

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY TYPE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF PUPILS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WARRI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE – IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

Children thrive successfully in almost all facets of life when they belong to two parent families. But the reverse is the case in many aspects of life when they belong to one parent families. Hence the study examined the influence of single parenting and socio-economic status on academic achievement of primary school pupils in Warri Local Government Area of Delta State. The cross-sectional research design was used for the study. A questionnaire on socio-economic status of parent, QSESP was used to collect primary data, while test-scores from pupils report cards were collected for secondary data. The sample of the study was 500 primary school pupils. The mean (\bar{x}) and SD were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The findings showed conclusively that single parenting has negative influence on academic achievement of pupils in the primary school. The study therefore recommended that single parents should seek help from relatives, NGO, Government and even religious institutions to help cater for their children instead of involving them in petty businesses that may endanger their lives.

Keywords: Single parenting, academic achievement, socio-economic status.

Introduction

Parenting at any age can be a real life-altering experience. Irrespective of race, education and socio-economic status, fatherhood and motherhood readily place demand on the person's life that was not there prior to the birth of the child. This demand becomes more strenuous emotionally and economically when the load is left alone for one parent to carry. Ezeoke (2016) hammered on the bitterness, the loneliness, the poverty and the insecurity involved in raising children by one parent. Compass and William (2006) define single parenting as a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is responsible for the

upbringing of the child. While Udansky (2008) sees single parenting as a case where by one parent is handling the responsibility of both parents to one or more children without the support of the other parent on physical, social and emotion upkeep of the children.

Single parenting, in recent times, is becoming widespread in an alarming rate. Ortesse (2000) cited in Amadu and Moses (2013) identifies single parenting as a major social problem on the rise. In a study reported by Battle (2008), 60% of children born since 1998 spend an average of 5 years of their childhood in a single-parent family, while 30% of all children in the United States spend their entire lives with single parents. But this was not the usual make-up of family since the origin of man. Culturally, the family is made up of the father, mother and the children, and not father alone with the children or mother alone with the children.

In Nigeria particularly, like other countries in the world, parental roles are culturally determined and distributed. Paternal roles are of economic responsibilities, educational advancement of the children and their disciplinary training. Maternal roles on the other hand, were that of child-rearing, home training and playing complimentary roles. In this way, the child became mentally, morally and emotionally balanced to face the future with confidence (Fadeiye 2000). But in the case where the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for the economic and social needs of the child, or the mother is absent and the father is not privileged to care for the basic needs of the child, this might affect the educational level of the child.

In Warri South Local Government Area particularly and also like many other local government areas in Delta State, many factors are identified to be responsible for single parenting. Among them area:

- Co-habitation
- Romantic boyfriend and girlfriend relationship
- Decision to produce and rear a child or children outside wedlock
- Divorce
- Extra-Marital affairs
- acute poverty that may lead to one of the mates abandoning the family
- Alcoholic mate (or Drunkard)
- Murderous temper in which the other mate feels threatened
- Insubordination, mannerlessness and poor hygiene
- Death among others

Predominant among the factors of single parenting in Warri Local Government Area (WALGA) are co-habitation and romantic boyfriend and girlfriend factors. This is because the Urhobo man does not attach much

importance to the payment of bride price and marriage registration. They prefer to cohabit through boyfriend and girlfriend relationship and raise children from there no without attached. And then in no time too, the relationship is dissolved with every flimsy excuse (ranging from inability to cook well on the part of the woman or poverty and drunkenness on the part of the man) leaving the children to the care of one of the parents. Favour (2016) in her study relating to family in Okpe and Warri south local government area, pointed out that if there were 40% legal marriages among the people in these areas, the other 60% living together and raising children are not legally married.

Single parenting can sometimes be precarious to socio-economic status of the family, and affects children's academic achievement and social behaviour. Wikipedia (2018) defines socio-economic status (SES) as the total combination of economic and sociological measure of a person's work experience and of an individual or family economic and social positions in relation to others based on incomes, education, and occupation. Or it is the person's class in society based on how much money he/she makes. A study was carried out in Germany by Steck (2009) to ascertain the proportion of single mothers in Western countries where support programs for them is rare. It was found that out of a total of 891 single mothers, 531 of them were psychologically distressed on socio-economic status (income, education) without support for their children. As a result, sons of single mothers have increased behaviour problems.

On academic achievement, Amadu and Moses (2013) studied a sample of 170 pupils from single family in Ghana and said that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of pupils from single parent homes and those from two parent homes. According to this study, the main conclusion drawn is that single parenting has negative impact on a child's academic performance. On the other hand, Ezeoke (2016) opined that pupils or students from single families are very prone to antisocial behaviours ranging from stealing, bullying, cultism, substance use disorders prostitution and school drop-out. The Global monitoring Report on Education (GMRE 2007) highlighted the statistical figures for 2004, that Nigeria heads the global list of countries with the highest number of out of school children. Of particular note, is the fact that most pupils from one parent home where socio-economic status is low, always found themselves struggling from infancy to assist the single parent to provide for the family. Because of this, they may not mind dropping out of school or attending to their academic study haphazardly. This may not be the case in two parent families. Children from two parent families in many cases are balanced academically, and sociologically. This is

because, the two parents lay the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to the school is determined by the home.

On Social learning theory, Bandura (1997) draws attention to human behaviour, and emphasized the importance of observing and modeling behaviours attitudes and emotion. He said that people learn through observing others' behaviour, especially the modeling from the two parents. But when one of the parents is absent, so that the other parent takes up the responsibilities of the two, this may lead to maladjustment or fixation by the child in the phallic stage of personality development according to Freud, (1962)

In Warri local government area of Delta State, the influx of child labour on the streets and roads, along with increase of antisocial behaviour with a geometric decrease in academic achievement of pupils in the primary schools, prompted this study to ascertain the socio economic status of single parenting on academic achievement of the pupils.

Statement of the Problem

The geometric increase in single parenting in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State is recently alarming. Meanwhile, child labour through hawking sachet water, bread, kpekere, (plantain chips), digestive biscuits, groundnuts, oranges, boiled maize, Akara and so on, is constituting nuisance on the busy Warri-Benin road, Warri-Port Harcourt road and Warri – Sapele road. The most distressing aspect of this business by these minors is the fact that it is carried out during school hours meaning that most of these children are out of school. Meanwhile there are complaints from the ministry of education on the low academic achievement of pupils in recent times. (Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, 2018). This study is therefore aimed at investigating single parenting/two parents family and their socio-economic status on academic achievement of pupils in the primary schools.

Method

The study adopted the cross-sectional research design. This design is appropriate because according to Nworgu (2015), it examined the varying ages of basic school pupils who are fragile because they are still in their formative years meaning that any disruptions could have a lifelong result on them. In this study the influence of socio-economic status (SES) of single and non-single family type and academic achievement of pupils were observed. Population of the study was made up of 5000 pupils in primary five and six. Meanwhile, 500 pupils formed the sample for both single parenting and two

parents' family. Instruments for data collection were divided into primary and secondary data collection. The primary data was socio-economic status of parent questionnaire (SESPQ) while the secondary data on academic achievement was on test scores obtained from pupils' report cards in twelve primary schools. The reliability of 0.67 was obtained through Cronbach's alpha method for the primary data collection. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level. The mean (\bar{x}) was used to answer the research questions, while a t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

The research questions that guided this study were.

1. What is the influence of parental involvement in pupils academic achievement in Warri South Local Government Area?
2. What is the level of socio-economic involvement of parents on pupils behaviour?

The hypothesis tested at 0.05 alpha level that guided this study was

Ho: There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of pupils from single families and two parent families.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of parental involvement in academic achievement of pupils in WALGA?

Table 1: Parent involvement in academic achievement of pupils.

Respondents	No respondents	Subjects	\bar{X}	SD
Single parenting	200	English	42.2	6.2
Non single parenting	300	English	68.4	8.3
Single parenting	200	Maths	41.1	64.4
Non single parenting	300	Maths	58.6	7.7
Single parenting	200	Basic science	60.4	7.8
Non single parenting	300	Basic science	80.5	8.9

Source of Data: pupils school records.

The table above showed the academic achievement of pupils from single families and two parent families. While pupils from single parents had the mean (\bar{x}) of 42.2, 41.1. and 60.4 in Maths, English and Basic Science with the SD of 6.2, 6.4 and 7.8; pupils from two parent families had the mean (\bar{x}) of 68.4, 58.6 and 80.5 Maths, English and Basic Science with the SD of 8.3, 7.7 and 8.9, respectively.

Testing Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference between academic achievement of pupils from single families and two parent families.

Table 2: T-test analysis on academic achievement of pupils from single and two parent families.

Respondent	Subject	X	SD	DF	t-cal	T-crt	Decision	Alpha level
Single parenting	English	42.2	6.5	22	9.70	2.074	Rejected	0.05
Non single parenting	Englis	68.4	8.3					
Single parenting	Maths	41.1	6.4	22	6.7	2.074	Rejected	0.05
Non single parenting	Maths	58.6	7.7					
Single parenting	Basic science	60.4	7.8	22	6.48	2.074	Rejected	0.05
Non-single parenting	Basic science	80.5	8.9					

The table 2 above indicated the hypothesis tested at 0.05 alpha level with a significant difference in academic achievement of single and two parent families. The calculated value of 9.7, 6.7 and 6.5 in English, Maths and Basic Science respectively is greater than the critical value of 2.074. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. The rejected hypothesis signified a significant difference in academic achievement of pupils in favour of two parent families.

Research Question 2: What is the level of socio-economic involvement of parents on the social and economic behaviour of pupils?

Table 3 summary of the mean (x) scores of pupils' social and economic behaviour using four point scale.

S/N								
S/N	Statement	Responses						
		SA 4	A 3	D ₂	SD ₁	$\frac{\sum XW}{W}$	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Most pupils who hawk on the busy roads and streets are from:					29		Accepted Rejected
	a. Single parent families	4	5	3	2	10	3.9 2.7*	
	b. two parent families	1	1	6	8	27		

2	Pupils who drop out of school are from: a. single parent families b. Two parent families	8 2	7 3	6 4	8 5	$\frac{73}{10}$ $\frac{30}{10}$	7.3 3.0	Accepted Accepted
3	Most pupils who learn stealing are also from: a. single parent families b. two parents families	10 3	6 1	4 2	5 3	$\frac{52}{10}$ $\frac{22}{10}$	5.1 2.2	Accepted Rejected

*Bench mark: 3.00 and above is accepted. Below 3.00 is rejected

4	Again most pupils who learns bullying others are from: a. single parent families b. two parents families	5 1	4 2	2 5	3 6	$\frac{43}{10}$ $\frac{26}{10}$	4.3 2.6	Accepted Rejected
5	Pupils who later become sex workers are most from a. single parent family b. two parent families	5 2	7 1	4 4	6 1	$\frac{55}{10}$ $\frac{20}{10}$	5.5 2.0	Accepted Rejected
6	Drug abuse and cultism delinquency among pupils later in life are from a. single parent families b. two parent families	6 1	8 5	3 2	6 3	$\frac{60}{10}$ $\frac{26}{10}$	6.0 2.6	Accepted Rejected

- Bench mark: 3.00 and above is accepted. Below 3.00 eg 2.80 is rejected.

The response to statement 1 on table 3 with the Xw of 3.9 was accepted for single parenting while it was rejected at the xw of 2.7 for two parents families. Response to statement 2, with the xw of 7.3 and 3.0 was accepted for both single parent and two parent families. but responses to statements, 3,4,5 and 6 with their respective xw of 5.1, 4.3, 5.5. and 6.0 were accepted for single parent families but were rejected for two parent families at the xw of 2.2, 2.6, 2.0 and 2.6.

Discussion

Parental involvement in high academic achievement of their children as well as their socio-economic status (SES) cannot be denied. This is mostly true when both parents are there to play their individual roles on guiding the children academically, socially and economically. But when the load of two parents are placed on the shoulder of one parent – especially, a single mother parents with one, two or more children to cater for, it is most distressing.

This is what the findings in this study indicated. The X of 42.2, 41.1 and 60.4 and their corresponding SD of 6.5, 6.4 and 7.8 showed a low academic achievement for single parent children, while those from two parent families had a high academic achievement. This finding supported a similar study by Amadu and Moses (2013) who said that children from single parent have a negative impact on a child academic performance.

On socio-economic status, the findings showed that single parents, especially single mothers with low social and economic background, make most of their children hawk petty food items on the high ways and busy streets; learn how to steal, bully others, abuse drugs and even become sex workers later in life. Again these findings corroborated the findings of Ezeoke (2016) and Steck (2008) who reported that pupils and students from single parent are prone to antisocial behaviour ranging from stealing, bullying and even prostitution; while Steck 2009 concluded that sons of single mothers who had no support programme have increased behaviour problems.

Counselling Implication

The study provides evidence for the low academic achievement of pupils from single parents. It showed how pupils mostly from single parents engaged in petty trading that mostly always endangered their lives on the highway. It also showed how some of them can become thieves later in life, abuse drugs and become sex workers.

Having seen the influence of single parenting on children, it becomes imperative to avoid the factors that are responsible for it such as cohabitation, romantic boyfriend and girlfriend relationship, divorce, extra-marital sex, having children out of wedlock, common among the urhobos, Okpes, Isokos, Itsekiri in Warri South and North Local government area, of Delta State. Where two elephants fight, it is adage that it is the grasses that suffer. Parents should consider the future of the children, they bring into the world and the future of the state and the country.

Recommendations

Having considered the influence of single parenting and socio-economic status on academic achievement of pupils, the study therefore gave the following recommendations:

1. Parents should try as much as possible to protect their marriages from collapsing; through bickering, extra-marital sex drunkenness and insubordination
2. Cohabitation and girlfriend and boyfriend relationship where children are brought forth should be prohibited at all costs.
3. Single parents should seek help from relatives, NGO, government, and even religious institution to help in catering for their kids instead of involving them in petty businesses that may endanger their lives.
4. Religious organizations should have counseling sections on marriages, where married couples are given counsels from time to time.
5. Government should enforce the registration of marriages and payment of fines if violated, to avoid trial marriages where children are raised, through awareness campaigns in all towns/villages.
6. Again, children from single parents can be assisted by the government with grants, prizes and even scholarship.
7. School counsellors should try to identify children from single parents, who are challenged emotionally, financially, mentally, socially and physically and give them the needed counsels at the right time.

Conclusion

The family is the nucleus of the society at large. A healthy family structure is a healthy nation and well developed family is also a developed nation. therefore, the family should be viewed as a micro nation, that needed care and protections. Findings from the study had shown that single families can be minimized through the prohibition of man-made factors responsible for it, and the children brought forth, can be protected. The onus therefore rests on the government to impose fines on the man-made factors causing single parenting.

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