

SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN: A STUDY OF AMASSOMA COMMUNITY IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, the number of children in single-parent families has risen significantly over the past four decades, causing substantial concern among policymakers and the public. Researchers have identified the rise in single-parent families (especially mother-child families) as a major factor driving the long-term increase in child poverty in Nigeria. The effects of growing up in single parent households have been shown to go beyond economics, increasing the risk of children dropping out of school, disconnecting from the labor force, and becoming teen parents. Although many children growing up in single-parent families succeed, others will face significant challenges in making the transition to adulthood. Children in lower-income, single parent families face the most significant barriers to success in school and the work force. The study therefore focuses on the experiences of single parents in Amassoma Community of Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Single-parenthood, effects, amassoma, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Single parenthood is a phenomenon that has always been in existence and is as old as mankind. According to Dowd Nancy in (1997), a single parent is a parent, not living with spouse or partner, who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the child or children.

The socialization of children is very important for the continuity of any culture. The family is said to be the most important agent of socialization, especially for children. Children in most communities are raised in a highly structured and disciplined manner, parents helped to instill and inculcate strong basic moral, spiritual, social, physical and cognitive principles in their children (Santrock, 2002).

African system of raising children in extended family pattern has changed a great deal, with the advent of industrialization and globalization. Family lives have been disrupted with the rapid social change that comes with the globalization (Olaleye, Y.L et al, 2010). Many of the old customs and traditions which were taught and practiced for several years are becoming obsolete today. The modern culture has changed and out grown values and benefits that were thought to be the core believes and values of our society. What was unacceptable in the olden days is now becoming fast and rapidly rising trend.

In Nigeria, the existence of single parenthood was unknown, and where they existed, they were ignored as exceptional cases. However presently, they are fast growing family patterns both inside and outside Nigeria, and have become even more common than the so-called “nuclear family”, consisting of a mother or father and the children (Tenibiaje M.O. et al 2011). Factors such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples, and single parent adoption are the major causes of single parenthood in our society today (Amato, 2000).

In Nigeria, among the Yoruba’s, parental roles are culturally determined and distributed. The maternal roles are that of child rearing, home training and playing of complementary roles, while the paternal roles are that of economic responsibilities and discipline of children. The child is morally, mentally upright and emotionally balanced when the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents. (Tenibiaje M.O, et al, 2011). When children are brought up by a single parent, it makes life more demanding and challenging on the parent. If this phase of the child’s life is not well managed, it might lead to maladjustment in life.

When the subject of single parenthood is been discussed, it would almost certainly involve women since women are usually considered the primary care givers. Apart from being the primary care giver, she becomes the bread winner and head of the family.

The demographics of single parenting show a general increase worldwide in children living in single parent homes (Jayson, Sharon 13 May, 2009). Single parenting has become an accepted norm in the United States and is an accepted trend found in many other countries. Debates concerning issues bothering on single parent households, and more have risen. Recently, the numbers of single parent families have increased drastically and it is gaining a global dimension.

Hamburg (2004) opined that marital separation commonly involves major emotional distress for child relationship. About twice as many children from one parent families compare to two parent families drop out of school.

Statement of the Problem

Parenthood is challenging enough even under the best of conditions. So, being a single parent in our society is tasking to say the least. This is because, with one parent, the challenges are multifaceted. Single parenting in our society has been the focus of much interest and research in recent years. (Chiemelie Ezeobi 2011). According to Funmilayo Oriyomi (2011), a communicator, “The effect of single parenting are far reaching because it does not only affect the parents, it also affects the children. In fact, the effects are more devastating on the part of the children because single parenthood leaves them with deep scars. Being a single parent is a very tough and challenging task.

Many of the problems that single parents have, are similar to those of two parents family, but these problems seems more difficult to bear or manage when the home is being tutored by only one person. For example, all children feel hostile towards their parents as they grow-up and try to be independent. But in a situation, where the anger and rebellion are all directed towards one person, it may seem worse, if there is only one to bear it, not for the two to share.

There are some problems that are exceptional, which are only faced by the single parent, which make it somewhat difficult to raise children. These problems include bitterness towards the absent spouse, loneliness, poverty and insecurity about raising children alone without a help. For these and some other reasons, single parents sometimes cling to their children or over indulge them. Members may unrealistically expect that the family can function like a two-parent family and may feel that something is wrong when it cannot.

Children living with continuously married parents are not faced with much stressful experiences as those living with single parents. Although various schools define stress in different ways, but stress is generally seen as when external demands exceed peoples coping resources. This results in feelings of emotional distress, a reduced capacity to function in school, work and family roles, and an increase in physiological indicators of arousal.

Children are increasingly socialized by influencers outside the immediate family. As a result of poor parental care and guidance caused by divorce, separation or death of a partner, children are exposed to potentially damaging situations (Olaleye, Y.L and Oladeji David, April 2010). When a mother is out of a home, leaving the children under the charity and mercy of step-mother, these children are prone to many problems such as poor feeding, negligence, not inspired to study or learn diseases and sicknesses, emotional disturbance (fear, insecurity) as such, they are not likely to perform up to expectation in school. Step parents do not show much love and affection to their step children. Thus, these children suffer from mental retardation, personality disorders and are miserable. They show behavioral response like lying, stealing, and playing truant in school. There is increase in domestic work and redistribution of household chores, which leave the children with little or no time for their studies (Adelani Tijani and Ogunbanwo B, 2008).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are stated in two folds; a general objective and a specific objective. The general objective of the study is to examine the effects of single parenthood in children of Amassoma community.

Specifically, the research intends to find out the following:

1. To examine the prevalence of problems faced by children in single parent homes as against a comparable simple of children from dual parent family background.
2. To find out if boys other than girls appear to have significantly greater incidence of problems in single parent homes.
3. To find out if there is a significant relationship between problems faced by children in single parent families and age of child at time of parental separation.
4. To suggest solutions to such problems.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to serve as guide to the study:

1. Is there a significant difference in problems faced by children in single parent homes when compared to children in dual parent families?
2. Is there any significant difference in problems faced by boys in single parent homes compared to girls in single parent homes?
3. Is there any significant relationship between problems faced by children in single parent homes and age of the child at time of separation?

Research Hypotheses

- Hi:** There is a significant difference in problems faced by children in single parent families when compared to children in dual parent families.
- Ho:** There is no significant difference in problems faced by children in single parent families when compared to children in dual parent families.
- Hi:** Boys in single parent families face significantly greater problems than girls in single parent families.
- Ho:** Boys in single parent families do not face significantly greater problems than girls in single parent families.
- Hi:** There is a significant relationship between problems faced in single parent homes and age of child at time of parental separation.
- Ho:** There is no significant relationship between problems faced in single parent homes and age of child at time of parental separation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Review

This portion of the literature review takes a critical look at works of earlier researchers on the topic or similar areas. A comparison of research findings is important in determining the relation between the main variables of the topic and how these relate to theories concerning the topic. Reports of studies in the area of single parenting, its causes and consequences on children are examined.

Single Parenthood

A single parent, sometimes called a solo-parent is a parent that is not living with a spouse or partner, who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the child or children. A single parent is usually considered the primary caregiver. The primary caregiver is the parent the child have residency with majority of the time (Dowd Nancy E, (1997). If the parents are separated or divorced, children live with their custodial parent and have visitation or secondary residence with their non custodial parent. (Benokraitis, Nijole, 2012, 2011, 2008).

In western societies in general, following separation, a child will end up with the primary caregiver, usually the father. (Statistics Ginger Bread, 2010). Custody battles, awarded by the court or rationalized in other terms, determined who the child will spend majority of their time with. This affects children in many ways, and counseling is suggested for them.

Causes of Single Parenting

Some factors are responsible for determining the status of single parenthood. These factors are divorce of couples with children, desertion, death of a partner, birth to unmarried woman or unintended pregnancy and single parent adoption.

Divorce

Divorce is one of the main events that lead to single parenting in advanced countries (Amato 2000). Divorce was generally rare historically (although this depends by culture and era) and divorce especially became very difficult to obtain after the fall of the Roman

Empire, in Medieval Europe, due to strong involvement of ecclesiastical courts in family life (although annulment and other forms of separation were more common (Kent's commentaries on American law).

Child custody in reference to divorce refers to which parent is allowed to make important decisions about the children involved. Physical custody refers to who the child lives with. After a certain "crisis period" most children resume normal development, however, their future relationships are often affected as they lack a model upon which to base a healthy long term relationship. Nonetheless, as adult children of divorcees cope better with change. (Cherlin, Andrew, 2010).

The remarriage of a divorced custodial parent result in a third family configuration that is experienced by an increased number of children.

Separation

The crucial event of a marital break down is the act of separation. This usually occurs when the relationship between both parents had gone cold. Divorce is a legal consequence that follows the emotional fact of separation, though not all separation leads to divorce. Although separation generally precedes divorce, some couples are able to sort out their misunderstanding and misgivings and are able to put the separation period behind them and move on with their lives. (Olaleye .Y.L., and Oladeji David 2010).

Strong et al, (2002) opined that as many as one couple out of every six marriages are likely to have separated for at least two days. The changes that take place during separation are crucial because at this point a person's emotions are raw and most profound. Men and women react differently during this period. When separation takes place in the family, the other parent does not know what to do or expect, there are no divorce ceremonies or rituals to mark this major turning upon the children.

Desertion

Desertion is one of the ways to single parenthood in our society. It is a situation whereby either the father or mother walks away from the marriage, leaving the other party without help or support. Desertion is also known as the poor man's divorce. It is called the poor man's divorce because one party leaves the marriage without going through legal process of divorce. Kendall (2003). The process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in raising such children, which will definitely impact positively on the children during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years (Azuka- Obieke Uchenna, 2013). Children of deserted parents find it more difficult to understand the reason why they have to do without the other parent. Santrock (2002), asserts that these children see themselves as unloved and unwanted by the deserted parents as if it is their fault for the abscond parent desertion.

Death of a Parent

Single parent families were historically as a result of parental death. In fact, death of a parent was a major cause of single parenting. (Amato .P. and Keith .B. 2000). He further

stated that about one-fourth of children born around the turn of the nineteenth century experienced death of a parent before they reached age fifteen.

Unintended Pregnancy

Some out of wedlock births are intended, but many are unintentional. Where out of wedlock births are accepted by society, they may result in single parenting. A partner may also leave as he or she may want to shirk responsibility of bringing up the child. Where they are not accepted, they sometimes result in forced marriage; however, such marriages fail more often than others. ("Single parent Households- How does it affect the children?" (Retrieved 23 April, 2014).

Single Parent Adoption

Single birth adoption has existed since the last 19th century. Men were rarely considered as adoptive parents and were considered far less desired. Often, children adopted by a single parent were raised in pairs rather than alone and adoptions by lesbians and gay men were arranged as single parent adoptions. During the mid 19th century, many states welfare officials made it difficult if not impossible for single persons to adopt, as agencies searched for "normal" families with married men and women. In 1965 the Los Angeles Bureau of adoption sought single African Americans orphans for whom married families could not be found. In 1968, the child welfare league of America stated that married couples were preferred, but there were "exceptional circumstances" where single parent adoptions were permissible (Single Parent Adoption Retrieved 23 April, 2014).

Effects of Single Parenting

This reviews research on psychological effect, educational effect, behavioral effect, economic effect and conclude with effect of single parenthood in adult life.

Psychological Effect

Empirical evidence has shown that children from intact-homes will be taken care of and better socialized. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in raising such children; which will definitely impact positively on the children during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years Azuka-Obieke Uchenna, 2013).

Adolescence is a transitory period (12 years to 18 years) between childhood and adulthood and it involves biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes (Santrock, 2004). During this period an individual is seen neither as a child not as an adult. Salami and Alawode (2000) claimed that adolescents are characterized by emotional instabilities and hyper-activities, which cause them to experience storms and stress. Diane 2007 opines that identity formation creates tension in adolescents to the extent that some of them become confused about their personality. Adolescence period is a transitional period in the development of critical thinking and a time of increased decision making. The theory of cognitive development emphasize that adolescents think more abstractly, idealistically and also thinks more logically (Santrock, 2004).

The period of adolescence is very important to the development of any individual. Therefore, any laxity on the part of the parents in assisting and guiding the adolescent may result in academic backwardness and development of unwholesome behaviors.

The foundation of what a person becomes in the societies depends is laid in the home and at the initial stage of life. According to Sigmund Freud who is the pioneering architect of psychoanalytic theory, early experiences with parents and family relationships extensively shape development (Santrock 2004). Parents therefore have their children and adolescents acquire the appropriate academics, social, psychological and moral development.

Research has consistently shown that family structure can facilitate or limit the ways in which parent are able to positively influence the psycho-social and educational outcomes of their children. (Amato and Keith 2000). A child from home where the father and mother are present will be well taken care of and socialized in the best way possible. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in bringing up the child. Such child is likely to achieve self socialization later in life (Azuka-Obieke Uchenna, 2013). The problem of deprivation of a second parent is bad enough but when the remaining parent cannot cope with the resultant problems, a tragic situation arises. In such a situation, the child becomes a misfit in the society. The inability of the single parent to cope is as a result of double responsibilities he/she (the parent) faces which requires extra time, attention, and money of the parent. Hence less attention is paid to the psychological well-being and education of the child. (Azuka-Obieke, Uchenna, 2013).

Although growing up in a single parent family is frequently viewed as a risk factor for children, single-parent families have reported positive psychological adjustment educational outcome (Amato 2000).

Educational Effect

Parents are primarily responsible for the educational and career development of their children (Salami and Alawode, 2000). Literatures on academic performance among children suggest that children's academic performance improve when both parents are actively in their education. (Nyarko 2007; Nyarko and Vorgelegt, 2007) married parents are more likely to involve in their children's education than single parents.(Nyarko 2011, and Chowa et al, 2012). As parent s engage in the academic activities of their children, it is most likely to have a positive influence on their academic performance. However, this does not necessarily suggest that once parents engage in a child's academic activities, the child would be academically successful as the child's own abilities and the school environment also play critical roles in that respect. In a related way, Donkor (2010) indicates that parents noted that the poor performance of their children emanates from their lack of proper supervision of their ward's homework. Salami and Alawode (2000) in particular pointed out that both parents have roles to play in the child's education. The father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement while the mother is to supplement the father's effort in this regard. 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 or withdrawn. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough.

Given the positive influence of parental involvement on children's educational outcome, children under single parent family structure might not receive the necessary attention they required because the single parent might be over whelmed by many responsibilities Abankwa Amoakohene, (2013) states that children in single parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families. Because single parents are the primary and frequently the sole source of financial support for the family, they have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement.

In contrast, there are few studies that believe that the single parent household may not have as widespread and adverse an effect on academics as is publicized. Findings suggest that conventional wisdom may exaggerate the detrimental effect of father's absence (Debell, 2007). This study seemed to imply that once the socio-economic factors are controlled there is a much lessened effect on the academic performance and all round well-being of the child.

Behavioral Effect

Interest in parenting and behavioral problem in children is widely acknowledged. Anti-social behavior is a major problem in childhood and beyond. Overall, prior research has shown that children who have experienced any kind of family change have poorer behavioral outcomes than children in stable two-biological parent families (A.J Cherlin, 2005). Children from single parent families tend to have poorer cognitive and behavioral outcomes than those from intact families (W. Single-Rushton S. McLanahan, 2004).

Some western studies have noted greater problem behaviors in children from families with unmarried mothers or it been more for boys than girls (Ackerman et al, 2001). Karst (2000) attributes this greater prevalence to limited supervision, strained financial resources, social isolation, fewer coping supplies compared with children in traditional two-parent families. Also, youths from single parent families appear to be more to peer pressure and more likely to be make decisions without consulting a parent (Griffin et al, 2000).

A related study found higher percentage of psychiatric disorders like depression, anxiety and mood disorders or alcoholism in single mothers (Cairney et al, 2006). Being raised in such homes double the risk for children to develop emotional behavior problems. Both such children as well as their parents showed lower ego functioning, lower self esteem, less empathy, greater aggression, fighting and vandalism, less tolerance for negative behavior and more likelihood to display non age-appropriate behaviors (Hollist and McBroom 2006; Knoester and Hayne 2005). These problems are linked to future adult crimes, drug and alcohol miss-use, unemployment, poor physical health and mental disorders.

Economic Effect

Being a single parent and struggling for money often coincides. Economic hardship has been found to cause emotional distress in parents, which can in turn hamper parent's ability to be supportive, sensitive and consistent with their children (E. Dearing, K. McCartney and B.A Taylor, 2006). Also in a study carried out by Azuka-Obieke,

Uchenna, 2013, he noted that single parent homes are more likely to be low-economic homes. These children would therefore be subject to problems associated with their socio-economic group. When there is only one parent, the family is often less well off financially and this is the main reason for so many family problems. The report of the study shows that effect of coming from a low-income family can include things like lower educational level; lower economic achievement and can result in leaving the child feeling isolated and lonely.

A similar study was carried out by single-Rushton and McLanahan in 2002. The study was concerned with the well being of the child in the absence of one parent the outcome of the study draws our attention to the fact that children raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parent. Single parent families tend to be poorer than are two-parent families.

Given that family economic status is an important determinant of children's education, it is evident that difference in economic studying between children from single parent homes and intact homes explain some of the educational differences between them. The absence of one parent have serious effects on the adolescent as homes led by single mothers experience lower household income which eventually influence the educational opportunities and success in school (Benokraitis, 2012).

Effects of Single Parenthood in Adult Life

Children affected by the negative effect of single parenthood continue on with their lives; however, the lasting effect of divorce have been shown to follow some children into their adulthood, including their marriage and own children's life. The negative views of relationships that have been instilled due to exposure of their "childhood" family conflict can cause long term effects on these now adult and their own children. According to Amato et al (1995) cited in Abankwa A. (2013), adults who are able to recall a high level of conflict between parents while growing up tend to report disproportionately a large number of psychological and marital problems in their own lives.

Many of these adult children continue to struggle in their everyday lives with symptoms of depression, anxiety and overall feeling of dissatisfaction with their overall lives. In fact, many of adult children will utilize more mental health services than will the adult children of two parent households (Amato and Sobolewski, 2001).

It has been found that parental divorce is associated with lower socio-economic status in adulthood, compared with children from two-parent families, children with divorced parents are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to attend college, and complete fewer years of education overall (Amato and Sobolewski, 2001). Many believe that this is due to the emotional disturbance that is caused in disrupted and chaotic households and a child's potential to form a poor sense of self. This poor sense of self and instability in relationships can lead to still other relationship troubles including infidelity, reoccurring divorce and remarriages and in extreme cases spousal and domestic abuse.

Much research that has been published appears to point a picture of somewhat bleak situation. This picture has made the individuals that are affected and involved appear as though they are all hopeless, anxious and somewhat mix up. Fortunately, there is also evidence that children from single parent, divorced or broken homes, with support, have

and supported sense of self have become successful adults, and capable of positive marriage and relationships with their own children and have formulated the will to survive (Abankwa A. 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design that was used in this work is survey design. This design aims at collecting samples from the population in order to examine the distribution, incidence and interaction of sociology and psychological variables. Surveys are oriented towards the determination of the status of a given phenomenon rather than towards the isolation of causative factors as experimental research seek after. Parenting or child upbringing is a practical social situation. Using survey design will afford the researcher the opportunity to answer the research questions and also test the hypotheses in the work. Thereafter, suggestions for improvement will be made.

Study Population

Considering the fact that it is practically impossible for the researcher to study all the children in Amassoma community due to time and financial constraints one hundred and fifty (150) children were purposively selected to participate in the study based on convenience to the research.

Sample Size

A sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) children was selected for the study in other for the test of statistical significance to be viable, a sample size must be large enough to allow for comparism of sample statistics and population parameters.

The one hundred and fifty (150) children constitute ten percent (10%) of the population within the age range of twelve (12) to seventeen (17) years of age in Amassoma community, and this is considered large enough to permit test of statistical significance and hypothesis testing.

Sample Selection

The purposive sampling technique was employed to arrive at the sample size. Purposive sampling is the common name most authors have given to quota and judgment sampling. Quota sampling gives a semblance of representativeness. Thus, quota sampling is to non probability what stratified random sampling is to probability sampling, because both select sample subject to conform to some control measures detected by some inherent characteristics of populations of interest.

The sample size for this study constitutes equal number of boys and girls. In other words, the sample of children from single parent homes comprises thirty seven (37) boys and thirty eight (38) girls, same is applicable for those from dual parent families.

Data Collection Instrument

There are many methods of collecting data in social sciences. These include the questionnaire methods, interview techniques, observation method comprising both

participant and non participant methods, etc. However, in this research, data were collected both through primary and secondary sources, the survey method was adopted with the researcher going to the field himself. Questionnaires were administered to respondents and completed. Data collection through secondary sources includes; data collected from text books, journals and internet with references shown in the bibliography. All the questions asked are close ended. This facilitates coding and allow for comparism and responses. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) were administered. The choice of self-administered questionnaires is due to the fact that all respondents are literates. Another basis for the selection of adolescent respondents is because of their cognitive maturation and capacity to retrieve stored data for exercises such as this one.

Method of Data Analysis

This study adopted the simple percentage and Kendell's measure of concordance. These techniques are used because they are easy to comprehend and considered adequate for the analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Variables of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent that were relevant to the study included their sex, ages, type of home they came from, the biological parent they are living with, the cause of their staying with only one biological parent, age (range) at time of separation, how long biological parents were separated and the occupation of their parents.

Children of single parent homes were required to answer all these questions, while those from dual parent families were limited to the first three questions and the last question. These demographic variables are therefore examined and compared.

**Table 1: Showing frequency of the sex
Distribution of Respondents (N=120).**

Single Parent Families			Dual Parent Families		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	25%	Male	30	25%
Female	30	25%	Female	30	25%
Total	60	50%	Total	60	50%

Sex Distribution of Respondents

Out of the one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires retrieved from respondents, sixty (60) representing 50% were boys, while the remaining sixty (60) also representing 50% were girls. Out of the sixty (60) representing boys, thirty (30) representing twenty five percent 25% were from dual parent families. The same division is done for the girls. This is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 2: Showing frequency of age groups of respondents (N120)

Single Parent Families			Dual Parent Families		
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
12-14	30	25%	12-14	30	25%
15-17	30	25%	15-17	30	25%
Total	60	50%	Total	60	50%

On the age distribution of respondents, twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents from single parent families were between the ages of twelve to fourteen (12-14), twenty five percent (25%) from dual parent families were also between the ages of twelve to fourteen (12-14). This twenty five percent (25%) from single parent families is also applicable to those within the ages of fifteen to seventeen (15-17). This is shown in table 4.2.

Table 3: Showing the frequency of Biological parents children are living with

Biological Parents	Boys	%	Girls	%	Grand Total	%
Mother	18	60%	25	80%	43	70%
Father	12	40%	5	20%	17	30%
Total	30	100%	30	100%	60	100%

The numbers of boys living with their mothers were eighteen (18) constituting sixty percent (60%), while those staying with their fathers were twelve (12) constituting forty percent (40%). On the other hand, girls staying with their mothers were twenty five (25) constituting eighty percent (80%), while those living with their fathers were five (5) constituting twenty percent (20%). In totality, forty three (43) children constituting seventy percent (70%) were living in single parent homes run by mothers, while seventeen (17) children constituting thirty percent (30%) were living with single fathers. This is a reflection of the findings of Ginger bread statistics in 2010 which states that “following separation, a child will end up with the primary caregiver, usually the mother, and a secondary caregiver, usually the father”.

Table 4: Showing causes of single parenting in Amassoma community

Causes of staying with one biological parent	Frequency	Percentage
Death	18	30%
Separation	31	51.7%
Desertion	4	6.7%
Unintended pregnancy	7	11.7%
Total	60	100%

Out of the sixty (60) respondents from single parent homes, eighteen (18) of them were living with only one biological parent as a result of death of the other parent, thirty-one (31) of them said it was due to separation, four (4) was due to desertion while the remaining seven (7) respondents stated unintended pregnancy as a cause of staying with one biological parent.

Data gathered from the respondents indicated that separation was a major cause of single parenting within Amassoma community, contributing 51.7% of single parenting and followed by death of a parent representing 30%, while unintended pregnancy contributed 11.7% of single parenting, only 6.7% was attributed to desertion’

The above findings are in sharp contrast with the findings of Amato P. and Keith, B. (2000), where they stated that death of a parent was a major cause of single parenting.

Table 5: Showing frequency of the age (range) of children at the time of parental separation.

Respondents age at time of parental separation (years)	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	30	50%
6-10	24	40%
11-15	5	8.33%
16+	1	1.67%
Total	60	100%

Out of the sixty (60) respondents from single parent homes, those that fall within the age (range) of 1-5 were thirty (30) representing fifty percent (50%), those that fall within the age (range) of 6-10 were 24 representing 40%. Five (5) of them representing 8.33% fall within the age of 11-15, while only one (1) representing 1.67% falls within the age (range) of 16 and above.

Table 6: Showing duration of parental separation

Duration of parental separation (years)	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	8	13.3%
6-10	26	43.3%
11-15	24	40%
16+	2	3.3%
Total	60	100%

Children whose parents have separated for a period of 1-5 years were 8 representing 13.3%. Those whose parents have separated for 6-10 years were 26 representing 43.3%. Those whose parents have separated for 11-15 years were 24 representing 40%. Lastly, those that fall within 16 years and above were two (2) representing 3.3%.

Table 7: Showing a frequency of the kind of work parents in Amassoma do for a living.

Occupation of parents	Frequency	Percentage
Civil service	49	39.2%
Trading	28	22.4%
Professional	34	27.2%
Other	14	11.2%
Total	125	100%

Out of the 120 respondents from single parent homes and dual parent homes, studied, those whose parents were civil servant, were 49 representing 39.2%, those whose parent were traders were 28 in number representing 22.4%. 34 representing 27.2% were professional parents while the remaining 14 representing 11.2% were doing other works ranging from cleaners to electricians, international networking, etc.

Analysis of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Section B of the questionnaire constitutes the research questions. The research questions that were relevant to the study revolve around social problems, educational problems, psychological problems, behavioral problems, etc. Children in single parent homes and those in dual parent families are required to answer the section B. The research questions are therefore examined and compared between children from both families (single parent families and dual parent families). Three hypotheses were formulated and the three hypotheses will be tested using the data collected in the cause of the study. Using the Kendell measure of concordance (w), the following steps were applied.

Step1: Add the rank for each problem and for all the problems

Step2: Square the total rank for each problem

Step3: Add a square total to get $\sum RT^2$

Step4: Use the result to determine the sum of squares for the rank.

Step5: Use the sum of squares in the following formula to obtain Kandell's (w).

Step 6: Test for significance of the w by using the chi square statistics.

Research question 1: Is there a significant difference in problem faced by children in single parent home when compared to children in dual parent families?

Hypotheses 1:

Hi: There is a significant difference in problems faced by children in single parent families when compared to children in dual parent families.

Ho: There is no significant difference in problems faced by children in single parent families when compared to children in dual parent families.

Table 4.8: Showing prevalence of problems faced by children in single parent families

Problems	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	RT	RT ²
Ability to negotiate social situation and produce successful social intention	115	90	84	289	83,521
Ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically	140	138	69	347	120,409
The degree of connectedness to others in their social environment	108	61	178	347	120,409
Children self perception	214	73	116	403	162,409
Behaviours applicable to children	379	436	454	1,269	1,610,361
Attitudes towards school	296	110	194	600	360,000
Parents knowledge of their children where about	36	19	5	60	3,600
Parental understanding of children's feelings	33	16	11	60	3,600
Children's satisfaction about the way they are living their lives	28	15	17	60	3,600
Total				$\sum RT=34$ 35	$\sum RT^2=2467909$

$$SSR = \sum RT^2 - \frac{(\sum RT)^2}{N}$$

$$SSR = 2467909 - \frac{(3435)^2}{9}$$

$$SSR = 2,467,909 - \frac{11,799,225}{9}$$

$$SSR = 2,477,909 - 1,311,025$$

$$SSR = 1,156,884$$

Use the sum of squares (SSR) in the following formula to obtain Kendall's τ

$$W = \frac{12 \text{ SSR}}{K^2 n (n^2 - 1)}$$

Where K^2 is the number of cases (which is 3, i.e. Agree, neither agree nor Disagree, and Disagree) and N = the number of items ranked (which is 9)

Substitute in the formula

$$W = \frac{12 \times 1,156,884}{9 \times 9 (81 - 1)}$$

$$W = \frac{13,882,608}{81 (80)}$$

$$W = \frac{13,882,608}{6480}$$

$$W = 2142.2$$

Table 9: showing prevalence of problems faced by children in dual parent families

Problems	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	RT	RT ²
Ability to negotiate social situation and produce successful social intention	108	103	82	293	85,849
Ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically	148	146	59	353	124,609
The degree of connectedness to others in their social environment	76	53	221	350	122,500
Children self perception	196	79	128	403	162,409
Behaviours applicable to children	327	362	590	1,279	1,635,841
Attitudes towards school	303	94	200	597	356,409
Parents knowledge of their children where about	45	12	3	60	3,600
Parental understanding of	35	6	21	60	3,00

children's feelings					
Children's satisfaction about the way they are living their lives	31	23	4	58	3,364
Total				$\sum RT=3,453$	$\sum RT^2=249818$

$$SSR = \sum RT^2 - \frac{(\sum RT)^2}{N}$$

$$SSR = 2498181 - \frac{(3453)^2}{9}$$

$$SSR = 2,498181 - \frac{1,192,329}{9}$$

$$SSR = 2,498,181 - 1,324801$$

$$SSR = 1,173,380$$

Use the sum of squares (SSR) in the following formula to obtain Kendall's w

$$W = \frac{12 SSR}{K^2 n (n^2 - 1)}$$

Substitute in the formula

$$W = \frac{12 \times 1,173,380}{9 \times 9 (81 - 1)}$$

$$W = \frac{14,080,560}{81 (80)}$$

$$W = \frac{14,080,560}{6480}$$

$$W = 2172.9$$

Finding the difference between 2142.4 and 2172.9

$$2172.9 - 2142.4 = 30.5$$

$$W = 30.5$$

Test for the significance of the w by using the chi-square statistics as follows

$$X^2 = K(n-1) w, \text{ with } n-1 \text{ degree of freedom}$$

$$X^2 = 3(9-1)30.5$$

$$X^2 = 3 \times 8 \times 30.5$$

$$X^2 = 732$$

$$df = (9-1) = 8$$

$$df = 8$$

Decision: At 8df at 0.05 level of significance, table value is 15.507. The calculated value of 732 is higher than the critical table value. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in problems faced by children in single parent families when compare to children in dual parent families.

Research question 2: Is there any significant difference in problems faced by boys in single parent homes compared to girls in single parent homes?

Hypothesis II:

Hi: Boys in single parent families faced significantly greater problems than girls in single parent families.

Ho: Boys in single parent families does not face significantly greater problems than girls in single parent families.

Table 10 Showing problems faced by Boys in single parent families

Problems	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	RT	RT ²
Ability to negotiate social situation and produce successful social intention	56	56	35	147	21,609
Ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically	60	73	39	172	29,584
The degree of connectedness to others in their social environment	54	32	87	173	29,929
Children self perception	110	42	46	198	39,204
Behaviours applicable to children	187	245	192	624	389,376
Attitudes towards school	141	65	91	297	88,209
Parents knowledge of their children where about	16	10	4	30	900
Parental understanding of children's feelings	17	8	5	30	900
Children's satisfaction about the way they are living their lives	12	10	8	30	900
Total				∑RT=1701=	∑RT²600611

$$SSR = \sum RT^2 - \frac{(\sum RT)^2}{N}$$

$$SSR = 600611 - \frac{(1701)^2}{9}$$

$$SSR = 600611 - \frac{2,893,401}{9}$$

$$SSR = 600611 - 321,489$$

$$SSR = 279,122$$

Use the sum of squares in the following formular to obtain Kendell's w

$$W = \frac{12 SSR}{K^2 n(n^2-1)}$$

Substitute in the formular

$$W = \frac{12 \times 279,122}{9 \times 9 (8-1)}$$

$$W = \frac{3,349,464}{6,480}$$

$$W = 516.9$$

Table 11: Showing problems faced by girls in single parent families

Problems	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	RT	RT ²
Ability to negotiate social situation and produce successful social intention	59	34	49	142	20,164
Ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically	80	65	30	175	30,625
The degree of connectedness to others in their social environment	54	29	91	174	30,276
Children self perception	104	31	70	205	42,025
Behaviours applicable to children	292	191	262	645	416,025
Attitudes towards school	155	45	103	303	91,809
Parents knowledge of their children where about	20	9	1	30	900
Parental understanding of children's feelings	16	8	6	30	900
Children's satisfaction about the way they are living their lives	16	5	9	30	900
Table				∑RT=1734	∑RT²=633624

$$SSR = \frac{\sum RT^2 - (\sum RT)^2}{N}$$

$$SSR = \frac{633624 - (1734)^2}{9}$$

$$SSR = \frac{633624 - 3,006,756}{9}$$

$$SSR = 633624 - 334,084$$

$$SSR = 299,540$$

Using the sum of squares in the following formular to obtain Kendell's w

$$W = \frac{12 SSR}{K^2 n(n^2-1)}$$

Substitute in the formular

$$W = \frac{12 \times 299,540}{9 \times 9 (81-1)}$$

$$W = \frac{3,594,480}{81(80)}$$

$$W = \frac{3,594,480}{6480}$$

$$W = 554.7$$

The difference between 554.7 and 516.9 is $w = 37.8$

Test for the significance of the w by using the chi-square statistics

$$X^2 = K(n-1)w, \text{ with } n-1 \text{ degree of freedom}$$

$$X^2 = 3(9-1) 37.8$$

$$X^2 = 3 \times 8 \times 37.8$$

$$X^2 = 907.2$$

$$df = (9-1) = 8$$

Decision: At 8df at 0.05 level of significance, table value is 15.507. The calculated value of 907.2 is higher than the critical table value. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that boys in single parent families face significantly greater problems than girls in single aren't families.

Research question 3: is there any significant relationship between problems faced by children in single parent homes and age of the child at time of parental separation?

Hypothesis III:

Hi: There is a significant relationship between problems faced in single parent homes and age of children at time of parental separation.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between problems faced in single parent homes and age of child at time of parental separation.

Table 4.12: Showing the relationship between problems faced in single parent homes and age of child at time of parental separation.

Problems	Age of children				RT	RT ²
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+		
Ability to negotiate social situation and produce successful social intention	65	53	23	3	144	20,736
Ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically	89	42	32	2	165	27,225
The degree of connectedness to others in their social environment	72	43	29	2	146	21,316
Children self perception	62	61	10	2	135	18,225
Behaviours applicable to children	90	50	48	5	193	37,249
Attitudes towards school	54	29	18	2	103	10,609
Parents knowledge of their children where about	20	9	2	2	33	1,089

Parental understanding of children's feelings	18	3	4	1	26	676
Children's satisfaction about the way they are living their lives	21	10	5	1	37	1,369
Total					$\sum RT = 982$	$\sum RT^2 = 138,494$

$$SSR = \sum RT^2 - \frac{(\sum RT)^2}{N}$$

$$SSR = 138,494 - \frac{(982)^2}{9}$$

$$SSR = 138,494 - \frac{964,324}{9}$$

$$SSR = 138,494 - 107,147$$

$$W = \frac{12 SSR}{K^2 n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Substitute in the formular

$$W = \frac{12 \times 31,347}{16 \times 9 (81 - 1)}$$

$$W = \frac{376,164}{144 (80)}$$

Test for the significance of the w by using the Chi-square statistics.

$$X^2 = K(n-1) w \text{ with } n-1 \text{ degree of freedom}$$

$$X^2 = 4(9-1) 32.7$$

$$X^2 = 4 \times 8 \times 32.7$$

$$X^2 = 1,046.4$$

$$df = (9-1) = 8$$

Decision: At 8df at 0.05 level of significance, table value is 15.507. The calculated value of 1,046.4 is higher than the critical table value. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between problems faced by children in single parent homes and age of the child at time of parental separation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the responses of the respondents from single parent families, the researcher found out that single parenting has negative effects on children. Generally, children face problems or challenges just the same way adults do. The challenges they face are however, equal to their age. These problems are social problems, psychological problems, educational problems, behavioral problems, etc. Children in single parent families however, face significantly greater problems than those raised in dual parent families. This is a reflection of the findings of Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) that carried out a similar study concerning the well being of the child in the absence of one parent. The outcome of the study

draws our attention to the fact that children raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parents.

The findings of the study further reveals that Boys in single parent families face greater problems than girls in single parent families. Also, the severity of problems faced by children in single parent homes depends on the age of the child at time of parental separation. From the study it was established that younger children are more affected by the trauma of single parenthood. The findings of Nancy in 2001 and an earlier study of price and McKenry (1998) supports the above findings. The findings of their study concluded that the effects of marital dissolution or single parenthood are more severe for boys than for girls, and marital dissolution or single parenting is more traumatic for children who are younger at the time of separation.

The study, thus, reveals that apart from economic problems, single parenting has a negative effect on children's psychological, social, behavioral and educational well being.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The main concern of this study focuses on "The Effects of Single Parenting on the Nigerian child using Amassoma as a case study". The specific objectives of the study include examining the prevalence of problem faced by children in single parent homes as against a comparable sample of children from dual parent family background, finding out if boys face greater problems in single parent families than girls, and finding out if age of child at the time of parental separation affects the severity of problems children face. In order to place the study within the appropriate perspectives, various works of different scholars in the area were considered.

The study adopted the survey research design. The target population consisted of all children between the ages of twelve (12) to seventeen (17) who were living in single parent and dual parent homes in Amassoma community, while the sample size consisted of 150 respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size. However, questionnaires were used to elicit information from respondents as primary source of data, and the secondary sources as textbooks, journals, and internet. The response rate was high as the researcher retrieved 120 questionnaires from the respondents. The findings of this study were presented, analyzed and discussed using the simple percentage and Kendell's method. From the findings, the study found out that children in single parent families face significantly greater problems than children in dual parent families, boys in single parent homes face greater problems than girls in single parent homes, and also age of child at the time of parental separation affects the severity of problems children face. In other words, younger children face greater problems than children that are a little bit mature due to the trauma they face.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of single parenting on the Nigerian child using Amassoma as a case study. Having carried out this work through careful observation, administration of questionnaires, and the review of relevant literatures, the researcher concludes that single parenting has adverse effect on children. Although other factors may contribute to aggravating the problems children face; generally speaking, children in single parent homes often face greater problems.

On the contrary, some children in single parent families fare better than children in dual parent families. A careful look at the table confirms the above statement, but when data from the different samples of children (single parent children and dual parent children) are compared, samples from single parent families always have a higher toll of problems.

Finally, the researcher also found out that, boys in single parent homes faces greater problems than girls in single parent homes. Skolnick .a. and Jerome (1989) offer the possibility that living with the opposite sex is more difficult than with the same sex, and because the custodial parent is often the mother, boys are exposed to this situation more often. (Table 4.3).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the study, it is therefore recommended that parents stay together with their children to ensure that their welfare is properly catered for. Government should provide free and compulsory education without social family support and help the less privileged parents with financial support by empowering them. Public enlightenment on issues of parental skills, family planning, family values and child discipline could be done regularly, as this would make for an intact family.

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