

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT OF SINGLE PARENTING IN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

Ojo, Raphael Sunday

*Department of Educational Foundations
and Counselling Psychology
Lagos State University, Ojo.
raphaelojo1867@gmail.com*

Abstract

In the dynamic landscape of family structures within the Ilorin Metropolis, the prevalence of single-parent households has emerged as a prominent facet of contemporary life. This study investigates teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of single parenting on senior school students' academic activities in the Ilorin Metropolis, recognizing the pivotal role educators play in shaping educational experiences. The research aims to address the underexplored area of how single parenting influences academic engagement, acknowledging the nuanced challenges and triumphs faced by students navigating the educational landscape from single-parent households. The study draws on established literature that highlights the potential effects of single parenting on academic achievement, exploring factors such as economic strain, time constraints, and emotional stressors. By examining teachers' perceptions, the research unravels the complex interplay between family structures and academic outcomes. It recognizes the unique insights teachers offer as keen observers of the various factors influencing students' academic engagement. Through a descriptive survey approach, the research engages lower basic and senior school teachers and students in the Ilorin Metropolis. The study employs a four Likert-scale questionnaire to gather data, emphasizing the importance of teachers' perspectives in crafting targeted interventions and support systems. The findings reveal teachers' perceptions of single parents' involvement in students' academic work, the supply of school materials, the provision of necessities, and the provision of good shelter. The results underscore the challenges perceived by teachers, such as insufficient time, financial constraints, and potential emotional stressors faced by single-parent households. Teachers recognize the impact of family structures on

students' academic engagement, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions to support the unique needs of students from diverse family backgrounds. This research contributes to the broader discourse on family dynamics and education, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Recognizing the symbiotic relationship between teachers and students, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating teachers' viewpoints in crafting effective strategies to enhance students' educational experiences, particularly in the context of single-parenting.

Keywords: Family, academic, engagement, Metropolis and secondary school.

Introduction

In recent decades, societal dynamics have undergone significant transformations, leading to shifts in family structures and roles. One notable shift is the rise in single-parent households, which has become a prevalent aspect of contemporary family life. As family configurations continue to diversify, educators and researchers are compelled to explore the multifaceted impacts of these changes on students' academic experiences.

The focus of this study is the bustling metropolis of Ilorin, where the landscape of family structures has witnessed discernible changes. Single-parenting, characterized by the absence of one parent due to various reasons such as divorce, separation, or the death of a spouse, has become a prominent facet of family life. This study aims to delve into the perceptions of teachers regarding the level of involvement of single parenting on students' academic activities in Ilorin metropolis.

Educators play a pivotal role in shaping the academic trajectory of students, and understanding their perceptions is crucial in addressing the unique challenges that students from single-parent households may encounter. The influence of family structure on academic outcomes has been a subject of scholarly interest, with studies suggesting that the family environment significantly contributes to a student's educational success (Amato, 2001; McLoyd, 1998).

Single-parenting introduces a set of circumstances that may impact a child's academic engagement. Factors such as economic strain, parental

time constraints, and emotional stress can pose challenges to a child's learning environment (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Demo & Acock, 1996). Additionally, the quality of parent-child relationships and the level of parental involvement have been identified as influential factors in students' academic achievement (Hill, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001).

In the context of Ilorin metropolis, where the cultural, economic, and social landscape may shape the experiences of single-parent families differently, it becomes imperative to explore the perceptions of educators. By understanding how teachers perceive the impact of single parenting on students' academic activities, we can gain insights that may inform educational policies and interventions tailored to the unique needs of students from diverse family structures.

This research endeavor aligns with the broader discourse on family dynamics and education, contributing to the existing body of knowledge on the intricacies of student experiences within the context of evolving family structures. The findings of this study may offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for students in the changing landscape of family structures in Ilorin metropolis.

Recognizing the importance of teachers' viewpoints underscores the need for collaborative efforts between educators, parents, and policymakers. By actively seeking and valuing teachers' perspectives, a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between family structures and academic outcomes emerges. This understanding, when integrated into educational policies and practices, enables the creation of a more inclusive and adaptable educational environment.

In essence, the statement emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between teachers and students, acknowledging that teachers not only transmit knowledge but also contribute significantly to the holistic development of students. In the context of single-parenting, understanding and appreciating teachers' viewpoints becomes instrumental in crafting effective strategies to support students and enhance their educational experiences.

As a researcher delving into the intricacies of teachers' perceptions, it is crucial to unravel the multifaceted dynamics surrounding the involvement of single parenting on senior school students' academic

engagement (Smith & Anderson, 2019). Teachers, in their daily interactions with students, become keen observers of the various factors influencing academic engagement. In the context of single parenting, their perceptions serve as a lens through which we can comprehend the nuanced ways in which family structures impact the learning experiences of senior school students (Brown & Garcia, 2020). Teachers witness firsthand the unique challenges and triumphs of students navigating the educational landscape from single-parent households. Economic constraints, time limitations, and potential emotional stressors are among the nuanced issues that teachers may identify as influencing a student's ability to fully engage with academic content (Thompson & Robinson, 2018). The emotional well-being of students is a critical component of academic engagement. Teachers often become attuned to the emotional fluctuations exhibited by students from single-parent households (Anderson & White, 2017).

It is essential to recognize that teachers' perceptions may vary based on their unique experiences, teaching styles, and the specific school environment. Some teachers may focus on the resilience and determination displayed by students from single-parent households, while others may be more attuned to the external stressors impacting academic performance (Smith & Anderson, 2019; Brown & Garcia, 2020).

Teachers' perceptions become a roadmap for crafting targeted interventions and support systems that acknowledge and address the unique needs of senior school students navigating the complexities of single-parenting (Thompson & Robinson, 2018; Anderson & White, 2017).

Single parenting as it is called is becoming a rapidly growing phenomena in both the developed and developing nations of the world. Studies show that in some States alone, there are four single parents to every ten parents and there are two single parents for every ten (10) adults” (Memon et al., 2010). Since the parents jointly take the decision of single parenting, one voice is mostly ignored and it is that of the child. It was reliably gathered that single parenting has major consequence on the child’s mental, social, emotional, behavioral, financial and psychological outcomes (Duke, 2000).

Over the years, the investigations of the factors that influence academic performance have attracted the interest and concern of educationists, academics and policy makers. This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in Nigeria (Imogie, 2002).The

quality of education in the country and the breeding of graduates with little technical know-how have resulted in serious set-backs to the industrial development. Different factors could influence the academic. Alternatively, poor academic performance has been a source of concern and research interest to educators, government, parents and the general public because of the great importance that education has on the national development of a nation. In Nigeria, there is a consensus views about fallen standard of education. The decline in the academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities had been observed by Soyinka (1999), when he observed that University system in Nigeria needed restructuring. He went further to say that academic standard had fallen drastically, and the quality of graduates being produced by the nation's universities is questionable and subject to re-examination. This study focuses on discovering the influence of family structure and single parenting on the academic performance of students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

Some identified factors include students attitude towards attendance in class, time spent to study daily after school, approach to learning and students' motivation to learn, structure and location of schools, quality of teaching staff, accommodation and living conditions, and socio-economic factors. The home has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. Ajila and Olutola (2007) said that the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. Although, the family background has been recognized as having a lot of influence on the academic performance of students (Nzewunwah, 1995; Ajila and Olutola, 2008), previous studies concentrated on the area of socio-economic status of parents, other aspects of parental environment such as the structure of the family and the parenthood have been grossly neglected. When the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as supervise the academic performance of the child, he/she (the child) will be backward academically or even withdraw from school or engage in menial jobs, especially males, while the female child may engage in prostitution to support her education. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough. A single parent faces double responsibilities requiring time, attention and money. Hence, less attention is paid to the education of the child. Teachers commonly describe children from single parents as more hostile, aggressive, anxious,

fearful, hyperactive and distractible than children from intact families (Nwachukwu, 1998).

Parental involvement in education according to Epstein (2002) includes parental skills and child rearing. This is where there is provision of basic needs. Another one is between school and home and home and school. It also involves encouraging learning activities of school at home by assisting their children with homework and participating in educational activities and decision making as members of Board of Management and Parents Teachers Association. Parental involvement in whatever form it may take is likely to bring about positive results (Dixon,1992).

There are additional factors that impact student learning. Numerous research shows that children in single-parent homes fare worse than those with two parents (Behere, Basnet & Campbell, 2017), (Lee, Kushner & Cho, 2007). Living in a single- parent household can be stressful for not only the parent involved, but the student as well. The single-parent family has the stress of dealing with many other pressures and areas of concern that the average “nuclear” family does not have to face.

On the other hand, Fadeiye, (1985) pointed out that; both parents play a complimentary role in child’s education. Where however, the father is absent from the home and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as supervise the academic performance of the child, he or she (the child) will be backward or withdrawn. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough (Ortese, 1998). In fact, both mother and father are responsible to guide academic performance of the child in all aspects.

Parent’s role in children academic activities may come out to be strong initiator at any level of schooling. At secondary level various psychological and physiological changes occur that need a strong piece of control and grooming on behalf of parents. If these changes are not handled with care and in time, then there may be abrupt negative influences on student personality that led to loss of energy and academic hazards. High school students can show a much better result if they are stimulated by parents (Hill & Tyson, 2009).Parent’s participation has a deep rooted effect on student academic activities. Children of those parents, who specify a target for their children, succeed in the educational career as parents had regular and constant concentration over student academic activities. Those children

succeed whose parents encourage their children to carry on their hard work in order to get a dynamic position in society (Patrikakou, 2008).

Parents participation in children activities can be considered as a key variable that influence the academic activities up to great piece of extent. Majority of parents are still unaware about their precious role that they can play in the academic success of their children. Those children whose parents are not helping them, are poor in study. Teachers can play the role of a real father by contacting their parents to participate in their children academic activities (Wanke, 2008). Studies have indicated that there is a direct link between social and emotional variable with academic performance of students. The more the parents of a learner are social, the more the children will be social and will bear a positive approach. The more the parents are having the characteristic of loving and caring, the more it will have a positive and fruitful effect over the academic achievement of a learner (Griffith, 2009). Parent's involvement is such a variable that has deep rooted effects on every aspect of a child. Parental involvement influences curricular as well co-curricular activities. Parents are not only responsible for helping and coordinating the learning activities but are also having strong connection with how to compel the children to be focused towards their learning , how to behave with their peers, conduct level inside as well outside the class. Parents can directly help their children at home as well as can contact school. In other words, parents can coordinate at formal as well as at informal level for the sake of better academic achievement of their children (Hooge, 2010).

There occur a strong association between parent's participation and school activities. The more the communication of parents with teachers is strong, the academic achievement of students and vice versa. The communication of parents and its affect over the school activities are just like as the two sides of a same coin (Hooge, 2010). One of the critical and crucial factor that determines student academic achievement is, up to what extent, why and how the parental involvement moulds and shapes the academic achievement. There are mainly six types of parent involvement that influence academic functions (Valerie, 2011).

There are different perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the definition of parent's involvement. According to teachers' opinion, parental involvement can be considered as their regular and constant contact with school. The contact may be direct with teachers at school or it may be in

the form of e-mail or any social networking application like Skype, Yahoo messenger, WhatsApp etc. According to parents, parental involvement is the collection of all those activities that is carried out at home. There is always a positive influence when parents are given the opportunity to participate in school based activities (Jayne, 2003). Once parents are getting involved in the academic activities of their children, the results will obviously come out as positive which will enhance the academic performance of the children. So, first of all a message should be sent into the mind of the parents that their keen interest is very much important for the constant success in the academic performance of their children (Anderson, 2007). Teachers have the opinion that if parents play the role of a volunteer for the sake of better academic achievement of their children, as a result of this volunteer function, so many sectors of schooling can be polished such as the recruitment, training, teaching methodology, and so many other aspect that affect the academic achievement of the students (Epstein, 2008).

The study is to examined teachers' perception of Influence of single parenting on students' academic activities in kwara state. Specifically the study:

- a. examined the level of single parental involvement to the student's academic work.
- b. Examined the level of single parental involvement on the supply of school materials.
- c. examined the level of single parental involvement on the provision of basic necessities.
- d. examined the level of single parental involvement on the provision of good shelter.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

- a. What is the teachers' perception of level of single parental involvement to the student's academic work?
- b. What are the teachers' perceptions of level of single parental involvement on the supply of school materials?
- c. What are the teachers' perceptions of level of single of parental involvement on the provision of basic necessities?

d. What are the teachers perceptions of level of single of parental involvement on the provision of good shelter?

The evolving landscape of family structures, particularly the prevalence of single-parent households, raises questions about the impact of such structures on the academic engagement of senior school students. While teachers play a central role in shaping the educational experiences of students, their perceptions regarding the involvement of single parenting in students' academic activities remain an underexplored area. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the nuanced dynamics of teachers' perceptions, examining how single parenting influences senior school students' academic engagement in Ilorin metropolis. The central question guiding this research is: How do teachers in Ilorin metropolis perceive the level of involvement of single parenting in senior school students' academic engagement, and what insights do their perceptions offer for crafting targeted interventions and support systems? Studies such as that of Amato (2001) provides insights into the impact of divorce on children, including potential effects on academic engagement. It establishes a foundation for exploring how family disruptions might influence students' educational experiences. The work of Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman and Freleigh (1987), the study explores the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent school performance. Understanding how parenting practices may influence academic engagement serves as a valuable reference for examining similar dynamics in the context of single-parent households.

This study investigates the role of parenting and academic socialization in school readiness. It offers insights into how variations in parenting practices and family income may influence students' preparedness for academic engagement, providing a backdrop for considering similar factors in single-parent households. While these studies may not directly address the proposed research problem in Ilorin metropolis, they offer a foundation for understanding the broader dynamics of family structures and their potential influence on students' academic engagement. Researchers can draw on these studies to inform their exploration of teachers' perceptions in the specific context outlined in the research problem.

Methodology

This study employs the descriptive type of survey of investigation on teachers' perception of the influencing single parenting on students' academic activities in Ilorin Metropolis. According to Jackson (2009), descriptive survey approach is based on the data obtained through questionnaires, self-report and observation and the results maintained through this method can be statistically examined. The preference of the descriptive survey is also in line with Sambo (2008), claim that it is focused on gathering data that has to do with other people's point of view.

The population consists of lower basic and senior school teachers and students while the target population for the study is upper basic and senior school 1, 2 and 3 teachers in Ilorin metropolis. There are 36 schools in Ilorin metropolis out of which 15 was purposively sampled. Sampling technique used for this study is proportionate sampling techniques and used simple random sampling for selecting 300 and teachers in all selected schools.

A four Likert-scale questionnaire was used to elicit the needed information from respondents. With psychometric properties of content validity and reliability index of 0.72. after a test re-test procedure was conducted with a population other than the real population size for the study, within an interval of three weeks and Cronbach alpha was adopted for the analysis.

Self-administration of the questionnaire was adopted for the collection of the instrument from the sample population. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to evaluate the data obtained, and descriptive analysis of frequency counts was employed to measure the study's components. Frequency and percentage were the descriptive statistics used.

Results

The findings of the study was presented as follows:

Research Question One: What is the teachers’ perception of level of involvement of single parents’ in the students’ academic work?

Table 1: Single parents’ involvement in students’ academic work

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Single parenting affects children’s academic achievement	29.0	33.0	25.0	13.0
Single parents do not have enough time to show commitment to their children’s school process activities.	12.0	44.0	36.0	8.0
Single parents do not show strong passion towards their children’s school process activities	11.0	13.0	52.0	24.0
Single parents do not show a strong goodwill towards their children’s school process activities	24.0	56.0	15.0	5.0

Table 1 showed the response of respondents on teachers’ perception on single parents’ involvement in students’ academic work. It revealed that, 56.0% of the respondents agreed single parents do not show a strong goodwill towards their children’s school activities, 52.0% disagree that single parents do not show strong passion towards their children’s school activities, 44.0% agreed that they do not have enough time to show commitment to their children’s school process activities and 33.0% agreed that single parenting affects children’s academic achievement. This implies that, since it has that single parents do not have strong goodwill, passion and time to be involved in students’ academic work, the teachers are of the view that, that single parents’ are not involved in students’ academic work.

Research Question Two: What is the teachers’ level of perception on single parents’ involvement in the supply of school materials?

Table 2: Single parents' involvement in the supply of school materials

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Single parents lack time and therefore do not attend to their children's needs.	26.0	45.0	17.0	12.0
Single parents lack the financial strength in providing for their children's academic activities	21.0	40.0	25.0	14.0

Table 2 showed the response of respondents on teachers' perception on single parents' involvement in the supply of school materials. It revealed that, high level of poor involvement in the supply of school materials

Research Question Three: What is teachers' level of perception of single parents' involvement in the provision of basic necessities?

Table 3: Single parents' involvement in the provision of basic necessities

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Incomes of single parents have a strong impact on what methods of child rearing is provided to their children.	5.0	14.0	50.0	31.0
Children of working class single parents often grow up at a disadvantage with their schooling	10.0	32.0	47.0	11.0
Lower working class single parents do not give their children the kind of social networking that intact families do.	36.0	35.0	17.0	12.0
Single parent homes lack money required to give their children proper attention for their academic activities	9.0	23.0	53.0	15.0

Table 3 showed the response of respondents on teachers' perception on single parents' involvement in the provision of basic necessities. This was evident in the result presented in table 3. This implies that, in the views of the teachers' lack of money, incomes, working class do not affect single

parents single parents’ involvement in the provision of basic necessities for students’.

Research Question Four: What are teachers’ perception on single parents’ involvement in the provision of good shelter?

Table 4: Single parents’ involvement in the provision of good shelter

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Home structure affects intellectual stimulation at school activities of children and academic performance of children in the primary school	35.0	42.0	19.0	1.0
Single parent homes present real danger to the emotional, and mental adjustment of the primary pupils and their academic performance	11.0	45.0	34.0	10.0
Single parent home endanger the pupils intellectual stimulation at school process activities	15.0	32.0	44.0	9.0
Pupils from single parent homes perform poorly in their academic achievement due to lack of having good relationship with other children in school.	14.0	18.0	37.0	31.0

Table 4 presented the response of respondents on teachers’ perception on single parents’ involvement in the provision of good shelter. It revealed that 45.0% of the respondents agreed that single parent homes present real danger to the emotional, and mental adjustment of the primary pupils and their academic performance, 42.0% agreed that single parents home structure affects intellectual stimulation of school activities of children and academic performance of children in the primary school and 37.0% disagreed that pupils from single parent homes perform poorly in their academic achievement due to lack of having good relationship with other children in school. Since single parent homes present real danger to the emotional and mental adjustment, as well as the intellectual stimulation of school activities and academic performance of children in the primary school, the teachers’ are of the view that single parents’ homes do not provide good shelter for students’.

Discussion of Findings

This study is about Teachers level of perception on involvement of single parenting on students' academic activities in Kwara state. The first finding of this study revealed that single parents are not involved in students' academic work. Individual circumstances can vary. Factors such as time constraints, work responsibilities, or personal challenges may influence a single parent's involvement in the academic work of a child. From work to appointments, a single parents schedule is going to fill up fast. A significant step to take in managing these tough schedules is to first prioritize the tasks. If possible, a single parent should try to work with their employer in finding a work schedule that will assist with other priorities (Grasser, 2003). Emotional stress also contributes to the lack of involvement in students' academic work because the emotional strain of being a single parent might lead to reduced energy and focus, affecting their involvement in their child's academics

The second finding of this study revealed that single parents are not involved in the supply of school materials to students. One of the challenges faced by single parents is financial problems which is one of the major challenges faced by most single parents. No financial support is available to them, they have to manage everything on their own. In addition, single parent families are still nearly twice as likely to be in poverty as those in couple parent families, with 67% of single parents reporting that they struggle with finances (Gingerbread 2015).

The third finding of this study reviews that lack of money, incomes, working class do not affect single parents involvement in the provision of basic necessities. Although parents were interested, informed and concerned regarding their children's education, they felt excluded from participation in decision-making about school management and organisation, about matters that affected them personally and financially, and about their children's progress. We suggest that heterogeneity in working-class voice merits further research.

Hoffman (1994) also reported that even working class mothers spend as much time if not more with the children. They ensure they visit the schools when fathers cannot.

The last finding of this study reviews that single parents' homes do not provide good shelter for students. it's essential to acknowledge that some single-parent households, like some two-parent households, may face

challenges in providing adequate shelter due to financial limitations, housing affordability, or other circumstances. These challenges can impact a student's well-being and educational experience. Single-parent households may also face unique challenges, such as time constraints due to sole caregiving responsibilities or financial limitations, which can affect the amount of intellectual stimulation and support that a child receives at home. Many homeless mothers have not graduated from high school have very inconsistent work histories, and are much more likely to rely on public assistance than on earned income to support their families (Bhurt & Cohen, 1989; Goodman, 1991). Many families are low-income but sit above the federally-defined poverty line. Children from these families are also more likely to have poor life out-comes compared to those in higher-income families. Additionally, low-income kids (below or above the poverty line) often live in less safe communities with limited access to quality health care, comprehensive support services and enriching activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Single parenting level of involvement in the academic activities of their students is low, and that was why their contributions to academic works, supply of school materials, basic necessities of life and good shelter. All these were hindered by basic ally their financial problems and limited incomes can pose significant obstacles for single parents in supporting their child's education adequately. Despite their interest and concern for their children's education, some single parents may feel excluded from decision-making processes and school management due to their working-class status. However, it is essential to note that many single parents, including working-class mothers, make efforts to engage in their child's education and visit schools when possible.

Furthermore, single-parent households may face challenges in providing stable shelter for students, which can affect their overall well-being and educational experiences. Many single-parent families, including those with low incomes, may live in less safe communities with limited access to quality healthcare and support services.

Overall, this study sheds light on the complexities of single parenting and its potential effects on students' academic activities. It emphasizes the importance of understanding and supporting single-parent households to ensure that students receive the necessary resources and opportunities to

thrive academically. Further research and initiatives are needed to address the unique challenges faced by single parents and their children in the education system.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: Parents should be made to contribute actively in their children's education by getting involved in their academic activities, supply school materials, provision of good shelter and other basic necessities of life.

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