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**Influence of Single Parent's Educational Support
on Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary
School Students in Delta North Senatorial
District of Delta State**

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of single-parent educational support on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District Delta State. Four research questions were raised to guide the study, and five corresponding hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The descriptive and correlational research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study consisted of 2,939 SSIII students from public senior secondary schools in Delta North Senatorial District. The sample of the study was made up of 147 public senior secondary school students representing 5% of the total population, randomly selected using the simple random sampling technique. The research instrument used for data collection was a standardized test. The instrument was administered on thirty (30) respondents for its reliability and a reliable coefficient value of 0.76 was obtained. The data collected for the study were analyzed using Mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings from the study showed that there was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students from single mothers and single fathers. The findings further revealed that the performance of students from intact families was significantly higher than the mean performances of students from single mothers and those from single fathers among the sampled students at .001 and .002 significant levels respectively. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that Parents should consider the future of their children as the first priority, stay together and provide psycho-social and economic support to enhance the academic performance of their children.

Keywords: Educational Support, Single Parent, Intact Family, Gender, Academic Achievement

Introduction

Academic achievement represents a performance outcome that indicates the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals based on their focus on instructional activities. Academic achievement is a broad topic; several authors have focused mainly on selected aspects of academic achievement, such as enhancing academic achievement or specific predictors of academic achievement. A student's academic achievement can be explained in terms of grades obtained from tests or examinations in courses taken. The level of students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Nigeria is determined through external examinations like the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Poor academic achievement of students in these examinations has been linked to several factors ranging from teacher factors, school factors, parent factors, and so on. One leading factor is that of the family that the child comes from.

The family is a child's first place of contact with the world. The child, as a result, acquires initial education and socialization from parents and other significant persons in the family. The family lays the psychological, moral, and spiritual foundation for the child's overall development. Structurally, family/home is either broken or intact. A broken home in this context is one that is not structurally intact, as a result of divorce, separation, death of one parent and illegitimacy. According to Frazer (2021), psychological home conditions arise mainly from illegitimacy of children, the label of adopted child, broken home, divorce and parental deprivation. Such abnormal conditions of the home are likely to have a detrimental effect on the school performance of the child, he asserts. In Nigeria, the existence of single parents, which is as a result of broken homes, was formerly unknown and where they existed, they were ignored as exceptional cases. However, nowadays, they are the fast-growing family patterns both inside and outside Nigeria (Nwachukwu, 2018). The child is morally upright and emotionally stable when the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents. The family is the first socializing agent the child comes in contact with. It has a great influence on the child's physical, mental, and moral development.

The family lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to school is determined by the home. Salami (2018) pointed out that both parents have roles to play in child's education. The father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement, while the mother is supposed to supplement the father's efforts 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 progress of the child, he/she (the child) could be backward or withdrawn. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough (Salami, 2018).

Agukwe and Oluoma (2021) opined that the unhappy economic status of parents may be associated with low academic achievement because witnessing conflicts between parents increases stress in children. This keeps them from focusing on schoolwork. Children with separated parents score lower than children with continuously married parents on measures of academic success. Academics are one of the most important aspects of a student's life. With good grades, students can get into colleges and universities, which allow them to earn degrees and pursue the careers they desire. If the relationship between the student's parents is unstable and filled with conflict, this can alter the student's academic performance. He further identified single parenting as a major problem on the rise. Parent separation is a common phenomenon in the community today, but still represents a major life stressor for the individuals involved, with potentially strong negative consequences for the mental and physical health of all members of the family.

Parental educational support is essential in every family, whether it is a dysfunctional or an intact family. Educational support provided by parents ensures that their children have access to all the necessary resources for their academic success. According to Ogundele and Oshopene (2014), educational support is an integral and essential part of educational administration; hence, educational support must be provided for every learner, which aids interpersonal harmony, a conducive teaching-learning environment and personal institutional esteem within and outside the institution. Life, in a single-parent family or broken home, can be stressful for both the child and the parent, which may result in low educational support from the parent. Such families are faced with challenges of inadequate financial resources, as only one parent has to cater for all the needs of the child. When a child is in a single-parent household, the parent may be overwhelmed by economic and social demands that they may not be able to fully support their children's academic activities. Such children may depend on peers or pull away from their friends, teachers and this leads to significant drop in academic performance (Ogundele & Oshopene, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The issue of single parenting is an increasing social problem that has become a topic for discussion in recent times. It has been noted globally that single parenting may have a negative effect on the social, economic and emotional behaviour of children from single-parent homes. This has been a great challenge facing many countries worldwide. Students who live with a single parent may perform poorly in terms of education, since they may not get full support from both parents. A major issue of single parenting in a child's education is the lack of attention to the mechanisms through which family structure affects children's outcomes. For example, single-parent families tend to be poorer than two-parent families, in most cases, because only one parent has to cater for the needs of the children. Moreover, financial issues may also result in lower support and a lower level of involvement in children's education in a single-parent home, as the parent may be too busy trying to meet the basic needs of the child. This results in less supervision and monitoring of the child's school work. This may further result in poor academic achievement in the child's education. Inter-parental conflict resulting in divorce tends to lower the parent-child relationship, which may in turn affect the child's educational achievement negatively. This socioeconomic relationship between the child and his or her parent is another important mechanism through which the disadvantages associated with single parenthood occur. Based on these observations, the research therefore seeks to investigate the influence of single-parent educational support on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in the Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State. Thus, the thrust of this study, put in a question form, is: Does single-parent educational support affect the academic achievement of senior secondary school students?

Purpose of the Study

This study is to examine the influence of single-parent educational support on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in the Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Identify the proportion of students with single-parent educational support in the Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State.
2. Examine the level of academic achievement of students with single-parent' educational support.
3. Compare the levels of academic achievement of students with single parent's educational support based on gender.

4. Compare the level of academic achievement of students with single-parent and intact family educational support.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What is the proportion of students with single-parent educational support?
2. What is the level of academic achievement of students with a single parent's educational support?
3. What is the level of academic achievement of students with single parent's educational support based on gender?
4. What is the level of academic achievement of students with single-parent and intact family educational support?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1. There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single mothers and those from single fathers among the sampled students in the Delta North senatorial district
2. There is no significant difference in the levels of academic achievement of students with single parent's educational support based on gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of academic achievement of students with single-parent and intact family educational support.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would be beneficial to students, teachers, parents, curriculum planners, researchers, and the general public. The findings of this study would be of immense benefit to students with single parent. It would help create a conducive environment for them and also assist them in coping with various challenges associated with a single-parent home. The findings of this study would provide information to the teachers on challenges faced by students with single parents and how these challenges influence their academic performance. It would also enlighten the teachers on the role they could play as role models in coaching and mentoring these students in areas where their parents may fall short. The outcomes of this study would also be useful to single parents, either for commendation or correction, to help them maintain and ensure high educational achievement of their children without bias. The findings of this study would also be beneficial to future researchers, as it would serve as a pointer from which other studies could be carried out to determine the influence of single-parent educational support on students' academic achievement.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive and correlational research design. The population of this study comprised 2,939 SS III students from public senior secondary schools in the Delta North Senatorial District (Source: Ministry of Education, 2024). The population was drawn from a total number of 171 public secondary schools within the nine Local Government Areas of Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State. The sample of the study comprises 147 SSIII students in public secondary school in Delta North Senatorial District. This was done by adopting the simple random sampling technique in selecting 5% sample from the total population of the study, making a sample of 147 SSIII students as the sample of the

study. The instrument that was used for data collection was a standardized test. The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A contained items that sought the demographic information of respondents while section B contained a standard test on two subjects English and Mathematics. The standardized test comprised of 15 English questions and 10 Mathematics questions with option A-D to test for students' academic achievement. The instrument was validated by three experts from the faculty of Education, University of Delta Agbor. This procedure was necessary in order to ensure face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha method. This was done by administering the questionnaire on thirty (30) respondents. Data collected was analyzed for its reliability, and the reliability coefficient of .833 was obtained, which implies that the instrument was reliable for the study. The mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (SD), independent sample t-test and the F-test was used for the analysis of data.

Presentation of Results and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented in the following table.

Research Question 1: What is the proportion of students who have educational support from single parents among the sampled students in the Delta North senatorial district?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Proportion of Secondary School Students who have Educational Support from Single Parents among the Sample in Delta North Senatorial District

Family	Frequen cy	Relative Frequency	Perce nt	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Remark
Single mother	24	0.25	25.0	25.0	25.0	A large proportion
Single father	10	0.104	10.4	10.4	35.4	
Intact family	62	0.646	64.6	64.6	100.0	
Aggregate	96	1.00	100.0	100.0		

Key: Less than 30 = Small, Greater than 30 = large

The data in Table 1 showed that the frequencies of the students who had educational support from single mothers and single fathers were 24 and 10, respectively, representing 25 and 10.4 percent. The cumulative percentage for the two types of single parents is 35 percent. This showed that the proportion of students who had educational support from single parents in secondary schools in Delta North senatorial district is high.

Research Question 2: What are the academic performances of students who have educational support from single parents among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district?

Table 2: The Descriptive Analysis of the Academic Performances of Students with Educational Support from Single Parents among the Sampled Students in Delta North Senatorial District

Single parent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Percent	Remark
Single mother	24	14.6031	5.54755	1.13239	58.4	Good
Single father	10	12.4000	5.58172	1.76509	49.6	Fair
Aggregate	34	13.5016	5.5646	1.4487	54	Good

The data in Table 2 showed that the mean performances of students who have educational support from single mothers and single fathers among sampled students are 14.60 and 12.40 respectively. The overall mean performance of the two groups is 13.50. The standard deviations are 5.55, 5.58 and 5.56 respectively. The standard errors for the three mean values are 1.132, 1.765 and 1.449 respectively. Their percentage performances with the classifications are 58.4 (good), 49.6 (fair) and 54 (good) respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the Academic Performances of Students who have Educational Support from Single Parents in Delta North senatorial district based on gender?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Academic Performances of Students who have Educational Support from Single Parents among the Sampled Students Based on Gender

Gender	Single parent	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Min	Max	Percent	Remark
Female	Single father	6	14.5745	6.53197	2.66667	8.00	23.00	58.3	Good
	Single mother	13	15.0646	4.80384	1.33235	10.00	25.00	60.3	Good
Male	Single mother	11	14.1416	6.41022	1.93275	5.00	25.00	56.6	Good
	Single father	4	10.2255	1.91485	.95743	7.00	11.00	40.9	fair
Aggregate		34	13.5016	5.52744	.94795	5.00	25.00	54	Good

Key: Less than 39= Poor, 40-49= Fair, 50-60= Good, 61-70= V. Good, 70+ = Outstanding

The data in Table 3 showed that the mean performances of female students who have educational support from single mothers and single fathers among sampled students are 14.57 and 15.06 respectively, while those of their male counterparts are 14.14 and 10.23 respectively. The overall mean performance of the four groups is 13.5016. The standard deviations for the four groups and that of the overall distribution are 6.53, 4.804, 6.410, 1.9149 and 5.527 respectively. And the standard errors for the four groups' mean performances and overall mean are 2.667, 1.323, 1.933, .957 and .948 respectively. The percentage performances of the four groups and the overall percentage with their classifications are 57.3 (good), 59.7 (good), 52.4 (good), 40.9 (fair) and 54.4 (good) respectively.

Research Question 4: What is the Academic Performance of Students who have Educational Support from Single Parents and intact families in Delta North senatorial district?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Academic Performances of Students with Educational Support from Single Parents and Intact Family among the Sampled Students in Delta North Senatorial District

Student	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Min	Max	Percent	Remark
Single mother	24	14.6031	5.54755	1.13239	5.00	25.00	58.41	Good
Single father	10	12.4000	5.58172	1.76509	7.00	23.00	49.6	Fair
Intact family	62	17.9516	4.79558	.60904	7.00	25.00	71.81	Outstanding
Aggregate	96	14.9863	5.45716	.55697	5.00	25.00	59.9	Good

The data in Table 4 showed that the mean values of students who have educational support from single mothers, single fathers and intact family among sampled students are 14.60, 12.40 and 17.95 respectively. The overall mean value of the three groups is 14.99. And the standard deviations for the three groups and the overall score are 5.55, 5.58, 4.80 and 5.46 respectively. The standard errors for the three groups mean values and the overall mean are 1.13, 1.77, .61 and .56 respectively. The percentage performances of the three groups and their overall percentage performance with the classifications are 58.41 (good), 49.6 (fair), 71.81 (outstanding) and 59.9 (good) respectively.

Testing of Hypotheses

The Summary of the Test of Hypotheses is presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single mothers and those from single fathers among students in Delta North senatorial district

Table 5: Independent Samples t-test for the differences between the Academic Performances of Students with Educational Support from Single Mothers and Single Fathers among the Sampled Students

Single parent	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Single mother	2.2031	2.09165	.805	32	.427	Retain Ho
Single father						

The data in Table 5 showed that the mean difference between the two types of single parents is 2.2031. The standard error difference is 2.09 with t value of .81, which is significant at .43 probability level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained at 0.05 alpha level. The implication is that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single mothers and those from single fathers among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the levels of academic achievement of students with single parent's educational support based on gender.

Table 6: Independent t-test for the differences between the Academic Performances of Students with Single Parents Educational Support among Sampled Students Based on Gender

Students	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	T	Df	Sig (2 tailed)	Decision
Male	2.60351	1.88334	1.38	32	.176	Retain Ho
Female			2			

The data in Table 6 showed that the mean difference between male and female students with single parents is 2.60. The standard error difference is 1.88 with t value of 1.38, which is significant at .18 probability level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained at 0.05 alpha level. The implication is that there is no significant difference between the academic performances of male and female students from single parents among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the level of academic achievement of students with single-parent and intact family educational support.

Table 7: F test for the difference between the Academic Performances of Students with Educational Support from Single Mothers, Single Fathers and Intact Family in Delta North Senatorial District

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	438.068	2	219.034	8.519	.000	Reject Ho
Within Groups	2391.088	93	25.711			
Total	2829.156	95				

The data in Table 7 showed that the sum of squares between groups and within groups are 438.07 and 2391.09 respectively. The mean squares for both categories are 219.03 and 25.71 respectively with F value of 8.52 which is significant at .000 probability level. This showed that the mean performance of students from the intact family group is significantly different from the mean performances of the students from single mothers and that of those from single fathers among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district at .001 and .002 significant level respectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not retained at 0.05 alpha level.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that the proportion of students who had educational support from single parents in secondary schools in Delta North senatorial district is high. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Malima (2016), who assessed the effects of single parenting on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Arusha city council. It was found that there was a high level of single parents in Arusha, which was caused by divorce, death, separation or not being married. Also, the study revealed that there was a significant influence of single parenting on the academic performance of students. This finding, however, contrasts with the finding of Lasisi, Hassan, and Abdulkareem (2024), who conducted a study on the impact of Single Parenting on the Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Mathematics. The study sought to determine the effects of single parenting on junior secondary school students' academic performance in mathematics. Findings of the study revealed that the majority of the students were from intact families and expressed better academic performance as compared to those from single-parent homes.

The findings of the study also showed that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single mothers and those from single fathers among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Dele and Mokolapo (2021), who investigated the effect of single-parenthood on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The study showed that there is no difference between the academic performance of single-parent students and students from intact families, but there was a difference in truancy behaviour among students. However, the finding is in contrast with the findings of Chukwuka (2018), who also carried out a study titled Impact of single parent on child education in Primary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. Findings from the study revealed that children from broken socioeconomic backgrounds faced emotional destabilization, negative social disposition, poor moral upbringing, laxity in assisting and guiding in academic activities from parents, which results in poor academic performance among students from single-parent homes than those from intact homes.

The findings of the study further revealed that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students from single mothers and single fathers among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district. This finding is in agreement

with the findings of Murage-Kisoi (2016), who investigated the difference in Academic Performance of Students from Dual and Single Parenthoods in Public Day Secondary Schools in Nakuru Municipality. The study sought to determine the influence of types of parenthood on the academic performance of public day secondary school students in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. The study also determined gender influence on the performance of the students. The findings of this study indicated that the type of parenthood does influence students' academic performance. The study also showed that there was no significant difference between male and female students' academic performance and their parent type. The finding is in contrast with the finding of Muhle (2020), who carried out a study on single-parenting influence on child's academic performances at Mutare Junior School, Zimbabwe. The study findings revealed that children from dual-parent homes perform statistically better on the criterion test than those from single-parent homes ($t = -4.928$, significance value 0.05). The results also indicated that male students perform better than female students from single-parent homes on the criterion test ($t = -4.196$, significance value 0.05).

The findings of the study showed that the mean performance of the intact family group is significantly higher than the mean performances of the students from single mothers and those from single fathers among the sampled students in Delta North senatorial district. This finding is in line with the findings of Yennu, Kombat, Abugri, Asigri, Aparah and Ayuah (2023), who carried out an investigation on Broken Homes and Intact Homes Students' Academic Attainment in Mathematics in the Kasena-Nankana Municipality, Ghana. The study sought to compare the academic achievement of students from intact homes and their colleagues from broken homes in mathematics in the Kasena-Nankana Municipality, Ghana. The study results revealed a significant difference in mean scores between the two groups of students and this difference was in favour of the students from intact homes, suggesting that students from broken homes performed poorly compared to those from intact homes. The finding implied that family structure (broken or intact) is a factor that should not be undermined when looking at students' performances in mathematics. However, the finding is contrary to the finding of Oluwatosin (2011), who carried out a study on the effects of single-parenthood on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study attempted to investigate the effects of single-parenthood on the academic performance and truancy behaviour among secondary school students. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single-parent homes and those from intact parent homes. The second hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference between the truancy behaviour of students from single-parent homes and those from intact homes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students raised by single mothers compared to those raised by single fathers. This suggests that the gender of the single parent may not necessarily determine a child's academic success. However, a significant difference was observed when comparing students from intact families to those from single-parent households. Specifically, students from intact families exhibited higher academic performance than their peers from single-parent backgrounds within the Delta North Senatorial District. This outcome reinforces the idea that the presence of both parents in a child's life plays a vital role in enhancing their academic development and overall performance in school. It is, therefore, imperative for single parents to recognize the added benefits that come with dual parenting, especially in terms of the emotional, psychological, and academic support that

children receive. However, beyond the structure of the family, other critical parental factors should also be considered in understanding student academic outcomes. One such factor is the level of parental involvement in the educational process. Whether a child is raised in a single-parent or two-parent household, the lack of active engagement and support from parents can lead to academic decline. Even children from intact families may struggle academically if they are emotionally or educationally neglected. This insight calls for increased awareness and intervention programs aimed at encouraging greater parental involvement, especially among single parents, to foster improved academic outcomes for students.

Implications for Planning Practice

The implication of this study is that differences in academic performance of children exist between those from single-parent and those from two-parent families. In two-parent homes, both parents have roles to play in the child's education. Where one parent is absent and the other is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as supervise the academic performance of the child, the child will have poor academic achievement. More so, since no significant differences were found in performance based on gender or age, interventions could be designed to address general academic challenges rather than being gender- or age-specific in relation to single parenting and academic achievement of students. Furthermore, the lower academic performance of students from single-parent households compared to those from intact families implies the necessity for government and school authorities to provide additional financial, economic and emotional support to mitigate the disadvantages faced by single-parent students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Governmental organizations and the school should plan and organize seminars to teach couples the importance and requirements of family life in educating their children.
2. Schools at all levels should have a strong guidance and counselling unit to help all the children with family problems and also create a link between the home and the school.
3. All parents should be encouraged through the parents/teachers association meetings to create time for their children at home for homework activities.
4. Schools should liaise with the Ministry of Education to ensure that children from low socio-economic status families complete school by creating school bursaries to help these children settle their school fees.
5. Parents should consider the future of their children as the priority, stay together and provide psycho-social and economic support to enhance the academic performance of their children.

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