

## **INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN UKWUANI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined Perceived Influence of Single Parenting on Educational attainment of Primary School Pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The research design employed in this study was the survey design. The population of this study comprised all teachers and parents in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State with sample size of 176, comprising of 110 Primary school teachers and 66 parents. Eleven primary schools and ten teachers from each of the schools were purposively selected as Six parents were also randomly selected from the vicinity were the 11 chosen schools are located. 4 schools out of the 11 sampled were private. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Influence of Single Parenting Inventory (ISPI). The likert type scale of strongly agreed [SA] 4 points, agreed [A] 3 points, strongly disagreed [AD] 2 points and disagreed [D] 1 point were used. The data collected were analyzed with frequency distribution, descriptive statistics and Independent sample test. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant levels. The analysis revealed that the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State is high. There are enormous causes and mammoth consequences of single parenting on primary school pupils' social adjustment to societal norms. There are many ways of ameliorating the challenges facing single parenting. There is no significant difference between teachers and parents as well as between male and female on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. Conclusion was drawn and useful recommendations made, which includes that government should create academic and counselling units in schools with adequate funds to care for the psychological needs of students, especially those single parent homes.*

**Keywords:** Single parenting, broken homes, divorce and Education

### **Introduction**

Education is of great importance to every home, society and Nation at large. It is a proved fact that education has been and will continue to be described as the best legacy parents or Nation could bequeath for her children and generation unborn.

The home, which is the traditional nuclear family, is the smallest unit and microcosm of the larger society. The home is the first environment within a family and an essential place in the upbringing of children. Therefore, the family is a universal organization and it is hard to imagine how society can function without the family (Anderson cited in Ekeke & Dorgu, 2014). It is unfortunate that most families today are divided, separated and unstable.

The incidences of broken marriages are on the increase and bring about consequential failure of children in all levels of education (Bubelwa, 2014). Children need the care of both parents for their affective, cognitive and psychomotor development. If parents are not emotionally connected to their children, they will struggle to learn how to regulate his emotion and interact with others appropriately (Moges & Weber, 2014). A broken home can result in single parenting, and is like losing part of the body (Landucci as cited by Igbinosa, 2014).

Family is the children's first place of social organization where they acquire initial education and socialization. Family lays the psychological, moral and spiritual foundation in the overall development of the child. Where and when there is harmony within the family, it translates to a happy home for children where healthy and peaceful coexistence prevail amongst family members.

Historically, single parenting was only manifested when there is a death of one the partners or divorce but in recent times, there has been an upsurge in the number, and a revolution on how the society perceives single parenting due to the western education. Among other reasons people decide to adopt this style of family structure include; domestic violence, physically and emotionally abuse of weaker spouse, teenage pregnancies and feminism. Azuka-Obieke Uchenna (2013) stated that single parenting could be as a result of divorce, separation of various kinds or death of any of the spouses. Factors such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples and single adoption are the major causes of single parenthood in our society today (Ekpeyong & Lawrence, 2016). Pupils from this type of family structure often lag behind academically and in coordination.

The rate of marriage failure is on the increase in our contemporary society. As the saying goes when two elephants fight, it is the grasses that suffer. Amadu and Moses (2013) observed that the basic school pupils from single parenting are the most fragile because they are at their formative years and any disruption in development could have lasting consequences. Amodu and Moses (2013) asserted that most of the pupils from single parent home experience low parental involvement in their academic activities compared with pupils from two parent families which have a high level of parental participation in their academic work. According to Kimani and Kombo, (2010), there is a strong correlation between street life, sex and defilement offences. Children brought up in a step parent home had a strong inclination towards substance abuse with greater correlation for stealing and refusing school. Children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denial of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years. Studies have equally shown that children from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviours and poor academic records (Anderson cited in Ekeke and Dorgu, 2014).

When a child's needs are not properly addressed, his learning ability could be affected due to lack of motivation. Mothers who are more educated and have higher self-esteem have children who receive higher test scores (Eamon 2005). Also, mothers who delay childbearing have been shown to provide more "cognitively stimulating" and supportive environments at home which has a positive effect on school performance (Eamon 2005). Guidubaldi and Perry (2005) found that boys in divorce household exhibit more adverse effect than girls in terms of behaviour, school work and happiness. Ardavan and Mahmoudi (2010) indicated that boys and girls had similar levels of adjustment. Amede

(2017) found that motivation can positively influence students' academic performance, including those from single parent homes.

Poor educational attainment has over the years become rampant, more pronounced and a peculiar feature in the institutions of learning. This has generated a lot of concern among parents, teachers, counsellors, educational administrator, as well as in government circle. The influence of single parenting on pupil educational attainment cannot be overlooked which therefore forms the hub of this study in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

The family has enormous influence on the education of their children both directly and indirectly. In the formative years of the child, the home transmit culture and knowledge to the child correcting him where he goes wrong and directly him in other various aspects of his life in the society.

The influence of both parents on the education and general upbringing of a child is very crucial of which when left in the hand of a single parent might misdirect or halt the educational pursuit of the child. The range of feeling that students encounter due to single parenting ranges from: denial, sadness, loneliness, depression, anger, anxiety, fear, relief and hope. Responses to these feelings are often in diverse levels of intensity depending on their age, gender, available help/guidance, motivation and so on.

Majority of school children in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State Government Area experience changes in family dynamics which manifest in schools with indicators such as depression, decline in academic achievement, poor attendance, loss of confidence and disorganization. These problems call for concern among the academia which necessitated this research work to examine the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta state.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study examined the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. Specifically, the study intended to:

- i. Examine the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.
- ii. Determine the causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.
- iii. Investigate the consequences of single parenting on primary school pupils' social adjustment to the societal norms
- iv. Evaluate the ways in which the challenges facing ingle parents' homes can be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.
- v. Evaluate the difference between teachers and parents on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State
- vi. Explain the difference between male and female viewpoints on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

## **Research Questions**

The following Research Questions guided the study;

- i. Does single parenting influence the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?
- ii. What are the causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?
- iii. Has single parenting any consequences on primary school pupils' social adjustment to the societal norms in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?
- iv. In what ways can the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?

## **Research Hypotheses**

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers and parents on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

## **Methodology**

The research design employed in this study was the survey design. This type of design was preferred because the studies sought to find out the influence of independent variable (Single Parenting) on dependent variable (pupils 'academic performance. The population of this study comprised teachers and parents in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State government area of Lagos. The population of this study consisted of 110 senior secondary school teachers and 66 parents. Eleven primary schools and ten teachers from each of the schools were purposively selected from Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. Six parents were also randomly selected from the vicinity where the 11 chosen schools are located. Four schools out of the 11 sampled were private.

The instrument used for data collection for this study was a research questionnaire titled: Influence of Single Parenting (ISP).The instrument was constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire contained structured questions which were meant to facilitate responses by the respondents. The researcher-made questionnaire was constructed in three sections. Section A: The demographic information which included variables as gender, age, educational qualification. Section B was designed with items that measure the influence of single parenting on pupils' academic performance, Section C comprised of items on the causes of single parenting while Section D deals with issues on ways of ameliorating the consequences of single parenting. Respondents were asked to report their level of agreement on a four-point likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4(Strongly agree).The questionnaire covered areas relating to the case under study.

Validity of the instrument was done by experts in test and measurement in the Faculty of Education, National Open University of Nigeria to ensure that the items of the instrument

were not ambiguous and that options were in line with the research questions and hypotheses. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering it on a sample of 30 school teachers in the Etio-Osa South Local Government area of Lagos state, which was not part of the original sample population. The data from both tests were analysed with the Cronbach alpha statistics. A coefficient of 0.79 was established which shows that the instrument is reliable by this high coefficient.

The researcher first visited the schools used for the study and introduced himself and stated the purpose of visit to the principals. After some discussion with the principals on the topic of the research and its importance to the school, the principal of the schools permitted the researcher to come in any time to administer the questionnaire on teachers. The questionnaires were administered by the researchers to ensure that copies of the questionnaire got to the respondents at the right time and subsequently retrieved. 176 respondents were administered with the instrument and 155 were retrieved, thereby constituting about 88%. The data that was collected from the selected respondents was analysed using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, mean rating and t-test was used to determine the independent variable on the dependent variable. All the research hypotheses were examined at 0.05 alpha levels of significance. The weighted mean of 2.5 was used to evaluate the statistics.

## Results

**Research questions 1:** Does single parenting influence the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?

**Table1: Mean rating on the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State government area of Lagos**

S/N	Influence of single parenting	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Q1	single parenting inability to motivate their children to study	467.00	3.01	.71
Q2	Depression and aggressive often overwhelm single parents which may affect children academic exercise	482.00	3.11	.53
Q3	single parenting may exhibit poor leadership style may affect children academic activities	470.00	3.03	.55
Q4	Single parenting may not be able to pay fees due to economic pressure	498.00	3.21	.82
Q5	single parenting may encourage child labour because poverty	412.00	2.66	.57
Q6	Children from single parent homes may withdrawal or drop out of school	493.00	3.18	.67
Q7	Single parenting may not be able to monitor kids academic progress	479.00	3.09	.45
Q8	Children from single parent homes may experience psychological trauma that may affect children academic progress	432.00	2.79	.61
Q9	Children from single parent homes may experience poor inter-personal communication.	395.00	2.55	1.01
Q10	Single parenting may not be able to protect children of school age from negative peer influence.	488.00	3.15	.34
<b>Total</b>		<b>4616.00</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>.63</b>

Table 1 above revealed the mean rating on the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State government area of Lagos. Single parenting may not be able to pay fees due

to economic pressure tops the list with average mean score of 3.21, closely followed by Children from single parent homes may withdrawal or drop out of school (3.18); again by Single parenting may not be able to protect children of school age from negative peer influence (3.15). Next was Depression and aggressive often overwhelm single parents which may affect children academic exercise average mean score of 3.11. The total average mean was 2.97, which was above the average mean of 2.5. The implication is that the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State government area of Lagos is high.

**Research question 2:** What are the causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics on the causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State**

S/N	causes of single parenting	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q11	Wrong choice of Partners	505.00	3.26	.42
Q12	Selfishness	494.00	3.19	.45
Q13	Parental interference	510.00	3.29	.48
Q14	Economic Pressure	487.00	3.14	.46
Q15	Lack of trust and suspicion	474.00	3.06	.44
Q16	Wife battering	522.00	3.37	.52
Q17	Barrenness	519.00	3.35	.56
Q18	Adultery	491.00	3.17	.49
Q19	Poor communication.	434.00	2.80	.46
Q20	Unemployment status	481.00	3.10	.42
<b>Total</b>		<b>4917</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>.47</b>

Table 2 revealed the descriptive statistics on the causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. The analysis shows the total sum of 4917, an average mean to be 3.17 and the Std. Deviation of .47. The total average mean of 3.17 was above the weighted mean of 2.5. The implication is there are enormous causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Research question 3:** Has single parenting any consequences on primary school pupils' social adjustment to the societal norm?

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics on the consequences of single parenting on primary school pupils' social adjustment to societal norms**

S/N	Influence do broken homes	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q21	Children from single parent homes are easy recruits to banditry that instigates insecurity	505.00	3.26	.31
Q22	Single parenting breed crime and violence	490.00	3.16	.43
Q23	there exist a correlation between street life and single parenting	516.00	3.33	.53
Q24	brawny relationship between sex and defilement offences with single parenting	501.00	3.23	.42
Q25	Single parenting predispose pupils to child labour	508.00	3.28	.54

Q26	Children from single parent homes have strong fondness towards substance abuse	524.00	3.38	.67
Q27	Children from single parent homes constitute a higher percentage of out of school children and school drop outs	530.00	3.42	.45
Q18	Single parents' kids are susceptible to cultism	502.00	3.24	.61
Q29	there is a link between mental health and single parenting due to stress and depression	395.00	2.55	.22
Q30	there is a connection between theft and single parenting due to hardship	519.00	3.35	.36
<b>Total</b>		<b>4990</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>.45</b>

Table 3 revealed the descriptive statistics on the consequences of single parenting on primary school pupils' social adjustment to societal norms. The analysis shows the total sum of 4990, an average mean to be 3.22 and the Std. Deviation of .45. The total average mean of 3.22 is above the weighted mean of 2.5. The implication is there are mammoth consequences of single parenting on primary school pupils' social adjustment to societal norms.

**Research question 4:** In what ways can the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State?

**Table 4: Mean rating on the ways in which the challenges facing single parenting be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State**

S/N	Influence do broken homes	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q31	Single parents should learn to encourage their children to study	484.00	3.12	.40
Q32	Single parents should promote inter-personal communication that bothers on education	499.00	3.22	.31
Q33	Single parents may exhibit good leadership style that inspire children academic activities	504.00	3.28	.41
Q34	Single parents should work hard to wad of economic pressure and pay children school fees	473.00	3.05	.44
Q35	Single parents should discourage child labour	482.00	3.11	.47
Q36	Children from single parent homes should solicit for assistance where necessary	525.00	3.39	.53
Q37	Single parents should create time to monitor kids academic progress	521.00	3.36	.59
Q38	Children from single parent homes should be given special attention by teachers	507.00	3.27	.48
Q39	Government should subsidize education cost to reduce economic burden on single parents	527.00	3.40	.33
Q40	Single parents should protect children of school age from negative peer influence.	496.00	3.20	.45
<b>Total</b>		<b>5018</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>.44</b>

Table 4 above revealed the ways in which the challenges facing single parenting be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. Government should subsidise education cost to reduce economic burden on single parents tops the list with average mean score of 3.40, closely followed by Children from single parent homes should solicit for assistance where necessary (3.39); again by Single parents should create time to monitor kids academic progress (3.36), Single parents may exhibit good leadership style that inspire children academic activities (3.28), and the next was Single parents should promote inter-personal communication that bothers on education with average mean score of 3.22. The total average mean was 3.24, which was above the average mean of 2.5. The implication is that there are many ways in which the challenges facing single parenting be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the views of teachers and parents on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Table 5: T-test analysis on the difference between views of teachers and parents on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State**

<b>Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Parent	54	1.53			
Teacher	101	1.46	143	.820	.813

**At .05 level of significant.**

The result in Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between the views of teachers and parents on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State, at  $t(.820) = df=143, P<.05$ , with a mean of 1.53 for Parent and 1.46 for Teacher. The implication is that there is no significant difference between the views of teachers and parents on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the views of male and female on the influence of single parenting have on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Table 6: T-test analysis on the difference between the views of male and female on the influence of single parenting have on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Male	80	1.69	143	.819	.109
Female	75	1.63			

**At .05 level of significant.**



The result in Table 6 demonstrate T-test analysis on the difference between the views of male and female on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State, at  $t(819) = df=143, P<.05$ , with a mean of 1.69 for male and 1.63 for female. The implication is that there is no significant difference between the views of male and female on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

### **Discussion of findings**

Research question 1 sought to determine the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State? The analysis revealed that the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State government area of Lagos is high. This conclusion is in agreement with the views of Uchenn (2013) and Amede (2017) who stressed that living in a single parent family is unconstructively related with children's educational performance compared to living with biological parents after separation, the quality of parental involvement decreases. Thomas, Konstantina, Vassilis, and Panagiotics (2014) sited that among the factors that lead to decreased school performance in children who come from single-parent families. Low academic expectations of lone parents, lack of parental involvement in their children's education, low socio-economic status of the family, consequent stress of the lone parent to cope with the requirements of the new family patterns, poor quality of children's interpersonal relationships with both parents, time phase of the traumatic experience of separation/divorce (before, during, or after divorce) and the supporting frame-assistance provided to the single-parent family from parents, siblings, friend, family, school, state and other networks.

Research question 2 sought to establish the causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State? The outcome revealed enormous causes of single parenting in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. The finding agreed with Azuka-Obieke Uchenna (2013), who stated that causes of single parenting could be as a result of divorce, separation of various kinds or death of any of the spouses. Factors such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples and single adoption are the major causes of single parenthood in our society today (Ekpeyong and Lawrence, 2016).

The question as to whether single parenting has any consequences on primary school pupils' social adjustment to the societal norm was addressed. It was concluded that single parenting has mammoth consequences on primary school pupils' social adjustment to societal norms. According to Kimani (2010), there is a strong correlation between murder and a child having come from an intact family. For a single parent family parenthood, there was a strong correlation between street life, sex and defilement offences. Children brought up in a step parent home had a strong inclination towards substance abuse but the correlation was even greater for stealing and refusing school. Children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denial of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years. Studies have equally shown that children from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviours and poor academic records.

Findings from the study also established many ways in which the challenges facing single parenting be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. This finding concurred with view of Amede (2017) who found that motivation can positively influence students' academic performance including those from single parent homes. According to Azuka-Obieke Uchenna (2013), the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complimentary roles in raising such children; which will positively impact positively on the children during school years.

Answer to research hypothesis 1 revealed that there is a no significant difference between the views of teachers and parents on the influence of influence of broken homes on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. This conclusion agrees with Mothers who are more educated and have higher self-esteem have children who receive higher test scores (Eamon 2005). Also, mothers who delay childbearing have been shown to provide more "cognitively stimulating" and supportive environments at home which has a positive effect on school performance (Eamon 2005).

Result of hypothesis 2 shows that there is a no significant difference between the views of male and female on the influence of influence of broken homes on primary school pupils' educational attainment of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. This outcome is in consonant with Guidubaldi and Perry (2005) who found that boys in divorce household exhibit more adverse effect than girls in terms of behavioural work effort and happiness. Ardavan and Mahmoudi Armin. (2010) indicated that boys and girls had similar levels of adjustment.

### **Implication for Counselling**

This research work examined the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. The implications of this study to school counsellors are numerous. Knowledge of single parenting would help them to be aware of the peculiar features of pupils from single parent homes and device appropriate strategies to manage them adequately. The study would bring to the light the need to work towards improving family cohesion and minimize incidents that predispose separation and divorce.

### **Conclusion**

This research work examined the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. The analysis revealed that the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of primary school pupils in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State government area of Lagos is high. There are enormous causes and mammoth consequences of single parenting on primary school pupils' social adjustment to societal norms. There are many ways in which the challenges facing single parenting be ameliorated in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. There is no significant difference between the views of teachers and parents and male and female on the influence of single parenting on primary school pupils' educational attainment in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State. However, government should make create academic and counselling units in schools with adequate funds to care for the psychological needs of students, especially those from single parent homes.

## Recommendations

From the results of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. The government should create academic and counselling units in schools with adequate funds to care for the psychological needs of students, especially those single parent homes.
2. More learning materials should be provided to the pupils from single parent homes by their governments, parents and guardians for effective learning.
3. Principal and teachers should monitor the affairs of students from single parenting in their respective schools.

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