activities
2. Students of single parentage are habitual late comers to school
3. Students of single parentage engage in deviant behaviours in school

Research Questions

The following research questions would guide the study:

1. Do students from single parentage perform lower in academic activities?
2. Are students from single parentage habitual late comers to school?

3. Do students from single parentage engage in deviant behaviours in schools?

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 in the earlier chapter.

The population for this research comprised all the teachers in public secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State.

The sample size for the study was 50 teachers selected from 5 public secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. 10 teachers were selected from each of the 5 public secondary schools making a total of 50 respondents. The sample random sampling technique was used for the selection. This was to ensure that every member of the population had equal chance of being selected in the sample.

The main instrument that was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the research titled “Effect of Single Parenthood on Students Academic Performance (ESPPAP). It adopted a 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree (i.e SA, A, D, SD). The questionnaire consists of 20 items structured from the research questions posed in the study. The instrument was divided into two (2) Section A/B respectively. The section A elicited information on person’s data of the respondents while the section B contained the questions that were answered.

The instrument for data collection was presented to the project supervisor. The supervisor made corrections and suggestion on the items of the instruments. The instrument was also presented to two expert lecturers in measurement and valuation for the input. The reliability of the instrument was measurement and valuation for their input. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by the test-retest method to ensure that it measures what it was designed to measure with consistency and accuracy.

The researcher visited the respondents in the selected secondary schools for the distribution of the questionnaire. The researcher and her two assistants provided necessary help to the respondents to complete the copies of the questionnaire distributed. The questionnaire was retrieved back from the respondents same day. A total of 50 copies of the questionnaires were administered and retrieved.

The data collected were analyzed using simple arithmetic mean method of data analysis, the higher the figure of the result the more acceptable and vice versa.

RESULT

Research Question One: *Do students from single parentage perform lower in academic activities?*

Table 1: Mean response of respondents on whether students from single parentage perform lower in academic activities.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Single parenting can contribute to poor performance of students in school	30	15	2	3	50	3.70	Agree
2.	Single parents do not always get involved in the students’ academic activities	43	4	2	1	50	3.37	Agree
3.	Single parents do not always assist the student in doing their homework	34	10	4	2	50	3.40	Agree
4.	Non involvement of single parents in the students education lowers their performance in school	42	6	1	1	50	3.86	Agree
5.	Lower performance of students in school activities is as a result of single parentage	45	1	3	1	50	2.25	Agree
	Grand mean score						3.51	

In table 1 above, item 1.5 was analyzed to determine whether students from single parentage perform lower in academic activities. The result showed that all the items were rated on agreed with the grand

mean score of 3.51 indicating that the respondents were all in agreement that students from single parentage perform lower in academic activities.

Research Question Two: *Are students from single parentage habitual late comers to schools?*

Table 2: Mean response of respondents on whether students from single parentage are habitual late comes to school

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
6.	Students of single parentage usually comes late to school	35	10	3	2	50	3.63	Agree
7.	Students of single parentage are not given transport money thereby making them habitual late comes to school	43	5	1	1	50	3.70	Agree
8.	Single parent do not wake their children up from bed early to prepare them for school	38	6	4	2	50	3.43	Agree
9.	Single parents allow the students to stay late at night watching movies hence they come to school late	40	5	3	2	50	3.82	Agree
10	Students going to school late do not border single parents	41	6	2	1	50	3.84	Agree
	Grand mean score						3.71	

In table 2, item 6.10 was analyzed to determine whether students from single parentage are habitual late comers to school. The result showed that all the items were rated on agreed with the grand mean score of 3.71 indicating that the respondents were all in agreement that students from single parentage comes late school

Research Question Three: *Do students from single parentage engage in deviant behaviours in school?*

Table 3: Mean response of respondents on whether students from single parentage engage in deviant behaviour in school

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
11.	Students of single parentage are hostile to others	40	3	2	5	50	3.30	Agree
12.	Students of single parentage engage in fighting in school	38	10	1	1	50	3.25	Agree
13.	Students of single parentage so nor obey the teachers in school	30	17	2	1	50	3.76	Agree
14.	Students of single parentage engage in stealing in the school	25	20	2	3	50	3.76	Agree
15.	Students of single parentage associate with bad peers in the school	40	4	1	5		3.38	Agree
	Grand mean score						3.63	

In table 3 above, item 10-15 was analyzed to determine whether students from single parentage engage in deviant behaviours in school. The result showed that all the items were rated on agreed with the grand mean score of 3.63 indicating that the respondents were all in agreement that pupils from single parentage engage in deviant behaviour in school.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from research question one which was analyzed in table 1 on whether students from single parentage perform lower in academic activities in the school revealed that, academic performance of students from single parentage is very low. The finding also revealed that single parents do not assist the

child in doing his or her home work hence, the rate of single parent's involvement in the child academic activities is poor. This finding is in agreement with the views of Fadeyiye (2005) that in the case where the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the necessary and basic needs as well as supervising the academic performance of the child, by checking the academic records of the child or by going through their class and lesson notes or books every day, these will affect the educational state or level of the child negatively resulting in lower performance in the school.

Findings from research question two analyzed in table 2 indicated that the respondents agreed that students of single parentage are habitual late comers to school. The result further showed that students of single parentage are not provided with transport fare which will enable them come to school early. The result indicates that being late to school does not border single parents. This finding is not a surprise giving that our society today has witnessed total negligence of the right of the child to attend school regularly due to breakdown in the family. Supporting this finding, Nwachukwu (2008) stated that children from single parent homes are habitual late comers to school and that many of the problems that single parents have are similar to those of two parents' family, but these problems seem more difficult to bear or manage when the home is being tutored by only one person, in most cases, late comers to school have been viewed as individuals who come from less-intact families often referred to as single parent home.

Findings from research question three which was analyzed in table 3, indicated that pupils of single parentage engage in deviant behaviours in school. The findings also showed that most students of single parentage are hostile to others in the school, they frequently fight others. This finding is not a surprise because single parentage homes lack the love and warmth of a supportive home where children are cared for. This lack of love and care create hostility in the child and make the child feel with anger. The results further showed that students of single parentage are disobedient to the teachers in the school as well as engage in stealing. This finding is in tandem with Muhammed (2009) that the rise of antisocial behaviours among young people in Nigeria is due to single parenting among other factors, because children from single parent families have multiple behavioural problems which impel them to engage in anti-social behaviours because the warmth, direction, love and protection which the parents would have provided for them are lost and then sought in anti-social behaviours such as fighting and stealing.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the study that most of the students from single parent homes experience low performance in their academic activities compare with students from two parent families rather have a high level of parental participation in their academic work. The findings also suggest that single parenting has a negative effect on the academic performance of students, lead to deviant behaviours and lateness to school. The results obtained from this study have greater implication for classroom teachers, parents, counselors, curriculum planners and psychologists.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations were made from this study:

1. Parents, especially those who are single parents should apportion their time in such a way that they would be able to aid their children in doing their homework, give them tidbits on becoming academically successful, visit their children's school to find out their performance in class as well as given them all the materials they required for their studies. This is important as it shall complement the efforts of the teachers.
2. Teachers should give remedial lessons to students 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.
3. School counselors 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.

4. Parents should always attend PTA meetings at the school. This wills them to improve their relationship with the child and school authority thereby resulting in improved performance in examination.

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