

Impact of Single Parenting on the Psychosocial Development of Children in Primary Schools in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract - Single parenting is becoming an incidence of utmost concern around the globe due to the frenetic pace of events caused by rapid and unobstructed mobility of persons, goods, services and information between areas. Traditional life modes are being rapidly eroded by western globalized life modes brought about by education and modernization. Both kinship and extended family tiers have been abandoned for western individualistic ideas. This study is informed by this trend which is contributing significantly to disruption of social cohesion. Delinquent Youths restiveness, banditry and many other social problems may be the aftermath of this state of affairs. This study is saddled with the objectives of investigating and unravelling the underlying basis of the impact of single parenting on the overall development of an individual up to his adult stage of life. The literature review follows existing studies reported from field investigation on the subject matter. The methodology covers the explanation of the area of study, the research population, sampling procedure, instrument for data collection, method of data collection and methods of data analysis which was through one way test of homogeneity of variances and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The Levene Statistic in the result of the test showed that there is no significant difference among the variances (Strongly Agree 1.653, Agree 1.673, Disagree 1.731 and Strongly Disagree 0.505), since ($p < 0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance. Also, the results from mean plot further illustrated and revealed the homogeneity (between and within groups) of the means about the midpoint. Hence the null hypotheses H_0 were accepted while the alternative hypothesis H_1 was rejected. The result provided a substantive evidence to adjudge that there is no significant variation between single parentage and psychosocial development of single parents' children in primary schools in Obudu and that the homogeneity assumptions of the variance is met by the research. It was therefore recommended that school councilors, social workers, and others in allied fields should take speedy actions towards addressing the phenomenon of single parenting as it affects child's development.

Keywords: Single parenting, Psychosocial development, Children, Divorce.

I. Introduction

Single parenting refers strictly to a child rearing practice where a child or children are reared by a single parent either paternally or maternally. Single parenting may be forced or autonomous and constrained or impelled. Autonomous single parenting arises from situations of divorces, separation or negotiation or accidental incidents, constrained or impelled single parent do arise from unidentified impregnation where the actual father of the baby is not known due to multiple cohabitation by young girls or commercial sex workers, raping, concubine, death of a spouse or partner, separation caused by war or disaster and so on.

Currently at the global, regional and local levels the phenomenon of single parenting is on the increase caused by a variety of reasons. Firstly, the culture of avoidance of pre-marital sex and teenage pregnancy has been diminished. Previously, in our local communities it was act of grave ignominy for a young girl to be pregnant in her parental home without having consummated a marriage. But today so many abound where boys and girls cohabit outside marriage. The end point of this loose association is abandonment of the relationship leading to the existence of a single parent.

Secondly, materialism and the new social orientation has caused emergence of a new mentality where extra mental friendship or pals has become the fashion in vogue. Young girls cultivate premarital peers who remain intimate before and during their marriage. Elderly/married men and women engage in extramarital relationship in the form of "sugar babies" or "sugar daddy" or sugar mummy's", "uncles" or aunties. Some of these relationships do eventually culminated in delivery of children outside wedlock leading to the creation of single parentage. Married men on their own part do run more than one home where the mistress or concubine stays away and is cared for by the man in some cases with children born out of that relationship. Mothers or married women may

abandon grown up children in the former husbands' house and go for a young boy to start a family life leading to the existence of a single family arrangement in her previous home.

Divorce or separation is another area of explanation by which single parentage exists either leaving the children to the father or the mother. Some single parentages are caused by refugee status or displacement where the children may be left in the hands of the father or mother.

Finally, Education and/or religion provides another vent where single parentage emanates. Here the man or woman may prefer to have children from outside without going into formal marriage. In some cases women who are too highly Educated may be constrained to have ready suitors, at the end, they may end up settling for casual relationship that result in producing children that will not be bred in a formal family way. Religion is also another factor in the development of single parentage whereby some extremists particularly women who have premarital children will become "born again" and fails to go into formal marriage relationship. For all such background the need remains for an appreciation of how single parentage influences the entire life mode of the individual child in the current world environment.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Single parentage is household social Malay in today's world of globalization and worldwide interconnectivity characterised by unprecedented global migration and changing neighbourhoods. Men and women are staying separated in distant lands and rearing children in situations which are compelling and warranting people to leave their children to the care of others who treat them with disdain and lack of affection. Even children in orphanages and similar formations are experiencing conditions akin to single parenting and even worse. These situations inevitably worry the developmental progression of those young individuals who lack adequate familial affinity.

There is the dire necessity of clearly appreciating the degree of expected level of broad based inculcation of social life perspective gained by those fellows from their parents. How well is it with those individuals in their general material provision in terms of food, shelter, succour or overall comfort? What are the social and psychological ambiances they are wading through? To what extent is their self-concept in their overall life parlance? How altruistic is their individual's life ideals". What are the strength and limitations in their academic progression in such aspects as school attendance, subject matter mastery, interferes relationship as well as teachers perception by them. These and many other questions form the subject matter of this line of inquiry.

1.2 Aims/objective/justification of the research

Aims: The gross purpose of this envisaged study is to explore the various ways by which children reared through single parentage are faring socially and psychologically in their life modes.

Objectives: This study is guided by the following specific objectives.

- 1) How do children of single parents appreciate their own perspectives and the perspectives of others?
- 2) To examine whether there is a significant difference between the psychosocial single parents children and those with dual parentage

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Ho: there is no significant difference in the psychosocial development of single parentage children in the area under investigation.

1.4 Justification

Parenting is a crucial role in social analysis due principally to the fact that children need the succour or care of their parents for proper development. Poor parenting will result in unbalanced growth of children into wrong adults.

The study is significant as basis for understanding the direction of the social and psychological progression of these children under single parentage.

Findings or results from this study will be of immense value to social workers involved in family study. School managers and counsellors require knowledge from this study to properly diagnose or counsel their clients on the proper direction of societal orientation.

This study is equally of value in understanding the roots of drug abuse truancy, examination malpractice and scapegoat tendencies among learners. In the classroom situation it will assist the teacher in proper classroom manages true detection of individual differences.

II. Literature View

2.1 Over view

Definitively every complete family comprises father, mother and child or children. The family is an important unit in the society. It is the first socializing agent that undertakes the responsibility of child rearing or upbringing. The parental role of the family has a major influence on the physical, mental, moral and social development of the child [12], [2]. The family is the bedrock of what one becomes in the society

[5]. The ideal situation is that every family should live together as one but there certain circumstances which warrant or result in single parenting. As earlier mentioned in the background or introduction they include divorces, denied paternity, rape, separation of all kinds, and death of one spouse [9],[6]. The theory of psychosocial development has its basis in the earlier works of [13], [1] in his social learning theory. Implicit in these theories is the recognition that development is an ongoing process which takes place through one's lifespan and that failure to meet psychosocial needs of a child at an early stage will result in personality disorder and unhappiness in future [8].

Following Erickson's eight stages of development unfold as people go through their life span and that each stage comprises of a unique development task that confronts individuals with a crises that must be resolved [14]. Accordingly, he stated that this crises is not catastrophic but a turning point of increased vulnerability and enhanced potential and that the more successful an individual resolves the crises, the healthier the development will be [10], and [13].

In a similar views, social learning theory stress that people require a guide range of such behaviour, thoughts and feelings through fit or incompatibility between the child and environment. In other words the theory views behaviour as a learned phenomenon or stimuli derived from environmental sensation or signal. Hence, psychological attributes signify environmental responses by individuals.

2.2 Single parenting and children's psychosocial growth

Prodigious information has been amassed regarding the effect of single parenting on children. Studies [10] and [3] emphasized that single parents often have less time for general supervision and daily monitoring of their children. Also the absence of adequate communication between children and parents from single parenting households was also recognized and inferred by studies carried out by [3], [10] and [12]. Numerous social problems have been attributed to household with mother or father's absence [11],[5].

In the view of [14], children of single parents are more likely to display risky behaviours: Smoking, drinking, delinquency, violence and unsafe sexual activity and suicides attempts. It is also that children from single parents' homes are likely to suffer deprivation and denial of some rights and opportunities [4].

[7] Study revealed that failure on the part of parents and teachers to meet the psychological needs of the child at a certain stage in his or her development may result in personality disorder which can become potential and a source of unhappiness to the individual.

2.3 Parenting styles and mental health of children

Studies conducted by [7] revealed that parenting styles have significant impacts on early child's mental health. They noted that mental health can occur at a early age. That throughout the prenatal into the first years of life, the child's brain and body develops rapidly making the children very vulnerable to external influences.

Also that early childhood is considered a wide range of mental health disorders. And so that if parenting is not done properly, it can disrupt the mental health of the child. That parenting during infancy and early life is very important for healthy physical, psychological and social development.

This calls attention to the essence of single parenting which reflects a situation of inadequate familial relationship. This position is further adumbrated by the point that parents are the closest environment to the child. Whatever parents do and give will affect the child's development of mental health before stage 4, [7].

The factor of single parenting and psychosocial development of individuals' is receiving increased attention by psychologists sociologist and social anthropologist because of the diversity in family patterns caused by increased divorce rate, non-married single parent and remarriage among couples [5]. Two categories of parenting styles have been recognized in the literature. Those are positive and negative parenting.

Behaviours typically in the category of positive parenting include Warmth, positive reinforcement, monitoring, encouraging independence, and appropriate discipline. For negative parenting the listed behaviours may include harshness, extreme autonomy, neglect, psychological control, rejection and inconsistent discipline [6].

2.4 Summary of review

The dynamism in the current world society has engulfed every facet of human life including family life. Today, modernization and globalization have caused the erosion of traditional life style due to transformation from rural livelihood to urban lifestyles. Urbanization and general societal changes engender spirits of individualism and isolation.

Many individuals prefer independence and autonomy and do not consider family union as vital. Demographic transition has also led to the consideration of family planning and birth control. Considered alongside other social vagaries, single family life forms have become the fashion in vogue. This trend however does not go without a price. The price is the injury it inflicts on the society caused by emergence of

numerous social Malays. This situation of course informs the problem statement of this proposed study.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Area of study

The study area is Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Obudu is a geopolitical entity among the eighteen geopolitical units that formed the local government systems in the state. It is one of the five local government areas that comprise the Northern Senatorial district of the state. It falls among other sister local government in the zone namely, Obanliku, Bekwarra, Ojoja and Yala.

Interms of its ecological characteristics it falls within the tropical savannah ecotone with pronounced wet and dry seasons that influence the economic and social life of the people. The original inhabitants speak the “Bete” language and their principal occupation is arable farming with taints of mixed farming.

The existence of Obudu ranch resort offers the area the prospect of a tourist destination and coupled with the Federal College of Education (FCE) Obudu, an urban society is emerging with the anticipated attendant perspective of individualism and its culmination in single parents’ preferences by some members of its population.

3.2 Population of the study

The study population comprises students of public secondary schools in the state. Furthermore it is limited to junior secondary classes where all children of single parentage were surreptitiously drawn using gross interview procedure for all students in attendance in class.

3.3 Sampling technique

The technique employed involves area or cluster sampling where particular ratio of schools were drawn from each area on the basis of location such as urban/rural, riverine/mainland, accessible/difficult terrain. The sample comprised of one hundred and twenty (120) primary school teachers.

3.4 Instrument(s) for data collection

Closed – ended structure questionnaire was employed in the process of data collection to elicit responses from respondents.

3.5 Method of data collection

Data was collected based on the “concept of clandestine elimination” method where all the students in a particular class will be interviewed using the same instrument but later discriminated based on their individual identities as (single parents) or (Dual parentage) or (Dual parentage). The two groups will be assessed and compared.

3.6 Method of data analysis

Data was analysed using one-way analysis of variance for determination of individual background of single-parented individuals.

Table 1: Analysis of parameters of impact of single parenting on the psychosocial development of primary school children in Obundu, LGA Cross River State

S/N	PSYCHOSOCIAL PARAMETERS OF PARENTING	RESPONSE RATING BY TEACHERS				
		A	SA	D	SD	TOTAL
1	Cordial or harmonious relationship of single parents children with other pupils	22	18	42	38	120
2	Active participation in lessons	15	26	43	35	119
3	Traits of inadequate attention	41	44	18	16	119
4	Traits of introvertism or recluseneble	48	36	17	19	120
5	Egocentric or selfish tenderness	45	38	23	12	118
6	Development of poor sense of belonging	16	28	40	33	117
7	Spirit of accommodation and tolerance	24	35	32	29	120
8	Traits of gregariousity or societal warmth	15	19	42	43	119
9	Extra motivation to laming	14	24	40	41	119
10	Nature of relationship with teachers	40	36	22	20	118

IV. Results

4.1 Hypothesis testing

Values depicted on the table above were subjected to one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) following the null hypothesis which is restated below:

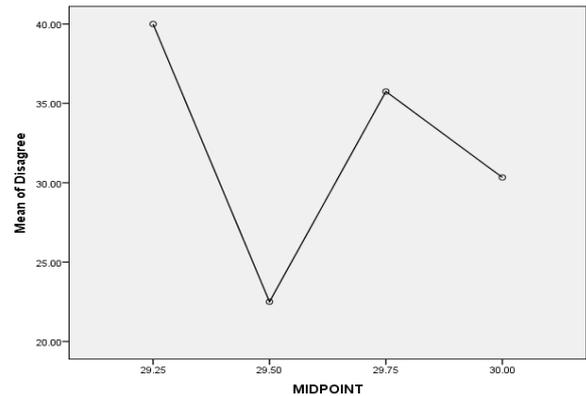
Ho: there is no significant difference in the psychosocial development of single parentage children in the area under investigation.

Table 2: One way test of Homogeneity of variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Strongly Agree	1.653	2	6	.268
Agree	1.673	2	6	.265
Disagree	1.731	2	6	.255
Strongly Disagree	.505	2	6	.627

Table 3: ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strongly Agree	Between Groups	112.983	3	37.661	.401	.758
	Within Groups	563.417	6	93.903		
	Total	676.400	9			
Agree	Between Groups	780.083	3	260.028	1.639	.277
	Within Groups	951.917	6	158.653		
	Total	1732.000	9			
Disagree	Between Groups	308.983	3	102.994	.833	.523
	Within Groups	741.917	6	123.653		
	Total	1050.900	9			
Strongly Disagree	Between Groups	442.983	3	147.661	1.327	.350
	Within Groups	667.417	6	111.236		
	Total	1110.400	9			



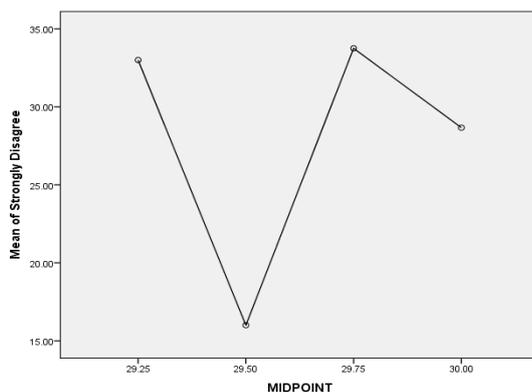
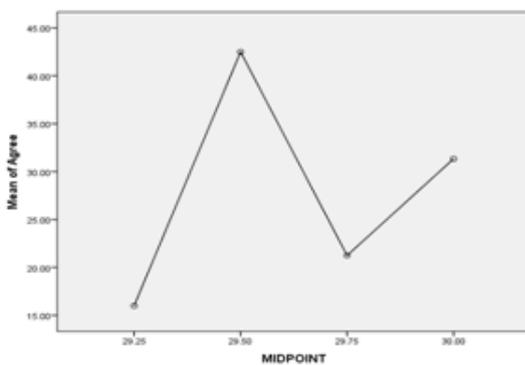
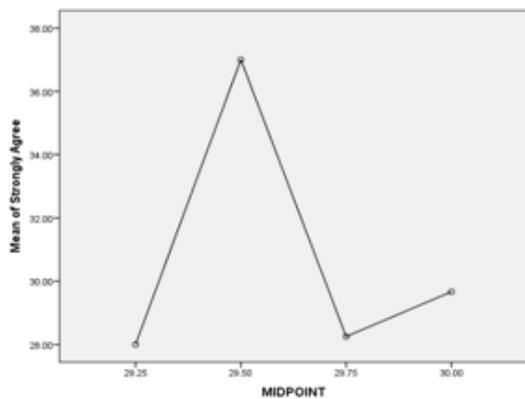
4.2 Results/Findings

The results from the data analysis which was through one way test of homogeneity of variances and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The Levene Statistic in the result of the test showed that there is no significant difference among the variances (Strongly Agree 1.653, Agree 1.673, Disagree 1.731 and Strongly Disagree 0.505), since ($p < 0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance. Also, the results from mean plot further illustrated and revealed the homogeneity (between and within groups) of the means about the midpoint. Hence the null hypotheses H_0 was accepted while the alternative hypothesis H_1 was rejected. The result provided a substantive evidence to adjudge that there is no significant variation between single parentage and psychosocial development of single parents' children in primary schools in Obudu and that the homogeneity assumptions of the variance is met by the research.

Following the parameters employed the responses elicited indicated that there was a strong opposition the point of a cordial relation of single parents' children in the class. This borders on the responses to item 1 as depicted on the table. This trait tends to support to the earlier work of [1] in their psychological development theories which states that development is an ongoing process which takes place throughout one's life span and failure to meet psychological needs of a child at any stage will lead to personality disorder. This position was later re-enacted by [8] to the effect that a single parents child may come from a domestic mellieu where there are of dearth of play mates or others around to provide the social warmth.

Further affirmation to items two and three regarding participation in class and attentiveness respectively indicated that, such children fall short of the essence. These inadequacies may be attributed to a number of causes which has a gross underlying factor of deprivation. This situation brings to bear results of findings by [8], and [9] emphasized that single parents often have less time for general supervision and general monitoring of their children. It may equally be

Mean Plot



added that the lack of attention to the needs of their children may be explained based on the psychology of the parents who may be imbued with poor mental equanimity arising from lack of succor from a partner or spouse this situation may yield a system of negative parenting earlier recognized. This recognition was further strengthened by the position held by [4] that children from single parents' homes are likely to suffer deprivation and denial of rights and opportunities.

The homogeneity of the attributes of single parents' pupils is reflected on the response pattern provided by the respondents as can be further observed from items 5-10 on table 1. Egocentric or selfish inclination received high positive affirmation as can be seen by the rating values of A- 48 and SA 38 as against D 23 and SD-12. It is also evident by the response rating on items 6 (sense of belonging) where positive affirmation is low in ranking. Right through items 6-10 while reflecting well developed personality traits the single –parent child is low in ranking suggesting that they have convergent poor development personalities.

These recognitions have earlier been explored by earlier studies conducted by scholars in the field of psychology on the mental development of a single parent's child. A few of such works available in the literature are studies conducted [7] which revealed that parenting styles have significant impacts on early Child's mental health. These scholars noted that mental health occurs at an early age. And that throughout the prenatal into that first years of life, the Childs brain and body develop rapidly making the children to be very vulnerable to external influences. [7], also noted that parents are the closet environment to the child and that whatever the parents do will affect the child's development. These and many other positions have been held concerning single parenting and mental development of children.

Following [5] "the factor of single parenting and psychosocial development of individuals is receiving increased attention by psychologist, sociologist and social anthropologist because of the diversity in family rates, non-married sing parents, and remarriage among couples. it is equally our opinion in this report that attention should equally paid to this trend in the developing world such as Nigeria where poverty and deprivation are on the increase thereby exacerbating incidence which may significantly be traced to adults with this kind of child hood background.

V. Conclusion

By and large, from our conclusion there is a significant of single parenting on the psychosocial development of children. It is therefore recommended that school councilor's, social workers, and others in allied field should take steps to address

the phenomenon single parenting as it affects child's development.

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