

The Impact of Single-Parenthood and Educational Challenges of Public Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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Abstract: The study carried out an analysis of students' response to the impact of single parenthood and educational challenges of public secondary school students in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Taro Yemen's formula and stratified random sampling technique were used to select 3,350 students in 245 public secondary schools in Rivers State that constituted the population of the study. A sample size of 600 students (male and female) was carefully selected. A set of questionnaire was used to elicit information. Research questions were answered using mean (\bar{x}), frequency and percentage. The results obtained showed that students from single parenthood do not perform well in their academics due to various factors such as lateness to school, and high enrolment age, among others. The study recommend among others that parents should avoid unnecessary separation to give their children best education that will help them to live a better life.

Keywords: Education, Single Parenthood, Challenges, Impact.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training and research. A nation or society becomes progressive politically, socially, economically and morally through education, when there is continuity, and survival of its posterity. Nwabueze (2011) sees education as the industry that produces manpower for socio-economic, political and cultural development of the society.

Education is essential for everyone in the society. It is the level of education that helps people earn respect and recognition. It is an indispensable part of life both personally and socially. The importance of education is undeniable for every single person. It goes without saying that education has a positive effect on human life. Only with the advent of education can people gain knowledge and enlarge their view over the world. For example, learning by watching TV or reading books give people a huge amount of information about anything they are interested in such as mathematics, current news, exchange rates, other countries, cultures, among others. Apparently, people may become more useful and civilized if they are better educated. In areas where residents are not able to receive an appropriate education, life cannot be as thriving and prosperous as locations where there is a high standard for education.

Also, education plays such a rudimentary role on society that one cannot imagine a life without it. It is a determined element for the civilization of human society. Not only does it help people develop healthy surroundings but it also generates an advance community. As a matter of fact, everything one creates today is based on the knowledge

obtained throughout life by way of education. This assists scientists in inventing equipment and devices, resulting in high technology advancements. The more developed life becomes, the more necessary education is for everyone. Without education, life would be disastrous and detrimental. Additionally, every child should be given equal opportunities to learn and study because the development of a country depends vastly on the standard of education. Though, the educational systems of different countries are not similar, they share a common goal which is to provide its citizens with a suitable and proper learning. Parents attitudes towards education assist in conditioning their children's interests and subsequent level of academic achievement. Parent who show total disregard for education, literacy or other forms of social advancement are bound to have some adverse effect on their children's educational development. In line with the foregoing, Morrish (2016) expresses that it is the examples of parents, and not their precepts that affect their children. Single-parenthood can be seen as when one out of two people is responsible for a child's upbringing, and the work meant for two people is now being carried out by only one person (Oluwatosin and Joseph, 2011).

Single-parenting is emotionally and psychologically destabilizing, considering the challenges of becoming the bread-winner and a single parent for the family. In the Jehovah witness "Awake Magazine" (2004:20), raising children can be both rewarding and challenging; hence, it assumes an overwhelming task, sometimes. Single-parenting, therefore is likely to be more difficult. In the process, one parent tries to do the work of two and issues may be complicated by other parents, or relatives as well as friends, all of who are likely to have their own different ideas on how children should be raised.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Single parenting is a very important social issue that can have significant effects on a child's academic success. Children who are raised in a single family home are likely to be at risk of not reaching their full potential. Such students within Nigerian educational system encounter many challenges in their family lives and may carry these challenges into the classroom.

The family structure, ideally, provides a sense of security and stability that is necessary for children. When there is a breakdown in the family structure, it may have tremendous impact on the children, including their ability to function ordinarily or achieve academically. In many situations, the children no longer have two parents to depend on. Consequently, they rely on one parent to meet most, if not all their needs.

With limited finances, time and availability, parents are less likely to provide the needed adequate support for the

children to perform to the best of their ability. This is not to say, necessarily, that the single parent raising them is not providing them with more than adequate love and attention; rather, the single parent model within itself comprises of many types that can affect his/her children's level of academic success. However, there are many students within the school system who come from single-parent families. Due to many issues that stem from the single- family model, some students are not likely to reach their full potential, as the single-parent model rapidly becomes the norm +in Rivers State

Objectives of the Study

1. Determine the impact of single-parenthood on male and female secondary school students punctuality rate in Rivers State.
2. Determine the age of secondary school enrolment of male and female students from single-parenthood in Rivers State.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it examines the educational challenges of single parenthood among secondary school students in Rivers State. Data arising from this study will be useful to the government, educational planners and administrators for assessing the influence of single-parenthood on the attainment of secondary education of single-parents' children in Rivers State.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will contribute to existing literature for further studies in related topic. It will enlighten and strengthen previous findings by earlier researchers and serve as a reference point to future researchers in related areas. On the other hand, it will enlighten single-parents on how to take care of their children morally, academically and emotionally.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to male and female students from single-parenthood in urban and rural areas of Rivers State. Specifically, the scope of this study includes variables, as punctuality, enrolment age, of male and female secondary school students.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design was adopted since the study attempted to identify the impact of

single-parenthood and educational challenges of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 3,350 students from single-parenthood in 245 public secondary schools in the Local Government Areas within the three senatorial zones of Rivers State. They comprised male and female students from upland and riverine public secondary schools as confirmed from the school authorities as well as the demographic records of the students (Source: Rivers State Ministry of Education Report, 2013).

Sample and Sampling Technique

Rivers State comprises of twenty-three Local Governments in three Senatorial Zones. Rivers East, Rivers South, Rivers South-East. Taro Yemen's formula,

$n = N/2$ (Gay 1996) was used to select the sample size where:

$$I + N(e)$$

N = population

I = theoretical constant

n = sample size

e = tolerance error (0.05)

For a population of 3,350 students, a sample of 600 male and female students was used. The study sample comprised of 30 secondary schools, ten from each Senatorial Zone selected through stratified random sampling technique (Gay 1996). Ten (10) male students and ten (10) female students were selected from each of the selected 30 schools. Altogether, a total of 300 male and 300 female students were selected

Method of Data Analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, numerical values were assigned to each of the response scales as follows: Strongly agree (SA) = 4; Agree(A) = 3, Disagree(D) = 2, Strongly disagree (SD) = 1

Based on this, a criteria means of 2.5 was calculated to judge the mean responses from the respondents.\

Presentation of Data

To what extent does single parenthood affect male and female secondary school students' punctuality in Rivers State?

S/N	STATEMENT	L P		SP		DIVORCED		WIDOWED	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		\bar{x}							
1	Children from single- parents come to school late because they live with their mother alone	2.85	3.13	1.56	1.88	2.31	2.21	2.46	2.26
2	Children from single- parent come to school late because they live with their father alone	2.26	1.88	1.64	2.11	1.90	2.16	2.16	2.24
3	I come to school late because I stay with sister who is not married	1.87	1.77	2.19	2.14	2.44	2.09	2.30	1.88
4	I look for what to eat in the morning before going to school	3.11	3.14	2.42	2.40	2.31	1.96	2.18	2.45
5	I am involved in morning sales before going to school	2.76	2.89	2.66	2.11	2.33	2.41	2.26	1.61

6	I go to school very late because of domestic jobs	2.28	2.84	3.04	2.84	2.61	3.22	2.88	2.45
7	I come late to school as a result it affects my performances	1.81	2.55	2.51	2.56	2.44	2.03	2.49	2.26
	Total	2.37	2.57	2.36	2.26	2.37	3.00	2.40	2.11
	— Grand x	2.47 (R)		2.31 (R)		2.69 (A)		2.26 (R)	

N/B: Lone parents = LP; separated parents = SP.

Criterion mean = 2.5

KEY: A= Accepted, R = Rejected.

Lone Parents

Generally, punctuality does not affect male and female students with grand mean of (2.47) but comparatively, it affects female students more with (2.57). Separated Parents, Generally, it does not affect male and female students with the grand mean (2.31) comparatively; it does not affect either male students (2.36) or female students (2.26).

Divorced Parents,

Generally, it affects male and female students with grand mean of (2.69) but

Comparatively, male students are not affected (2.37), while female students are affected (3.00).

Widowed Parents.

Generally, punctuality does not affect male and female students with grand mean of (2.26). Comparatively, it does not affect the male students whose mean is 2.40 nor the female students (2.11)

How does single- parenthood affect students enrolment age in Rivers State?

ENROLLMENT AGE (YRS)

S/No	Pattern of Parenthood	A 10-12	B 13-15	C 16-18	Total Response
1	Lone parent	10 (12.5%)	57 (71.25%)	13 (16.25%)	80
2	Separated	7 (6.25%)	93 (83.04%)	12 (10.71%)	112
3	Divorce	13 (6.74%)	145 (75.13%)	35 (18.13%)	193
4	Widow	44 (20.46%)	119 (55.35%)	52 (24.19%)	215
	Total	74 (12.33%)	414 (69%)	112 (18.69%)	600

NB: Percentage in parenthesis

Lone Parents

Students between the ages of 13-15yrs are affected with 71.25%

Separated Parents

Students between the ages above are greatly affected with the percentage rate of 83.04%

Divorced Parents

Students are highly affected with the percentage rate of 75.13%

Widowed Parents

Students are affected with percentage of 55;35%

This indicates that in all, the separated parents are greatly or highly affected by enrollment age.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Punctuality rates of secondary school students from single parents in Rivers State.

children from single-parenthood come to school late because they live with one parent alone, some come to school late because they stay with sister who is not married; and as such. look for what to eat in the morning before going to school, many of them are involved with morning sales before going to school, others go to school very late every day because of domestic jobs, and children from single-parenthood do not perform well at school because of frequent late coming. Children of separated families are often taken anyway to serve as house servant or maids instead of going to school This is where a child does not have anything to feed on or work on except home services. In such a situation, the child is exposed to insecurity and unstable life. Those who have the opportunity to attend school always live the house very late when they must have fished home services or sales. Supporting this assertion, Morrish (2016: 165) remarked that the child living in the shadow of broken family will feel bewildered by the comings and goings and by the mere fact that essential relationships are not prompted or are broken off and disrupted at a very impressionable time. Those who live with single parents find it very difficult to be involved in schools and social gatherings. Single parenthood involves a sole parent who cares for children without the help of the other parent (Ward, 2001).

In case of divorce, separation or death of a parent, children are at somewhat greater risk for symptoms of poor psychological adjustment, behavioural and social problems, low self-esteem, absence from school, lateness to school and poor academic performance in school. However, Oluwatosin and Joseph (2011) revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of adolescent students from single parent homes and those from intact parent homes.

Enrollment age of secondary school students from single parents in River State.

The findings of this study also revealed that the effect of single- parenthood on the enrolment age of students in Rivers State include: working hard to pay their school fees/get their school uniform influences the enrolment age of the child in school, lack of money for educational training of the child affect the enrolment age, Single-parents without job to make money and train the child affect the enrolment age in school, and Children going to hawk in other to make money for their education enroll late in school. Enrollment age and level of achievement in school influence how children are doing at the present time, including their cognitive, psychological, and social development. Children's cognitive abilities and academic achievement also set the stage for their future successes, such as their employment/earnings opportunities and achievement in school can also affect children's health outcomes.

Enrollment age of children living with single-parent at the secondary level is always high. Children living with single-parents have low access to education from an evolutionary perspective; both parents are more likely to invest more in their children's education than single-parent who are to look for feeding money before the educational training of the children. In contrast to two biological parents who invest in their relationship with each other by investing in their children, single parents may have to choose between investing in new relationships and in their children. Likewise, investment in children may not be as strong in step-families, compared with, two biological-parent families; though it appears that children living with two partnered adults should have educational advantages over children living with single-parents. Single parenthood affects the enrolment age of their children in secondary school negatively. From a resource perspective, parents provide their children valuable social and financial capital, and these types of resources tend to be more limited in families with one parent and even more so in families with no parents. However, single mothers are often less able to provide, support and a monitor their children effectively because they are overburdened by financial and emotional strains or are less able to balance work and family responsibilities successfully.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents should avoid unnecessary separation to give their children best education that will help them to live a better life. Parents should give their children adequate training and education to avoid their involvement into prostitution and criminal activities that would endanger their lives.

Government should ensure education for all by making it free at all level, award scholarship to those who cannot pay school fees. This will help the students not to dropout from school.

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