



Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Aba North L.G.A., Abia State

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Abstract: *The study was designed to examine the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A, Abia State. Four-research questions and null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study was based on Bowlby's attachment theory and survey research design. A sample of 140 teachers were randomly selected from a population of 360 teachers from the sampled schools. The study used a self structured research instrument to collect data from the respondents. The responses were analyzed using the statistical package for social science version 22 (SPSS 22) and the paired t-test statistics. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics by calculating mean and standard deviation for scales based on the sub-variables of single parenting. The findings revealed that children from single parenting faced emotional destabilization, negative social disposition and poor moral upbringing. The study concludes that life in a single parent family could be stressful for both the parent and the child as a result of so many challenges. The study also recommends that counselling services be provided in schools to enable children develop positive self-concept in life that will help them in their academic performance at school.*

Key words: *Single Parenting, Primary School Pupils, Academic Performance*

Introduction

The family is one of the vital aspects of organization in the society. The family is a primary source to whom children interact and mingle with early in their lives. The family's most significant and extraordinary duty is to arrange and lift the young ones within the standards and estimations of the society (Shuaila and Sarmad, 2019). Parents love their children unconditionally and facilitate their lives in every step they assume to take in life.

In single parent homes, this love and warm heartedness is seemed to decrease and directly have an effect on the child's overall health status and upbringing academically (Mabuza and Okeke, 2014; Falana and Ayodele, 2012).

Parenting promotes and supports the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the intricacies of

raising a child and not exclusively for a biological relationship (Brooks, 2012). The most common caretaker in parenting is the father or mother or both that is, the child's biological parent(s) in question. A surrogate may be an older sibling, a step-mother, aunt, uncle, or other family members or a family friend (Bernstein, 2008).

In some cases, government and society may have a role in child-rearing. In many cases, orphaned or abandoned children receive parental care from non blood relations. Others may be adopted raised in foster care or placed in an orphanage. Parenting skill varies and a parent or surrogate with good parenting skill may refer to as a good parent (Bernstein, 2008).

In Nigeria the existence of single parent was formerly unknown and where they existed they were ignored as exceptional cases. Presently single parenting is the fast growing family system both inside and outside Nigeria (Nwachukwu, as cited in Chukwuka, 2018). The child therefore is morally upright and emotionally stable when the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents. The family is the first agent the child first come in contact with and so has a great influence on the child's physical, mental and moral development; the family lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to school is determined by the family. The child's emotional development is traced to his or her home environment. A child's emotional development is affected by two kinds of relationships-the parent child relationship and the child-parent relationships (Bolu, 2016). A single is one not living with a spouse. The single parent has most of day responsible for raising the child or children. The herculean task of child rearing cannot be done by an individual. Thus, single parenthood is the practice of raising children or building family without a spouse or a partner. As a form of building a family, single parenting is now permissible in our societies which formerly stigmatize such a system because it was not much acceptable.

The family is a big institution and parenting is supporting and an establishing pillar with Societal norms and values being accountable for developing psychological and emotional wellbeing of the child. Single mothers are stigmatized because of patriarchal system of family run in our society (Falana, Bada and Ayodele, 2012). Culturally, it is not acceptable to live with opposite gendered parents. A parent conjointly leaves remarkable impacts on children's behaviours, personality and health. For instance, a girl cannot share every little matter with her father as she can with her mother or vice versa (Falana, Bada and Ayodele, 2012).

Children do their initial interaction with their families, observe and learn the actions of their caregiver (Mooney, Oliver and Smith, as cited in Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins, 2010). In single parenting, there has only been one parent to look at and copy his or her actions. Children learn behaviours from their families and if parents are responsible in some manner the child will learn same (Bandura, 1965). If parents have not built trustworthy relationships with their children, there are higher probabilities that children will face difficulties in forming good relationships with their surroundings. However, a positive result could be accomplished only if parents demonstrate the kind of behaviour

which they want their children to learn (Conor and Scott, 2007; Chapman, Whitefield, Felitti, Dube and Edwards, 2004).

Attachment is a basic human need to secure relationship between children and caregiver. A child psychiatrist John Bowlby (1958) gave a theory of attachment which clearly explains how children and their parents relationship emerges and influence the emotional and social development of a child. Bowlby designed four stages of attachment from infancy as pre-attachment, attachment in making, clear cut attachment, and formation of reciprocal relationship. All these stages build up a bond and this bond binds parents and their children emotionally (Conor and Scott, 2007).

Bowlby's colleague built up another three stages he called detachment, protest and despair experiences children faced when they are separated from their caregivers/parents (Chapman, Whitefield, Felitti, Dube and Edwards, 2004). When parents are not able to build stronger relationship in their homes, then there are higher chances that children will face some problems such as psychological disorders, such as decrease intelligence, increase anger and violent behaviour (Conor and Scott, 2007; Chapman, Whitefield, Felitti, Dube and Edwards, 2004).

However the primary school children are nonetheless the most fragile because they are still in their formative years, meaning that any disruptions could have everlasting effect on them. Many studies in Nigeria actually have focused more on parental involvement in children's school activities, not much has been done in family structure such as single parenthood and its effects on the pupils' academic performance which is also lacking in the primary schools in Aba North Local Government Area, Abia State.

Purpose

The main purpose of the study is to investigate how single parenting affects academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do you agree that single parent home influence primary school children's academic performance?
2. To what extent does intellectual stimulation at school process activities of single parent affects academic performance of primary school pupils?
3. To what extent do you agree that occupational status of single parenthood affects academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence between the scores of male and female respondents on the academic performance of primary school pupils
2. There is no significant effect between the scores of male and female responses and the academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North.

Method

A descriptive survey was used for the study. This method involved participants or non participant's observation as well a well structured interview and a self structured

questionnaire. The study consist of six primary schools in Aba North Local Government, Abia State and are all located in the Metropolitan city which is prone to sexual abuses and teenage pregnancy and so single parenting nature are found in the urban cities. 140 male and female teachers were drawn from the population from different primary schools through stratified sampling technique. This helped to reduce one sidedness and the stratification factors used were the head teachers' status dichotomy in the school system.

A questionnaire was employed as an instrument in this study. It included two major parts: the first was about the demographic data of the research participants; their age, gender and school location; the second part includes all the independent variables. The dependent variables were the mean scores of the entire independent variables each.

Data was analyzed through using the statistical package of social sciences version 22(SPSS-22) and descriptive statistics by calculating the mean and the standard deviation for scales based on the sub-variables of single parenting. The mean score for each item was interpreted by calculating the boundaries of each response in the 5-point modified Licket scale by dividing the serial width (4) by the number of responses (5) and were found to be 0.8. The value 2.4 is the decision rule. A mean score value of above 2.4 indicates the presence of the issue under consideration from very great extent, great extent, very low extent and low extent; below 2.4 indicates the presence from a non-applicable to a great extent, while 2.4 is the midpoint of very low extent. The null hypotheses were tested with paired t-test at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do you agree that single parenting influence academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North Local Government Area?

Table 1: Mean score and standard deviation of single parenting on pupils academic performance

S/N	Item statements	n	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
1	Single parenting affects children's academic achievement	1.40	3.33	.82	VGE
2	Single parents do not have enough time to show commitment to their children's school process activities.	1.40	3.40	.80	VGE
3	Single parents do not show strong passion towards their children's school process activities	1.40	2.99	1.07	GE
4	Single parents do not show a strong goodwill towards their children's school process activities	1.40	3.41	.86	VGE
	Overall mean		3.28	.89	VGE

The result in table 1 revealed that the mean score and standard deviation for influence of single parenting on academic performance ranged from 2.99-3.41 and .80-1.07 respectively. The overall mean average was 3.28. Close observation of the result showed that the respondents greatly agreed that single parenting influence academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

Research Question 2

To what extent does intellectual stimulation at school process activities influence pupils' academic performance in Aba North L.G.A.?

Table two: Mean score and standard deviation of intellectual stimulation at school process activities on academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

S/N	Item statements	n	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
5	Home structure affects intellectual stimulation at school activities of children and academic performance of children in the primary school	1.40	2.46	1.22	VGE
6	Single parent homes present real danger to the emotional, and mental adjustment of the primary pupils and their academic performance	1.40	2.96	1.18	VGE
7	Single parent home endanger the pupils intellectual stimulation at school process activities	1.40	3.17	.92	GE
8	Pupils from single parent homes perform poorly in their academic achievement due to lack of having good relationship with other children in school.	1.40	3.26	1.03	VGE
9	Single parenthood lack time and therefore do not attend to their children's homework or assignment.	140	3.31	1.03	VGE
	Overall mean average		3.03	1.10	GE

Table two above showed the mean score and standard deviation of the influence of intellectual stimulation at school process activities and academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A which ranged from 2.46-3.31 and .92-1.22 respectively. The overall mean average was 3.03. The result implied that the respondents agreed that intellectual stimulation at school process activities influence the pupils' academic performance in Aba North L.G.A.

Research Question 3:

To what extent do you agree that occupational status of single parenthood affect academic performance of primary school pupils'?

S/N	Item statements	n	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
10	Single parents lack the financial strength in providing for their children's academic activities	1.40	2.46	1.22	GE
11	Incomes of parents have a strong impact on what methods of child rearing parents provide to their children.	1.40	3.17	1.92	GE
12	Working class children of single parents often grow up at a disadvantage with their schooling	1.40	3.17	1.92	GE
13	Lower working class single parents do not give their children the kind of social networking that intact families do.	1.40	3.26	1.15	VGE
14	Single parent homes lack money required to give their children proper attention for their academic activities.	140	3.31	1.03	VGE
	Overall mean average		3.03	1.10	GE

Table 3 showed that the mean score and the standard deviation of the influence of income status on academic performance of pupils ranged from 2.46-3.31 and .92-1.22 respectively. The overall mean average was 3.03. The result implied that the respondents agreed that

the income status of single parents influenced their pupils' academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

Table 4: Paired t-test analysis of differences on academic performance of primary school pupils (n=140).

Variables	x	SD	T-value	Df	Sig.
Single parenting	13.13	2.25			
Academic performance	30.25	6.75	31.50	139	.000

Table 4 indicated that the paired t-test (134) = 31.50 P = .000. The P-value was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on the academic performance of primary school pupils was rejected. This implies that single parenthood has effect on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant effect on the intellectual stimulation at school process activities of single parents on the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Aba North L.G.A.

Table 5: Paired t-test analysis of effects of intellectual stimulation at school process activities of single parents on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Aba North L.G. (n=140).

Variables	X	SD	T-value	Df	Sig.
Single parenting	15.17	3.19			
Academic performance	30.25	6.75	27.79	139	.000

Table 3 indicated that the paired t-test (139) = 27.79, P = .000. The P-value was less than the alpha level of significance at 0.05. The null hypothesis that postulated that there is significant effect on the intellectual stimulation at school process activities of single parenthood on academic performance of the primary school pupils in Aba North has effect.

Discussion

In general, the respondents reported low extent on the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of primary school pupils. This means that children from single parenting face emotional destabilization, negative social disposition, laxity in assisting and

guidance and financial difficulty in providing for academic activities for their children. Single parent homes are faced with challenges of inadequate financial resources. This is supported by Schultz (2006) who asserted that if adolescents from unstable homes are not to be compared with those from two parent homes, it would be seen that the former have more social, academic and emotional problems. In such manner, Rochlkepartain as cited in Adebola (2013) supporting asserted that the family and its structure play a great role in children's academic performance. Levin (2001) agreed that parents are probably the actor with the clearest undimensional interest in a high level of their children's academic performance.

Chowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012) claimed that parental involvement in the school environment appears high because 37% reported attended parent teachers activity meetings, discuss expectations with their children, discuss school work and make sure their children do their work. This result showed that single parent bears the financial burden alone of taking care of their children thus leading to less academic productive among the children. The result is an indication that intact homes are more likely to involve in their children's education than single parents. Also Topor, Keane, Sheiton and Calkins (2010) claimed that parental involvement is positively associated with students' academic performance at school. In a related way, Dontor (2010) indicates that parents noted that poor performance of their children emanates from the lack of proper supervision of their wards homework and assignments.

Conclusion

Life in a single parent home can be stressful and challenging for both the parent and the child. The home is challenged with inadequate financial resources. It is clear from the study that most of the pupils from single parent homes experience low parental involvement in their academic activities. Evidence also suggest that single parenting has a negative effect on the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Aba north L.G.A.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Single parents should be enlightened on the need to stay together as husband and wife to raise a good family. Parents should persevere and tolerate each other in marriage for the sake of the children raised.
2. There is need for counselling services that will encourage individual counselling processes in our schools starting early from the primary schools to the tertiary level to enable these young ones receive and develop positive self-concept that will assist their academic growth in schools.
3. There is great need for instituting guidance and counseling units for awareness in the primary schools to tackle this and other similar problems in the schools.

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