



The Impact of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students in Kpando Municipality

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at the impact of single parents homes on the academic performance of pupils or students in the Kpando Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana. A total of twenty students from three Senior High Schools (SHS) were sampled for this study and the target group was SHS students. Simple random sampling was used to collect data for the research. The research instruments used for this work were questionnaire to students, interviews and opinionaire. The response of the questionnaire was analysed using (SPSS) and Manova programmes, version 16 and tables. After the comparison of the academic performance of the students from broken homes and non-broken homes, it was realized that broken homes actually had negative effects on the academic performance of the students. In view of this, it is recommended that, society in general and elders of families in particular, should be made to ensure that parents, who fulfil their responsibilities of their children's education, provide them with accommodation and shelter whether or not their marriages are in fact, special priority should be given to students from broken homes in disbursement of funds created by the government.

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Background to the Study

Education is vital in the development of every nation. Based on this, governments in Ghana devote as much as one third of their national budget to education (Nketsia, 2005). The government's budget allocation is all geared towards development as they believe that without an educated populace, socio- economic development cannot be realized. Basically, though, adult members of the family who are the mothers and fathers, have joint responsibility of looking after their children. They pull resources together to provide for the physical, social, emotional, educational and financial needs of their children so that they could grow up to become useful members of the family and the society at large.

Children in Ghana especially learn acceptable norms of behaviour, attitudes, values as well as certain vocational skills by imitating their parents and other adults in the home and community. For instance, as boys follow their fathers either to the farm or help them with their vocation, they also look up to their parents for their needed support; whereas girls learn to cook and do household chores by assisting their mothers in the home. In addition,

children are sent to school to receive formal education. It is required that their educational needs like school uniforms, fees and books are provided for them by parents. Parents are also expected to assist their children to study and do their homework. Parents may even have to employ the services of teachers for extra tuition.

However, not all children have that opportunity to grow up in families where both parents are present to provide their basic needs. One lesson is that the bond between families may be broken in cases of separation, transfer, divorce or death among others. This then suggests that bringing up children in such situations would be the sole responsibility of one or the surviving parent. Research findings in both developed and developing countries have shown that single home or one parent rather than both parents is gradually becoming a "norm" in most societies (Alhassan, 2000).

Awake (2001), stated that, there were more lone-parent families in UK (United Kingdom) than any other country in Europe. Broken parents or single now head almost one in five United Kingdom families with children under 18 years, compared with one in seven Danish families

and one in eight in Germany and France. Of every ten single parents in Britain, nine are women. The traditional, or so called nuclear family that consist of a father and a mother together with their children now learn to be one “family concept” among others. Single parenting is more prevalent because of divorce and separation. Until recently, single parenting was alien to the Ghanaian family culture. Where they exist at all, they are ignored as exceptional phenomenon. However, the aggressive influence of western culture has impacted so much on traditional family value in Ghana. This coupled with increasing socio-economic demands on traditional family life and the attendant social complexities have worked to erode strong positive family values associated with traditional Ghanaian families. Consequently, single parenting hitherto considered an aberration in the recent past is now gaining societal acceptance; but not without its negative tendencies.

Today, marriage is more stimulating and fun, however, it can also be more difficult. Women want more from marriage than their mothers and grandmothers expected. They want quality, a good lover, a good friend, career possibilities for themselves and children as well. In the Ghanaian cultural setting, which is dominated by matrilineal, raising children is the responsibility of women. It is therefore expected that more females will be victims of single parents or broken homes than males. When there is divorce or separation, it is more likely that, children would be left in the care of their mothers than fathers because most of Ghana’s societies are matrilineal (Alhassan, 2000).

Single parenting is a situation in which one of the two individuals (i.e., mother or father) involved in the conception of the child becomes solely responsible for the upbringing of the child. Single parenthood arises when either the male or female parent decides to produce and raise a child or children outside of wedlock. It could also come about as a result of divorce, separation of various kinds or death of any of the spouses thus, leaving the responsibility of raising the children to the ‘surviving’ partner. In the last few decades, attempts have been made by scholars, psychologists, educationists, counselors and students of child psychology to determine the nature and extent of the influence of single parenting on the emotional and physical development of the child. Example, most of these studies have focused more on adolescents and teenagers raised by female single parents. Not much effort has been put into adopting a more holistic approach to evaluating comprehensively the totality of relationship between the psychological well-being and academic performance of children raised by single parents.

The Concept of Family

Generally the family can be seen as a group of people who have biological, emotional or legal ties to each other (McDaniel, 1990). In different cultures the term “family” may mean different things. Though the extended family is in

existence but to Jallinoja, (2000), it has changed to smaller units- the nuclear family and even to smaller single-parent families. To him, family was earlier seen as an institution, but nowadays, the family is based on the intimate relationship between two adults. Jallinoja added that if the relationship is not working, the family will probably be broken. He concluded that broken homes give rise to single-parent families. The term single-parent family is used when a family is formed of one custodial parent and a number of dependent children. In the past, the death of a parent was more likely to disrupt families than was divorce (Amato, 2001).

Nowadays, a single-parent family is usually formed after parental divorce. Of all the single-parent families in Finland, about 88% are mother headed. The increase in the proportion of children living only with their mothers is accounted for mainly by a rise in the proportion of children living with the divorced mother, although there has also been a dramatic rise in the proportion of children born to never-married mothers (Hernandez, 1988; Bumpass, 1990). The amount and quality of contact with the non-custodial parent, usually the father, varies a great deal, some children losing the contact totally. It has been estimated that in the United States 15 to 25% of the non-custodial fathers maintain weekly visits even several years after the divorce (Thompson, 1994).

A choice parent is a parent who voluntarily becomes a single parent to a biological or adopted child from the very beginning, rather than by a later separation from a partner. On a metaphorical level, some may argue that artificial insemination or sperm donor situations are the only true cases of single parenting, because in the other cases, the parent was present at the time of conception and may very well still be part of a child's life. A woman may voluntarily become a choice parent by artificial insemination by the use of a conception device with donor sperm or simply by intercourse. Where intercourse is with a sperm donor for the purpose of impregnation, it is known as natural insemination (Bergman, 2007). Additionally, a parent can also choose to adopt a child while not being married or having a life partner. Another popular term for women who are choice parents is single mothers by choice.

Basically, a broken home is a house containing a family that is set apart due to tensions and certain problems. It is where the father and mother do not stay with each other because of their differences in terms of living and perspective in life. In several cases, broken home is usually caused by lack of communication and understanding of one’s view in society and one’s own selfishness (Marky-Chavez, 2009). Marky-Chavez also maintains that, financial instability can be a root of broken home because both father and mother can no longer support their children; and this affects the studies of the children. In a rare study that examined the effects of both father and mother absence, Heard (2007) found that father changes (e.g., father absence,

single-mother home) increased the risk of school disciplinary problems, while mother changes (e.g., mother absence, single-father home) reduced college expectations of the children. Heard also found that, for each year a child lived in either a single-father or single-mother home, there was a substantial reduction in the grade point average of the child. Heard concluded that living in two-parent homes encouraged the study habits and appropriate behaviour of adolescents.

Negative Effects of Broken Home

Literature indicates that some of the most significant differences between traditional two-parent families and single families are that the latter experience reduced income, and/or poverty, lack of a support system, lowered self-esteem, reduced personal satisfaction, and increased time pressure. (Booth, Kinder, Harland, Wilkin & Wakefield, 2002). As an individual attempts to balance work and family, role strain, conflict and stress often result. Voydanoff and Donnelly (1999) conceptualized role strain as the individual's appraisal of the level of conflicts between roles and of the degree of what was experienced from attempting to meet multiple role demands.

Consequences to the children of single parent families included less support, greater high school dropout, less parental attention and supervision at home, and less money for their needs. Evidence shows that these families face a greater variety of hardships (stressors) than do the two-parent families (Booth et al, 2002). Problems of single-parents experience in association with having to go to work include the lack of support in managing the home and children (Burden, 2006). Single parents are constantly pressed for time. London (2006) found that population of single mothers had reduced chances of completing school, decreased opportunities for marriage, and increased risks that public assistance will be needed to maintain the economic viability of the family.

A study by Mackay (2005) stated that those living with a single parent were about three times more likely to kill themselves or end up in the hospital after an attempted suicide by the age of 26 than children living with two parents. However this only happened to 2.2 percent of girls and 1 percent of boys.

Studies have indicated that disruption of family life causes acute stress to all family members and it may also have disadvantageous long-term effects on the psychological well-being of the offspring (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1999; Hetherington, 2001; Kessler, 2001; O'Connor, 2004). There is some evidence that childhood family background is related to criminal offending in adulthood. Parallel findings have previously also emerged and revealed that males who were labelled “ill-fated” (i.e. had experienced a single-parent family in childhood) had committed registered crimes more often than other males (Rantakallio, 1992; Raine, 1996). In the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development it was

found that parental separation, as well as poor parental child-rearing behaviour and antisocial child behaviour, strongly predicted later criminality. Childhood family background combined with other risk factors appears to be particularly strongly associated with later criminality (Farrington, 1995).

Single parents endure a lot of stress raising children in today's society. Positive things are never discussed. Constitutions speak about our rights as a citizen and nowhere in the constitutions was it stated that single parenting is illegal, lower class or un-human (Mitter, 1992). There are various reasons why single parenting occurs. A person may want to be single and have a child by opting to adopt or artificial insemination but majority of single parent homes occur by unforeseeable circumstances such as sudden deaths or abandonment by a parent. Wilson (1997) cited in Heste and Ratford (2002) clarifying the relation between single parenthood (separation and divorce families) and the well-being of children by suggesting that parental separation and divorce is not just one event but a long term process and that it may trigger later damaging effects. Hester and associate concluded that single parenthood which comes as a result of divorce leaves children vulnerable to a heightened risk of physical and sexual abuse.

According to Marky-Chavez (2009), a broken home can make a child insecure. This insecurity comes from the thought that they no longer had a complete family where they belong. Furthermore, these insecurities are heightened by friends around with a complete family. The insecurities, self-doubt and lack of confidence in a child can eventually make him uninterested in school. Furthermore, at school such children may show signs of withdrawal and have a difficult time concentrating in studies. The break-up of the family through the separation of their parents can trigger more reactions of children that may lead to fear, sadness, yearning, worry, conflicting loyalty to their parent and anger, lower self-confidence, heightened anxiety and loneliness, the depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts and even attempt suicide. Many of these feelings may persist. A child that is a product of a broken home sometimes suffers depression and low self-esteem. In some cases, it makes the child vulnerable to depression, drugs and alcohol addiction and if these conditions are left untreated, it can make the child mentally unstable. The children may even attempt to kill themselves if they can no longer hold all the misfortunes which they think are killing them softly (Marky-Chavez, 2009). When separation occurs while children are younger than five years of age they are particularly vulnerable to emotional conflicts at the time of the separation of their parents. They will frequently cling more to their parents and ‘regress’ to bedwetting. Older children frequently withdraw from home life and seek intimacy elsewhere (Pezzin, 2000)

Furthermore, other disturbing outcomes for teenagers include increased aggression, loss of self-confidence and particularly a sense of loneliness. In some

cases also, those teenagers who experience a broken home may engage in early sexual activity, substance abuse or dependence, hostile behaviour and depression are all more likely to follow divorce. These reactions are more likely to happen if the parents divorced prior to age 5, slightly less so if they divorce after age 10 (Smith, 2001). Broken home has many negative effects on the children that live through them. Broken homes are a tough situation to deal with. A child in this situation needs a lot of love and even extra attention just to feel that he/she is not alone (William Evans, 2000).

Academic Performance of Children from Broken Homes

Keith (2000) argued that parental divorce diminishes the economic and social resources available to the children and this in turn has negative consequences on the children's academic attainment because when there is not enough money in the home to support the children, they may have to find means of supporting themselves economically or drop out of school. Zaden (2002) indicated that although only 16% of the families in America are fatherless, they constitute 46% of the household living in poverty. According to Zaden (2005) children in particular tend to be the victims. Uhlenberg (1998) also realised that single-parents typically have too little to provide a healthy environment for themselves and their children. Hetherington (2006) found that the demands on children from single-parent families lead to short attention span and distractibility in children which results in a drop in scores achieved in school. In this case, the demands from home on the children might be such that they will be unable to concentrate in school and therefore their short attention span will result in lower scores which will lead to a fall in their academic performance. It is commonly assumed that two biological parents provide the optimal family environment for healthy child development and that any deviation from this such as single-parent families would pose many problems for the child, (Keith, 1999).

Approximately, one third of the family populations are growing with just a single parent (Bates, 1992). Regardless of the single parent's race or gender, single parenting generally is a difficult job. Making sure that a child is taught properly in all areas of life is a task that all single parents fear. To believe that your children's success and foundation come solely from that one parent is a thought that hunts single parent's thoughts. Children's backwardness in school is caused among other factors by insufficient sleep, rejection and instability in the home. According to Lovell (2002), children from one handed families encounter many social problems and these problems could lead to waywardness, delinquency, and truancy. Farrant (1999) states that backwardness which is one of the effects of single parent homes can contribute to poor academic standards. To him, poor academic performance resulting from backwardness could be the result of emotional stresses and

strains that come as a result of unhappy homes where much more household duties are expected than what the children can do.

Fox (2007) also noted that girls without mothers are more likely to be without individual adult guidance and counselling in the area of academic performance. Shinn (2000) also found in most of his studies that children without fathers in the home, tend to do badly academically especially in quantitative Mathematical skills than children with fathers in the home. In buttressing this position, Gaidubaldi (2003) contended that children of single-parent households exhibit behavioural problems in the school and perform badly academically than they did prior to the separation of their parents. According to the findings of Hetherington (2002) academic performance of boys and girls from single parent families and intact families differ. Females are superior to males in verbal areas of aptitude and achievement tests, whereas males are superior in quantitative tasks. But in single-parent families both male and female children are likely to show the female pattern of higher verbal scores than quantitative scores. Shinn (2007) found in most of his studies that children without fathers in the home tend to do badly academically especially in quantitative skills than with fathers at home.

Studies conducted by Pryor and Rodger (2001) found that children from separated families were disadvantaged in respect of education and socio-economic outcomes in childhood and adulthood compared to children of intact families. They found that 13 percent of children from separated families had poor school grades compared with seven percent from intact families (Pryor and Rodgers, 2001). In another US study, McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) found 16 percent of children dropped out of high school from separated families compared with nine percent from intact families. Evans, Kelly and Wanner (2001) also found that children from separated and divorced families were more likely to drop out of school, even when socio-economic factors were taken into account. Evans et al, (2001) stated that reasons for higher rate of school drop-out and lower attainment levels include the adverse impact of parental conflict (including anxiety and depression); reduced parental encouragement, support and control; and less commitment from step-parents. Evans and others added that school dropout and delinquency are among a host of other possible problematic health and well-being outcomes that have an increased likelihood for children following parental separation, when compared to children of intact families. Lower school achievement outcomes have ramifications for socio-economic factors later in life.

According to Pryor and Rodgers (2001) in UK, the Avon Longitudinal Study of pregnancy and Childhood conducted by O'Connor, Thorpe, Dunn and Golding (1999) found 11 percent of women who had experienced parental divorce as children lived in overcrowded housing as adults, as compared with five percent of other women. Direct

assessment of educational skills (such as reading and arithmetical ability) showed smaller differences between children of separated and intact families than measurement of attainment expressed in terms of final qualifications received or years remaining in school or full-time study (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). These different effect sizes observed when comparing the two measures of educational outcomes could reflect extrinsic constraints on children from separated families completing their education, which might include lack of socio-economic and other resources in such families that facilitate full-time study, and the greater likelihood that children who have experienced parental separation will leave home earlier (Kiernan, 2000, Pryor & Rodgers, 2001).

Economic Hardship of Single Parent Families

According to Millar and Ridge (2001), single parent families are at a higher risk of poverty than couple families, and on average single mothers have poorer health than couple mothers. Many factors influence how children develop in single-parent families: the parent's age, education level, and occupation; the family's income and the family's support network of friends and extended family members (including the non-resident parent, if available). Disadvantages in these factors that often accompany single parenting appear to cause most of this association rather than single parenting itself. Ahuja, Capella and Taylor (2009) state that even though salaries have increased immensely over the years, single parents still generally have a low economic profile: median income of a single parent is less than \$30,000 per year in the United States. Taylor et al (2009) also cited Eckel (1999) to support their research by stating that 41 percent of all single parent households live below the poverty line. They moved on to say that because single parents typically raise their children without the help of partners, they are often exposed to more stress than their traditional counterparts.

Nevertheless, the researcher is of the view that in Ghana, truancy is an issue that affects many people, because truancy has been associated with various criminal behaviours such as vandalism, burglary and drug use. Also, truancy can be the symptoms for other emotional/mental, economic and family situations. Therefore, the problem of defining truancy lies in the concept at which each researcher believes in, and this affects the definition of each researcher; some say, truancy depends on the school's criteria used in categorizing truancy, while some say it differs from school to school's handbook for defining truancy. Some authors also say, it depends on the total number of lessons/classes missed and so on. Long working hours away from home present less time for household tasks such as cooking or cleaning (Norgaard, Bruns, Haudrup Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2007). Shopping trips have to be coordinated around work schedules and therefore can barely be planned in advance. To Taylor et al (2009) due to time constraints,

quick meal solutions such as fast-food restaurants or ready-to-eat food are extremely popular with single parents as the single parent can enjoy some quality time with their children without wasting time preparing a meal (Thiagarajan, Ponder, Lueg, Lokken Worthy & Taylor, 2000, Eckel, 2002).

Since single parents have little time and capacity to shop, they do not have the time to look out for deals such as in-store promotions or coupons, even though they have low incomes and must economize wherever possible. Norgaard et al (2007) found that not just the parents spend most of their day away from home; the children equally have an immense amount of obligations to fulfill. Next to being at school for most of the day, various after-school activities such as sports or music lessons keep children busy. Because children are primarily required to fulfill their daily obligations and leisure time activities, their convenience to purchasing as well as the willingness to prepare food is small (Norgaard et al., 2007). Ahuja (2002) noticed that there is a scarcity of childcare in the USA. This is essential as single parent's full time work combined with this scarcity of childcare results in single parents often taking their children with them on shopping trips. This means that children are now actively participating in family purchases: For instance shopping for groceries now becomes a family activity where each family member may express their opinions on products and thus influences the decision making (Thiagarajan, Ponder, Lueg, Lokken Worthy & Taylor, 2009).

Investigation of factors that affect pupils' academic performance has produced several findings by researchers. For example, Clemens and Oelke (2002) and Emeke (2007) have attributed the cause of poor academic performance to a combination of personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to the individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability. While institutional factors are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences and school related factors- student/lecturer rapport, teacher related factors, accommodation and living conditions. The home has a great influence on students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2007), the state of the home affects the individual since parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, parents and the individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. In Olutola (2004) cited in Ichado (2007) the environment which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance at school.

Olutola added that, other aspects of parental environment such as the structure of the family have been grossly neglected. He stated that parent's constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could

lead to poor academic performance in school. He also said the family lays the psychosocial, moral and spiritual foundations in the overall development of the child. While the mother's significant role in this cannot be over-emphasized. To him, studies on father-child relationship suggest that the presence of a father in the home influences significantly the development of a child. Olutola, (2007) concluded that, parenthood is a responsibility requiring the full cooperation of both parents who must ensure the total development of their offspring(s).

Structurally, a family is either broken or intact. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons; death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never completed (Conkline, 2006). This analysis becomes necessary because life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Such families are faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources (Children's Defence Fund 2004), assumptions of new roles and responsibilities, establishment of new patterns in intra-familial interaction and reorganization of routines and schedules (Agulanna, 1999). These conditions are not conducive for effective parenting. This is because when the single parent is overburdened by responsibilities and by their own emotional reaction to their situation, they often become irritable, impatient and insensitive to their children's needs (Nzewunwah, 2000).

Broken Home and Delinquency

In 2003 Kierkus & Baer reported that adverse family environments are a major risk factor in predicting future delinquency. To them, studies have shown that children with parents who end their marriage in divorce are more likely to have higher levels of depression and engage in a greater amount of antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour is thought to develop due to lack of attachment, unsupportive parenting, improper supervision, and child neglect or abuse (Kierkus & Baer, 2003). This is becoming a pressing social issue, as the divorce rates globally are extremely high. Recently there have been a large number of studies trying to gain insight on risk factors that may predict later adolescent criminal behaviour. In 2005 statistics conducted in Canada showed that families with one parent are more likely to raise non-conforming children than families with the traditional two-parent structure. The study moved ahead to suggest that although as policy and social work have been implemented to support children and families in need, it is important to get a better understanding of what strategies can be used to develop and protect children from falling into a life of adult criminal behaviour.

Furthermore, Kierkus and Baer (2003) stated that marital disruption can be especially harmful for child development when the consequence is the child being raised by the parent of the opposite gender. To them, the majority of single-parent families are headed by females; many

researchers have suggested that often boys are more affected by the breakdown of their family system. Kierkus and associate opined that, the opposite-parent hypothesis is based on the notion that a single mother or father cannot provide a proper socialization environment for a child of the opposing gender. They added that broken home may even lead to a parent's hostility towards the opposite sex, including his or her own children. In 2003, Kierkus and Baer came out that attachment, a major component of social control theories, as a plausible explanation for why non-traditional family structures may be linked to child delinquency (Kierkus & Baer, 2002). Secure parent-child attachment is necessary for successful child rearing. The more attached a child is to their parent, the more time they will spend with them, and consequently, the more the parent will be able to contribute direct supervision and guidance to their child's development (Kierkus & Baer, 2002). If there is weakened attachment, the child may grow to be indifferent to the parent's opinions and thus be delinquent despite parental presence. Although attachment cannot completely explain the high risk of a single parent family, it is a contributing predictive factor.

Haapasalo & Moilanen (2004) examined whether child maltreatment would predict adult criminal behaviour in young inmates, using both self-report and official data sources. After analyzing 89 male inmates they determined that childhood physical, psychological, and emotional abuse and neglect were significant predictors of criminality (Haapasalo & Moilanen, 2004). The study revealed an association between physical abuse and later violent offences. In contrast, psychological abuse and neglect were major predictors of property crimes, such as vandalism and theft. Although differences were detected in this study, different types of maltreatment tend to co-occur, making the findings of these isolated correlations often difficult to identify. Kaplow (2007) also studied child maltreatment, but focused on the hypothesis that children with an earlier onset of maltreatment would be at greater risk for poor psychological functioning in adulthood. Results indicated that children who were maltreated before the age of six reported greater symptoms of depression and anxiety later in life.

In contrast to their hypothesis, results also showed that individuals that were older at the time of the maltreatment demonstrated greater externalization of problems as adults and a greater probability of not completing their high school diploma. However, overall, the findings suggested an earlier onset of abuse and neglect was more predictive of negative psychological outcomes compared to maltreatment occurring later in life (Kaplow, 2007). Other researchers have studied the effects of ineffective parenting on the development of self-control and reported that many delinquents lack proper discipline, supervision and affection in their childhood (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). They noted that in order for

self-control to be taught, a parent must be able to monitor their child's behaviour, recognize their inappropriate behaviour as deviant, and punish them accordingly. The problem for single mothers is that they may not have the time to monitor their child's behaviour, and they may not have the means to punish them. Many single-parent mothers are forced to work long hours and therefore allow their children to do a lot more without any interference. They are also not necessarily aware of their child's misbehavior (Gottfredson&Hirschi, 1990).

Furthermore, when truancy is recognized by others, parents have the tendency to blame external sources outside their control. This only teaches the child to externalize their problems and does not hold them accountable for their wrongdoings. Although it is possible for a single parent to properly raise a child, a great deal of time and energy must be devoted to giving the child effective support and guidance, a job that would otherwise be shared in a two-parent family. Many see this as an impossible task, especially when the single parent is the sole breadwinner (Gottfredson&Hirschi, 1990).Wadsworth (2000) examined the effects of parents' work experiences on their children. Not only did he confirm the hypothesis that parents' jobs affect their ability to supervise their children, but his work also showed that parents' negative feelings towards work affect children's educational aspirations, how they perform in school, and their feelings of self-efficacy and attachment. To Wadsworth all these results are characteristics that have been correlated with an increased risk of delinquency. He added that low job security and lack of financial stability, two factors often found in single-parent families, have been strongly correlated to negative family life and poor child development. Wadsworth ahead to say that if parents portray their negative work experience as resulting from external forces, there may be detrimental effects to their child's level of commitment and motivation to succeed in life. He concluded that this will further weaken social bonds to pro-social activities, such as school.

Predictors of a Child's Post-divorce Adjustment

Most children initially experience parental divorce as stressful and display disruptions in emotional, social and cognitive developments, but why some children continue to manifest divorce-related difficulties or develop behavioural or social problems long after the marital separation is mostly unexplained (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 2004). Kalter, Kloner, Schreierand Okla (2007) presented six hypotheses to explain the ways in which divorce may affect a child's development. According to them, statistically parental adjustment hypothesis received the strongest support. They move on to say that custodial parent is psychologically able to provide a loving effective parent-child relationship; children will be buffered from stresses the divorce can engender. If the custodial parent is deeply distressed by economic hardship, inter-parental hostility, and the role of

being a single-parent without help and support, the child may be negatively affected.

Father absence- the child needs a regular, ongoing, positive relationship with the father in order to develop into a well-adjusted person.

Economic distress- poverty accounts for various troubles of children of divorced single-mother families.

Multiple life stresses - an accumulation of multiple stressful circumstances (for example residential shifts, loss of job, remarriage) can cause adjustment problems

Inter-parental hostility-- parents who fight and blame each other stimulate anxiety and anger in their children, so that they may later copy aggression as a way of resolving problems

Parental adjustment-- a well-adjusted parent can continue to provide effective care, guidance and support for his/her children. The continuity of effective parenting is seen as facilitating a child's development into a healthy adult.

Short-term crisis- turmoil of the initial marital disruption gradually diminishes, and a new equilibrium is achieved eventually.For example, maternal depression does not necessarily have a direct effect on a child's adjustment, but instead the influence is mediated through family processes (i.e. mother's diminished ability to effective parenting). And yet, some variables moderate the relationship between other variables. Children with difficult temperaments (i.e. irresponsible, socially and psychologically immature) are expected to be more adversely effected by disruption in family life than children with easy temperaments. Thus, individual variables such as temperament can moderate the effects of the family process on a child's adjustment and well-being (Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan & Anderson, 2002).

One of man's vital needs is to belong to a group. It is described as a desire for affectionate relations with people in general and for a place in a group (Jorgensen & Henderson, 2006). If an individual belongs to a group and he is accepted by members, his/her influence are felt and he is missed when absent. He or she contributes in a way to keep the group alive and play a role. This gives him or her sense of security and comfort. On the other hand, if he/she is not accepted, by his/her colleagues and indifferent attitude between him/her and the rest of the members Thus feelings of inferiority and lack of affection exist and hardly considered him or her as belonging to the group. In the human society, the weak, the feeble and old are always cared for even if they do not continue in any way in the running of the society (Riker & Brisbane, 2006). This is because they belong to a group and the group owns them that duty. According to Robin (1992), an individual having a feeling that he or she belongs to a group whom he or she owes a duty and responsibility, enjoy their support an encouragement would like to let them down

The study also reviews the related literature under the following sub- headings:

“The Impact of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students in Kpando Municipality”

- (i) Single home
- (ii) Types of single homes
- (iii) Causes of single homes and its effects
- (iv) Social problems associated with single homes.

Broken Home and Types of single Homes

Hurlock, (2004) indicated that single homes can occur in many forms such as:

- A. Divorce
- B. Separation
- C. Desertion
- D. Widowed
- E. Inability to pay the bride price

Divorce

Divorce is the legal dissolution or the formal termination of marriage. Divorce is becoming quite common these days even in societies that were known to be close-knit or held fast to the traditional norms of unity, community and cohesion. The World Book Encyclopedia (1994) explains divorce as the ending by law of a valid marriage. It is usually distinguished from an annulment in which a court makes a declaration that a marriage is invalid because of some defect at the time of the ceremony. Jorgenson and Henderson (1990), state that divorce is a legal termination of a marriage contract.

Separation

Ricker and Brisbane (1992), cited in Afful- Broni (2005) state that the separation is where one spouse moves out of the relationship with notice. In this case, both parties remain married to each other though they live apart. The couples agree to separate and live apart with legal requirement to meet. A couple can also separate with legal sanctions determined by the court. In legal separation an order may be introduced by the court, setting down certain conditions which the couple must follow. These conditions may include financial support, custody of children, visitation rights and division of property. Knox (2000), says that separation or limited divorce is sought by couples who for religious or personal reasons do not want a divorce or do not have grounds for annulment.

Desertion

This is the situation where a partner walks out and breaks off all contact. Jorgenson and Henderson (1990) postulate that to desert someone is to withdraw abandon or fail himself or her in time of need. Stewart (2006) refers to desertion as the act by which a person abandons or forsakes, with or without justification, his or her family, thereby, denouncing and evading both lawful and normal responsibilities.

Widowhood

This is a period of loss of a spouse before remarriage. Schlesinger, (2000) defined widowhood as the shift to single

or broken parenthood due to the death of one of the parents. Wives are more likely than husbands to left with children under 18 years of age, and unlikely to remarry. At times help from in-laws after the death of partner is minimum even when the children are young. Smith and Apicelli (2005) stated that a widowed parent is single due to the death of spouse. Widowhood therefore is caused when a spouse dies leaving one either woman or man, behind to care for the children. Often it is the woman who is left behind. (Schlesinger, 2006) Typically wives are younger than their husbands and consequently, even without the sex difference, female's mortality would have a greater probability of leaving their husbands finally, the widowed remarriages status is considered lower for women than men. These facts are also true about the longevity of Ghanaian couples and about widowhood. (Schlesinger, 2006)

Inability to Pay the Bride Price

Schlesinger (2000) showed that broken homes family occurs when the partner fail to marry each other after the first child is born. The number of one-parent unmarried families in the country is related to the number of illegitimate births in that country. According to Smith and Apicelli (2002), United States census figure showed that in 2000 over 1.5 million, children less than 18 years lived in broken homes or single parents' mothers who had never been married.

Causes of Broken Homes

Mindful of many positive fruits of marriage, with all the high regard that indigenious communities across the globe have for it, one would expect that marriage would be kept intact until death. The fact of the matter is that like all other social institutions, marriage has its problems which is not death with can result in broken homes. There are many problems which married couples are likely to face. If care is not taken, challenges and problems may weaken the marriage and finally break it down (Afful-Broni, 2005)

Financial Constraints

According to Afful-Broni (2005) almost any activity or interaction involves some financial commitments. Marriage, whether in rural or urban areas, Christian or not, calls for some expense. Indeed, any serious and financial difficulty that brings prolonged suffering to one partner could lead to an end to the marriage. It is common observation that among Ghanaians living overseas, a major factor that causes separation or divorce is finance (Afful-Broni, 2005). In a situation where one partner is unemployed and depends totally on the other, the stability of the marriage may be threatened. Sometimes a couple's problem may stem from how the family income is spent. If one partner feels money is habitually spent on unnecessary things, she may be worried about the marital union. This can happen when the woman sees the man spending most of the income on lotto,

drinks and frivolous gifts while the family suffers for lack of resources (Afful-Broni, 2005).

Adultery

When a spouse commits adultery and the other partner finds it intolerable to live with him or her, separation may occur which may lead to divorce. Sexual immorality of spouses, according to many experts in the field, is a major cause of conflicts in marriages. The examples are varied such as a spouse having emotional relationship with their house help, or a husband taking on a new wife without or permission of the wife.

According to Fields (2001) sexual relationship outside marriage indicates a clearly divided love, incomplete affection and sign of unfaithfulness towards one's partner. To Fields, that is why when this is detected the offending partner often reacts strongly in an attempt to cover up his or her shame. Fields added that, this result is often that great harm is done to the marriage. Marital unfaithfulness, either on the part of the man or the woman is a leading cause of divorce, and some Christian communities are able to approve of it with a scripture backing.

Interference of In-Laws

Another common and major problem that may affect a smooth marriage is the undue interference or involvement in the affairs of the marriage by in-laws. Such interference may not allow the married couple the kind of privacy and independence they may wish to enjoy (Afful- Broni, 2005). The problem becomes more serious if at the least misunderstanding an in-law interferes by taking sides. Interference by friends and other relatives in decision-making could also be a source of a problem in a marriage. Some parents have too great attachment to their children to the extent that even when they are married, these parents, sometimes with knowing, end up interfering with the running of their homes. This often results in conflicts between the couples and may lead to breaking of the home.

Lack of Communication

Effective communication has, for a very long time been identified as the single most important factor in any relationship or interaction (Wiles & Lovell, 2000; Musaa 2003, cited in Afful- Broni, 2005) It is common fundamental advice usually offered to couples preparing to get married, that they must be sensitive and caring enough to stay open and honest, articulating clearly whatever they wish the other partner to be aware of. Effective information flow corrects misconceptions and solves many misunderstanding. It is commonly understood that once married, a partner's best friend is his/her partner. Married couples who do not share information with each other are likely to have problems. Thus partners who keep things themselves are doing harm to both the self and the marriage.

Cultural Factors

Benyin, (1991) cited in Afful-Broni (2005) points to some of the cultural factors that cause broken homes. In his study, he found that, conflicts may arise when husbands and wife have different cultural backgrounds or when they develop different patterns of behaviours after marriage. For example, breakdown of tradition in Ghana is another contributory factor. Sadly enough the canker of moral degeneration has drowned the society resulting in people not paying heed to the moral norms of the society. Thus married people are engaging in illicit activities outside their marriage which can cause divorce or death at times or end at least in endless quarrels (Afful-Broni, 2005).

Effects of the Single Home on the Academic Performance of the Child

The single home has a long term period on the development of the child. Here, the personality of the child is at risk. Children from broken homes tend to be permanently deprived of opportunities to experience a reasonable amount of pleasant feelings like joy, love and affection. Their broken home environments expose them to anger, depression, aggression, untruthfulness and quarrelsomeness. Such children are emotionally unstable. Most obvious behaviour problems to occur at the time of parents separation is tension in the house hold which usually makes children sometimes feel rejected and disappointed by the parents action. This, at times, results in delinquency on the part of the children. In their assertion, Regoli and Hewitt (2000) state that the relationship between single parent families are more likely to become delinquent than children from both-parent families

Children from broken homes at times find it difficult to adjust to school life and therefore do not perform well in school. Some of these children go to school without pocket money and they are in many cases found in torn clothes. Due to separation, the divorced live in reduced economic circumstances which affect the academic performance of their children. Children from divorced parents tend to have lower educational and socio-economic achievement (Baker & Drydent, 2006)

Stantrock (2005) also stated that adjustment problems of step family children and adolescent are much like those children and adolescent of divorced parents and academic problems, low self-esteem, early sexual activity and delinquency. Some divorce mothers also vent their anger on their children in the process of disciplining them thereby influencing their behaviour negatively. This at times may eventually leads to low achievement in school. The effects of divorce on children depend on the child's age and gender (Wallestein, 2006). Pre-schoolers may be anxious and fearful and sometimes believe they are the cause of their parent's problems. Children of elementary age often focus on the departure of one parent and fantasize that parents will be reconciled. Adolescents tend to be angry but are more

likely to understand the nature of the conflict between their parents.

According to Block & Ajerde (1986) cited in Afful-Broni (2005) boys seem to be more vulnerable to divorce than girls. They often display adjustment problems in schools and recover more slovenly from the effect of divorce. Boys have lower academic achievement and more incidents of disciplinary problems (Conidubaldi et al 2003). They are also more likely to lack concentration, drop out of school or become a “loner” (Cornacchia Olsen & Nikerson, 2000). Teachers can help students who are suffering the effect of divorce by providing empathy and offering guidance and friendship. Teachers should refer students to the counselor, if the behaviour becomes distressing. It sometimes helps children if they know they are not alone and that perhaps as half the students in their class are facing the same problem.

Aggrey, (2010) emphasized that the physical breaking down of the home itself does not pose serious problems. It is rather the psychological breakdown of the house that we have to worry about. This problem of broken home has assumed considerable dimension in Ghana today. Unsatisfactory and demoralized homes characterized by tension, conflict, discord or chronic disagreement between parents apparently tend to make the child unhappy, emotionally, disorganized, feeling unloved and rejected. The persistence of this unfavorable situation will eventually lead to the child’s low academic performance in school and will negatively affect his career and future achievement. Single parent fathers often feel sad over the fact that their family unit has been broken up. A break in a family unit therefore could result in emotional stress and strain on the child and could have negative impact on the academic performance of the child (Olsen & Defrank, 2000). In our African communities, it is unfortunate to note that children from broken homes mostly live in the custody of their mothers who tends to have poor financial background. A child in this situation may not be well fed whereas good nutrition is a vital element in the physical and mental development of the child (Defrank & Olsen 2000).

After a divorce, parents who have custody of children may need to ask the children to take more responsibility around the home (Sasse, 1997). It is therefore not common to find a child from a broken home being pushed into forced labour at the early adolescent stage. The exhaustion from strain will eventually lead to low academic achievement. Derndt (1997), confirms the negative effects of broken homes on the child’s academic performance when he reviewed 92 studies involving more than 13,000 children which showed that children from divorce families had poorer school achievement, conduct, psychological adjustment, self-concepts, and social adjustment than children from non-divorced families. Bain, (2001), in an article “Divorce causes many problems for children” made it clear that in two out of every three marriages that end in

divorce, parents-child relationship suffers and that, mental conflict and divorce can create serious instability in the family as well as insecurity in the child.

Furthermore, to Bain (2001), divorce has been associated with economic deprivation which causes a disrupted home life which in turn, associated with diminished academic achievement, low occupation attainment and poverty. Alhassan (2000) states that emotional disturbance resulting from family problem, unhealthy relationship with others, wrong perception of others, attitudes, and some personal problems may interfere a lot with the child’s cognitive functioning. The adolescent at this stage has a lot of development task to perform. Like other phases of the life cycle, adolescent offers numerous developmental challenges which causes inner turned and therefore need adjustment and adaptation. During this time, if the adolescent receives other external problems, it will go a long way to affect him or her negatively. Researchers have delved deep into the impact of parents separation on the adolescent and have come out with the findings that, although broken home does not affect all adolescents in similar fashion, certain reaction such as low academic performance and behavioural disorders appear to be fairly common among them (Alhassan 2000)

Social Problems Associated with Single Homes

According to Mirirangi (2001) cited in Afful-Broni (2005) children all over the world have social problems but, children from broken homes have extremes that need to be addressed. He went further to say that due to numerous social problems of children from single parent homes, they are not able to enjoy parental love; they are at disadvantaged by the way they look, act, their race or where they come from. Children from single parent homes mostly become victims of social vices, such as stealing, armed robbery, murder, rape, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy. To Ashleigh (2002) children from single homes are forced to work long hours, some are forced to go to war because they are not protected by any caring adult. Ashleigh (2002), further states that many young girls become prostitutes, due to the problem of single parent homes when there is no love for children at home; they also do not have any love for others. Ashleigh (2002) concluded by saying that it is a harmful exploitation to see children being treated as “things” rather than as very precious people. Often children are so exploited that they do not get a say in what happens to their social life.

Another problem of children from single parent homes is that they become “anti-social”. They refuse to join social clubs, societies, and social groupings in any form. They consider themselves as inferior and not worthy to seek membership in these social grouping. They relegated themselves to the background of their peers. This confirms an article published in August, 2001 by the United Nations Special Session on Children (UNGASS) which shown that

80% of membership of schools clubs and societies were made up of children from two-parent families. This study was conducted in the United State of America (USA). Again, the problem about self-concept which refers to the general picture one has about himself/herself is a concern to children from single homes. Often children from single parent homes have deficiencies in their self-identity, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-consciousness, and self-actualization in relation to his/her society or environment. Children from broken homes have the problem of knowing their own self, attitudes, feelings, emotions, aptitudes, strengths and capabilities in a given society. This supports Mirirangi (2001) when he stated that children are left out of, to care for themselves; it damages their pride, confidence and self-esteem. When such children grow up they become angry at the world and treat their families like the way they were treated. He suggested that one way of keeping children included is by praising them. This lifts their self-esteem, self-confidence and pride. Little things like acknowledging a child's presence of efforts can increase a child's confidence.

Furthermore, children from single parent homes, lack avenues, means and ways to address their social problems and petitions this state of affairs has a psychological effect on their social problems and petitions. This state of affairs has a psychological effect on their personal growth and development. This is because harboring problems within one's mind is harmful to one's health. Children from single parent homes lack direction and focus. They lack encouragements because they often have nobody to listen to their predicaments. This confirms Neille (2001) when he wrote “Everyone should listen to children's problems and their emotions. It is important that we the children are the future leaders”. (p.23)

Lack of parental care, love, affection, and protection are some of the problems children from broken homes are facing. Caring for children does not only mean providing a roof over their heads and food. It also means providing safe environment, keeping children from poverty and war, preventing them from harmful diseases and listening to them. Children need love, care, and stability. Parental care for children will help develop positive personality caring for children means securing our future generation (Claire, 2001) A parent in a single home is likely to have less time for each individual child than two-parents would. This is because a parent in a single home is responsible in providing all the needs of the family without any support. Hence, there is less time for each child. Sometimes a single parent lives with a partner who is not his or her spouse. Co-habiting relationship have been found to be less stable than marriage (Claire, 2001)

Research Design

Research design refers to the ways information is gathered from subjects and, in the case of experimental research, the nature of the treatments that are controlled by the investigator or the researcher. It can also be described as the overall plans for collecting data in order to answer the research questions. (Burke & Christensen, 2008) Causal comparative research design which is also known as an ex-post facto design was used. In the causal comparative design the researcher does not select, control and manipulate the variables needed to establish cause effect relationship. For example, the researcher cannot manipulate variables like socio-economic background, social class and teacher's characteristics but may wish to find out the effects of these on dependable variables like school attendance and performance in school (Quartey, Awoyemi, Mereku, Onivehu&Quarshigah, 2002). Therefore, the researcher used the causal comparative design to compare the academic performance of students from single parent homes and students from intact homes so as to find out if single parent homes had any effect on the academic performance of students.

Population of the Study

A population is the set of all elements. It is a large group to which the researcher wants to generalize his or her sample results (Burke & Christensen, 2008). They further explain that population have a global attributes and are sometimes referred to as a universe. The population of the study was three senior high school students and 3 teachers and 3 headmasters. It is important to mention that in view of the prevalence of single parents in the Municipality; at least one or two students from single parenthood could be found in each class. The total population for the study is twenty six.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a procedure whereby elements or people are chosen from a population to represent the characteristics of the population. A sample is a group of elements or a single element from which data are determined. A sample could also be defined as a subset or collections of some units of the universe or population. (Asamoah-Gyimah&Duodu, 2007) Simple random sampling was used in order to help generalize the finding about the population (Cosby 2001). The researcher used the lottery, snowballing, purposive, interview, observation, and questionnaire as methods of simple random sampling to select 20 students, 3 teachers and 3 headmasters. Table 3.1 shows an estimated number of the headmasters, teachers and students from single families in the Kpando Municipality.

Table 1. Estimated Sample Size

Name of school	Headmaster’s/	Teachers	Students	Percentage (%)
Bishop Herman College	1	1	7	35
Kpando Senior High School	1	1	8	40
Kpando Technical Institute	1	1	5	25
Totals	3	3	20	100

Source: Researcher Field Survey (2018)

Research Instrument

A research instrument is a device used to collect data to answer the stated research questions. Collection of data is vital to research work. O’Leary (2004) stated that collecting credible data is tough task and is worth remembering that one method of data collection is not inherently better than another. This shows that data collection method depends upon the research goal, merits and demerits of each of the methods. The instruments used in this research to collect data were interviews, questionnaires and opinionnaire.

Interviews

This study used both structured and unstructured interviews as a method of data collection. Two sets of interviews were conducted for the targeted population to ascertain their opinions. There were two types of interviews: Pre-intervention and Post- intervention interviews. A sample of the interview schedule is presented in Appendix C. The Pre-intervention and Post- intervention interviews lasted for 15 and 20 minutes respectively.

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was also used to collect data for this study on the impact of single parenting on academic performance of senior high school students in the Kpando Municipality. A structured questionnaire is a series of questions, statements or items presented and the respondent is asked to answer or respond or comment on them in a way he or she thinks best. There is a clear structure, sequence and focus (Cohen et al., 2000). A structured questionnaire is often used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. A structured questionnaire contains predetermined standardized questions or items meant to collect numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis. These questionnaires were administered to respondents for their responses by the researcher himself.

Opinionnaire

Opinionnaire is a type of data collection strategy used to measure the attitude or belief of an individual. It helps people to express their beliefs and feelings in the area of opinion. Based on this, a ten-item Likert scale was used to collect data from students. Likert Scale is a five (or seven) point scale which is used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement of an attitude, belief or judgment (McLeod, 2008; Tuckman, 1999). It is also referred to as summated ratings. A self-

developed three sets of opinionnaire were designed and used based on the purpose of the research. One set for the headmasters, another for tutors and the other for the students. The three sets were used for the purpose of triangulation. Triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data (O’Donoghue and Punch, 2003).

According to Richards and Morse (2007), triangulation measures validity by using multiple sources that support one another and directly address each other’s findings. As such, this study compared previous literature published on single parenting through review of existing literature with prevailing circumstances and applied to the study to see if the results are similar. The researcher also used group interview with students as a triangulation mechanism to review information on effects of single parenting on students’ academic performance. Creswell (2007) explains that member checking as a triangulation measure requires the researcher to seek respondents view on the credibility of the findings and interpretations. As such, to judge the accuracy and credibility of the findings, the researcher would take the analysis and interpretations of the data as well as the conclusions back to some respondents to provide alternate language, critical observations, or alternate interpretations if needed. This method would allow the respondents to reflect on the accuracy of the study.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

According to Crosby, Diclemente, and Salazar (2006) to determine if an instrument is valid and reliable, it is important to take into account face validity and content validity. To Golafshani (2003), validity describes whether the means of measurement are accurate and are actually measuring what they intend to measure. A test is deemed valid if its results are appropriate and useful for making decisions and judgments about an aspect of students’ achievement. Face validity of the research instruments were enhanced by the Municipal Guidance and Counselling Coordinator.

Pilot- Testing of Instrument

Gall and Borg (2007) posit that it is essential to thoroughly pilot-test your instrument before using it in your study. They again suggested that pilot-testing should include sample of individuals from the population from which you will draw your respondents. It is because of this assertion that the researcher pilot- tested the research instrument at Lakeside

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Senior High School in Kpando, in the Volta Region. The pilot-study was done to identify and correct some lapses in the intervention and data collection processes before the real intervention is done. It was envisaged that as a sister district with common culture, beliefs and traditional practices; it would be prudent to conduct the pilot study in Kpando municipality. The objective of the pilot study was to check whether there were flaws in the instruments designed for data collection. After the pilot study, the data obtained enabled the researcher to restructure some of the questions. For instance the feedback from the respondents indicated that some of the items were ambiguous. Such items were restricted to elicit the right information.

Data Analysis

According to Osuala (1993), data analysis was the ordering and breaking down of data into constituent parts and the

performing of statistical calculation with raw data to provide answers to the questions initiating the research. SPSS version 16.0 for window 2007 was used to analyze the collected data.

Discussion of Results

Demographic Data

The demographic data are based on selected variables which included sex, age, location of school (urban and rural), professional status, highest qualification, position and years of experience in current position as teacher or head teacher. Three senior high schools were used for the study. Twenty respondents were chosen from among the schools, with five (25%) female respondents and fifteen (75%) male respondents. The research covered teachers in the three senior high schools.

These are detailed in Table 2

Table 2. Demographic Data of Teachers

Variable	Teachers	Head teachers	Total	Percentage
Sex:				
Male	3	3	3	100
Female	0	0	0	0
Age (years)				
Up to 29	0	0	0	0
30 – 39	1	0	1	33
40 – 49	2	0	2	66
50 – 59	0	3	0	100
60+	0	0	0	0
Qualification				
Diploma	0	0	0	0
Degree	1	0	1	16
Masters	2	3	5	84
Years Served				
0 – 4	0	0	0	0
5 – 9	2	3	5	84
10+	1	0	1	16

Source: researcher field survey (2018)

Note. Percent may not sum up to 100% because of missing data (non-response to certain items)

The questionnaire was administered to 6 potential participants (3 teachers and 3 leaders (administrators)). Six (100%) participants comprising teachers and leaders (administrators) returned their questionnaires. Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the respondents were males (100%). The results show that almost all the study

participants were train teachers, with 85% holding the Master’s Degree qualification for teaching at senior high level. Therefore should the conditions and relevant components of single parenting be addressed, the youthful exuberance of the student could be transformed for the development of the individual.

Table 3. Demographic Data of students

Variable	students	Male	Female	Total	Percentage	
School	Bishop Herman College	7	4	3	7	35
	Kpando Senior High School	8	4	4	8	40
	Kpando Technical Institute	5	4	1	5	25
Age (years)	Up to 13	1	0	1	0	5
	14 – 16	3	2	1	3	15
	17 – 19	6	3	3	6	30
	20 – 23	8	5	3	8	40
	24+	2	2	0	2	10
Qualification	form 1	4	2	2	4	20
	form 2	6	3	3	6	30
	form 3	10	7	3	10	50

Source: researcher field survey (2018)

Analysis of Research Questions

The analyses reported in this chapter were conducted to answer the three research questions posed in the study. The results related to each question are described in the following sections. Descriptive statistics for the sample for all measures used in the analyses can be found in Table 4.1 and 4.2

Research Question One: What influence do single parents home have on academic performance of students in Kpando in the Volta Region of Ghana?

The researcher this question based on the following variables Parental Absence, Academic Performance, and Educational Expectations of the child. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine what, if any, significant differences existed for

academic performance and educational expectations when students experienced single parenting. The overall MANOVA was marginally significant for the experience of parental absence, $F(2, 265) = 2.87, p = .06$. Univariate tests revealed a significant effect of parental absence for educational expectations, $F(1, 266) = 5.64, p < .02$, but not for academic performance, $F(1, 266) = 1.16, p < .30$. For educational expectations, students who experienced parental absence reported lower expectations ($M = 3.16, SD = .66$) than students who did not experience single parenting ($M = 3.36, SD = .60$). For academic performance, while not statistically significant, students who experienced single parenting had lower achievement ($M = .10, SD = .74$) than those who did not experience single parenting ($M = .22, SD = .88$). See Table 4.

Table: 4. Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	N	%	M	SD
Single Parenting	20	100	1.0	.5
School			1.95	.79
Bishop Herman College	7	35		
Kpando Senior High School	8	40		
Kpando Technical Institute	5	25		
Parental separation	10	50		
Parental Divorce	6	30		
Parental Death	4	20		
Length of Absence			.87	.86
Less than 10 years	7	35		
More than 10 years	13	65		
Mom Absent	5	25		
Dad Absent	13	65		
Both Absent	2	10		
School Support			8.21	1.30
Economic Hardship			2.10	1.05
Parent Involvement			4.03	.76
Performance			.14	.79
Expectations			3.21	.65

Source: Field survey (2018)

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Investigation of these factors has produced several findings by researchers. For example, Clemens and Oelke (1997) as well as Emeke (1994) have attributed the cause of poor academic performance to a combination of personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to the individual’s intelligence, knowledge and ability. While institutional factors are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences and school related factors- student/teacher rapport, teacher related factors and living conditions. In the same vein, Wiseman (1993), Sogbetan (2001) and Hassan (2003) among others have examined the causes of poor academic performance among secondary school students. Some of the factors identified are intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socio-economic status of the family, poor family structure and anxiety. The consequences of these include indiscipline in schools and low level of educational standard. As emphasized early on in the literature, Daily Sketch Publication on “Causes and Cures of Poor Performance at West African School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)” in 2006 identified and categorized problems responsible for students’ poor performance to problems of teachers, problems of inadequate facilities in the schools, problem traceable to students, problems caused by parents and society at large and problems of government policies and low funding of the education sector (Ajila and Olutola, 2007).

Reviewed literature indicated that there is an awareness of the importance of the home environment or family on pupils’ academic performance. The home has a great influence on the students’ psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2007), the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual’s life. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of

performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual’s life during school periods, yet parents and the individual’s experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is.

Research Question Two: To what extent do single parents home have on pupils’ academic performance of students’ in Kpando in the Volta Region of Ghana?

The researcher answers this research question based on three Predicting variables: Academic Performance, Economic hardship and Parental absence variables. Inter correlations of the study variables are presented in Table: 4.2. There were some significant correlations of the control variables of grade level, gender, and academic performance. Females had poorer academic performance than males but more talented with academic performance. Reason for single parenting variables demonstrated inter correlations among factors related to single parenting and academic performance. It was unlikely for participants to experience both parental divorce as well as separation, even though there were participants who experienced both as dual causes for single parenting. Those who experienced parental divorce and those who experienced separation were more likely to experience the absence of their father. Those who experienced parental divorce were more likely to experience prolonged parental absence. Those who experienced the death of a parent were less likely to experience separation as well. However, there were some participants who experienced single parenting for all three reasons. Those who experienced the death of a parent were more likely to experience the absence of both parents and to encounter prolonged absence. The experience of parental death was also negatively related to academic performance, with students who experienced parental death having lower performance than those who did not experience the death of a parent.

Table 5. Inter correlations of Study Variables

Variable	Parental Divorce		Parental Separation		Parental Death		Absence Length		Expectations		Performance	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Bishop Herman College	20	33	40	20	20	20	≥5	≤5	75	60	40	40
Kpando Senior High School	40	40	20	20	20	20	≤5	≥5	75	40	40	60

Source: Field survey (2018),,,, *p < .05. **p < .001. ***p < .01

Factors related to single parenting were also correlated with coexisting factors related to the single parenting experience and academic performance and educational expectations. Prolonged single parenting was more likely to occur with the absence of the father as well as the absence of both parents. Prolonged single parenting was also linked to

reduced academic performance and lower educational expectations. Maternal absence was negatively correlated with paternal absence and single parenting was negatively correlated with the absence of both parents. The absence of both parents was linked to lower academic performance. Results also indicated that the outcome measures were inter-

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correlated. Educational expectations were found to be positively correlated with academic performance in that those who had higher expectations also performed better in school. Follow up regression analyses indicated that boys who experienced single parenting that resulted from divorce performed worse academically than boys who did not have this experience ($b = -.21, p < .05$), whereas there was no significant effect of separation for girls ($b = .11, p > .05$). For educational expectations, there was marginally significant, with female students more having higher expectations than their male counterparts who were not as proficient as the females. Single parenting resulting from separation was also significant for educational expectations, with students experiencing single parenting resulting from separation having lower educational expectations than students who did not experience single parenting because of the migratory process.

Results were similar for students who experienced parental death; those who experienced parental death reported lower educational expectations than students who did not experience the death of a parent. Results indicated an interaction effect of grade level and parental absence related to separation for educational expectations. Follow up regression analyses indicated that SHS one (1) students ($b = -.51, p < .01$) and SHS two (0) students ($b = -.35, p < .05$), but not Senior High School form three (3) students ($b = .22, p > .05$), who experienced single parenting that resulted from separation reported lower educational expectations

than students who did not experience single parenting as a result of separation.

Predictors of Academic Performance and Educational Expectations

Hierarchical multiple-regression analyses were conducted for academic performance and educational expectations. Hierarchical regression adds predictors to the regression model in blocks, or stages. The control variables of gender of the child, class level of the child and Academic Performance were entered into the first block of the model. Reason for single parenting (i.e., separation, parental divorce and parental death) was entered into the second block. Reason for absence was the researcher coded as three variables (1 = *separation*, 0 = *no separation*; 1 = *divorce*, 0 = *no divorce*, 1 = *parental death*, 0 = *no parental death*). The third block added the length of single parenting variable. The researcher coded gender of the absent parent variables (i.e., mom, dad, both parents) were entered into the fourth block of the model. The fifth and last block of the model entered interaction terms of interest into the model (i.e., grade X reason of absence, grade X parent gender, child’s gender X reason for absence, child’s gender X parent gender). Both academic Performance and educational expectations were tested with the same regression model. Results for the hierarchical regression models for Academic Performance are reported in Table: 4.3 and for Educational Expectations in Table: 6

Table 6. Predicting Academic Performance: Hierarchical Regression Analysis

PREDICTOR	B	Academic Performance		
		r ²	Fchg	r ² chg
Step 1: Control Variables			24.10***	.21
Bishop Herman College	.67	.05		
Kpando Senior High School	.54	.05		
Kpando Technical Institute	.49	.05		
Step 2: Gender			21.05*	.02
Academic Performance among boys	.48***	.08		
Academic Performance among girls	.65	.01		
Step 3: Reason for Single Parenting			1.15	.01
Separation	-.04	.00		
Parental Divorce	-.06	.00		
Parental Death	-.27**	.02		
Step 4: Duration of Single Parenting			2.75*	.01
Length of Single Parenting	-.09*	.01		
Step 5: Parent Gender			1.41	.01
Mother	-.01	.00		
Father	-.04	.00		
Both Parents	-.24*	.00		
Step 6: Interactions of Interest			.83	.02
Gender X separation	.30**	.02		

*** $< p.01$. ** $p < .05$. * $p = .06$. # $p = .09$ Note: Only significant interactions are reported.

Table: 7. Predicting Educational Expectations: Hierarchical Regression Analysis

PREDICTOR	B	Educational Expectations		
		r2	Fchg	r2chg
Step 1: Control Variables			2.24*	.02
Bishop Herman College	.67	.05		
Kpando Senior High School	.54	.05		
Kpando Technical Institute	.49	.05		
Step2: Gender			2.25*	.02
Expectations among boys	.60	.01		
Expectations among girls	.50	.00		
Step 3: Reason for Single Parenting			2.26*	.03
Separation	-.26***	.02		
Parental Divorce	-.16	.00		
Parental Death	-.41**	.02		
Step 4: Duration ofSingle Parenting			1.04*	.00
Length of Single Parenting	-.08	.00		
Step 5: Parent Gender			1.39	.01
Mother	.34	.01		
Father	.06	.00		
Both Parents	-.11	.00		
Step 6: Interactions of Interest			1.66*	.06
Gender X Separation	.23**	.00		

***p.01. **p.05. *p.06. #p.09 Note: Only significant interactions are reported.

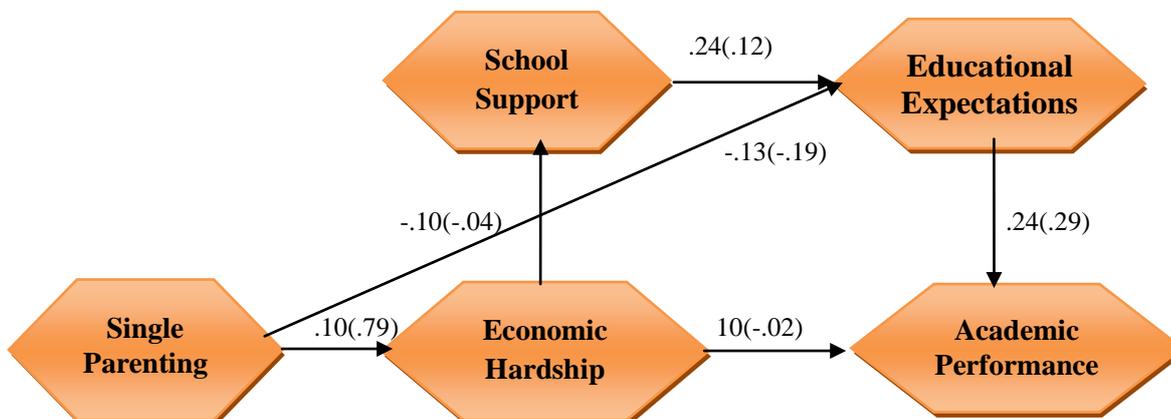
For academic performance and gender were significant predictors. Girls performed better than boys and students with their academic work. They virtually performed better than most boys who are victims of the same plight struggling with academic work. The experience of single parenting because of parental death was also significant for academic achievement, with those having this experience having lower academic performance than those who did not experience the death of a parent. The length of single parenting was marginally significant for academic performance, with students having prolonged experience with single parenting performing worse than students who did not experience single parenting for long periods of time. The absence of both parents was also marginally significant for academic performance, with students experiencing the

absence of both parents performing worse than students who did not experience the absence of both their mother and father. Results indicated an interaction effect of gender and single parenting associated with separation for academic performance.

Research Question Three:What influence do single parents home have on academic performance of students’ in Kpando in the Volta Region of Ghana?

The researcher used a simplified model to highlight the significant paths of single parenting influence on academic achievement of the students. These include parameter that estimates the structural coefficients in the model. Standardized coefficients appear on each path in parentheses.

Figure: 1. Simplified Model of Parental Absence on Academic Performance and EducationalExpectations



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The model indicates an impact of the experience of single parenting on academic achievement via economic hardship. It also shows an impact of the experience of single parenting on educational expectations via economic hardship and level of perceived school support, as well as a direct impact of single parenting on educational expectations. The model

also suggests an influence of single parenting on academic achievement. In addition, the model documents separate significant influences of gender of the child, form or grade level of the child and school support on participants’ academic achievement and single parenting.

Table 8. Standardized Path Coefficients for Model

<u>Path</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
Economic hardship child gender	-.13**
Parental school involvement form or grade level	-.37****
School support/ environment child gender	-.12**
Parental school involvement child gender	-.00
Educational expectations support/ environment	.24****
Educational expectations parental school involvement	.16***
Educational expectations economic hardship	.04
Educational expectations grade level	.04
Educational expectations parental absence	-.13**
Educational expectations child gender	-.05
Academic performance school support/ environment	.00
Academic performance grade level	-.01
Academic achievement parental absence	-.01
Academic performance child gender	-.28****
Academic performance educational expectations	.24****

**** $p < .001$. *** $p < .01$. ** $p < .05$. * $p < .06$. # $p < .09$.

Thus, for children experiencing parental absence, economic hardship increased by .10 units ($p < .09$). As economic hardship increased, academic performance decreased by .10 units ($p < .06$). Also, as economic hardship increased, perceived school support decreased by .10 units ($p < .09$). With the increase of perceived school support, educational expectations increased by .24 units ($p < .001$). In addition, for children experiencing single parenting, educational expectations decreased by .13 units ($p < .03$). Furthermore, as educational expectations of students increased, academic performance increased by .24 units ($p < .001$). There were significant direct influences of child’s gender on academic achievement, in that for males, academic performance decreased by .28 units ($p < .001$). Also, child’s gender was found to influence academic performance via economic hardship. For males, economic hardship decreased by .13 units ($p < .03$) and as economic hardship increased, academic performance decreased by .10 units ($p < .06$). Child gender also impacted educational expectations via perceived school support/ environment. For males, perceived school support decreased by .12 units ($p < .05$) and as school support increased, educational expectations increased by .24 units ($p < .001$).

The current study also found mediated relationships between grade level of the child and educational expectations. Grade level was found to influence educational expectations via parental school involvement. As students progressed through school, the level of single parental school involvement decreased by .37 units ($p < .001$) With

the increase of parental school involvement, educational expectations increased by .16 units ($p < .01$). The study also found direct and mediated relationships between academic performance and single parenting. Single parenting was found to directly influence academic performance and educational expectations. Students who performed better academically had higher expectations for their education. For instance it was realized that as academic performance increased by .35 units ($p < .001$) and educational expectations increased by .11 units ($p < .05$) the paths in the model were not statistically significant, meaning that the predictor variable did not account for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. While it was hypothesized that there would be a direct effect of the experience with single parenting on academic performance, this path in the model was not significant ($p = .85$). Also, the paths that hypothesized an effect of the experience of parental absence on school support ($p = .86$) and level of parental school involvement ($p = .27$) were not significant. This means that the experience of single parenting did not account for a significant amount of variance in school support/ environment or level of parental school involvement, and influenced academic performance only indirectly through economic hardship. Some of the hypothesized mediators in the current study were also not significant. For instance, level of parental school involvement did not have a significant impact on academic performance ($p = .72$). Also, the model found no significant impact of economic hardship on parental school

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involvement ($p = .82$) or educational expectations ($p = .48$). In addition, school support did not have a significant impact on academic performance ($p = .94$).

Total Effects of Parental Absence

Of particular interest in the current study were the total (direct and indirect) effects of the experience of parental absence on the academic performance of students. While the total effect of the experience of single parenting on academic performance was significant ($p > .09$), it was not significant for educational expectations ($p < .05$). The total effect of single parenting on educational expectations was -

.37. Meaning that including both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of single parent on educational expectations, when single parenting increased by one unit, educational expectations decreased by .37 units. There were also marginally significant total effects of the experience of single parenting on economic hardship ($p < .09$). For those who experienced single parenting, economic hardship increased by .14. In addition, total effects were found for language proficiency, gender, grade level, economic hardship, school support, and level of single parenting involvement on academic performance and educational expectations. Total effects can be found in Table: 9

Table 9. Total Effects in Model

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Parental Absence</u>	<u>Child Gender</u>	<u>Economic Hardship</u>	<u>Parental Involvement</u>	<u>School Support</u>	<u>Expectations</u>
Economic Hardship	.00	-.14*	- 1.69***	.00	.00	.00	.00
Parental Involvement	-.46****	-.28	-.18	-.02	.00	.00	.00
School support/ environment	-.14	-.39	-.58*	-.09	.00	.00	.00
Expectations Performance	-.10 -.11	-.37** -.27	-.27 - .62****	-.02 -.05*	.04*** -.10	.06** -.03	.00 .14****

**** $p < .001$. *** $p < .01$. ** $p < .05$. * $p < .09$.

Conclusion

Uhlenberg (1998) realized that single-parents typically have too little to provide a healthy environment for themselves and their children. Hetherington, (2006) found that the demands on children from single-parent families lead to short attention span and distractibility in children which results in a drop in scores achieved in school. In this case, the demands from home on the children might be such that they will be unable to concentrate in school and therefore their short attention span will result in lower scores which will lead to a fall in their academic performance. Many factors influence how children develop in single-parent families: the parent's age, education level, and occupation; the family's income and the family's support network of friends and extended family members (including the non-resident parent, if available). Disadvantages in these factors that often accompany single parenting appear to cause most of this association rather than single parenting itself. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using single parenting as the independent variable and academic performance and educational expectations as dependent variables was conducted to answer this question. The answer appears to be a qualified yes because the overall result was marginally significant. While the total effect of the

experience of single parenting on academic performance was significant ($p > .09$), it was not significant for educational expectations ($p < .05$).

There are significant differences in students from single parenting versus intact parent homes in terms of educational expectations and academic performance

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using single parenting as the independent variable and academic performance and educational expectations as dependent variables was conducted to answer this question. The answer appears to be a qualified yes because the overall result was marginally significant. While previous research has found a relationship between single parenting and reduced academic performance and lower educational expectations (Astone&McLanahan, 1991; Coley, 1998; Hernandez, 2004; Lamb, 1999; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009), the current research found a significant effect of single parenting for educational expectations but not academic performance. Students who experienced single parenting had lower educational expectations than students from dual-parent homes. Although the same occurred for academic performance, the results were not statistically significant. While the current study examined students from Kpando Municipality Senior High Schools, the researcher have realized that the educational systems in the community

likely provide students with some educational backgrounds that help them. That coupled with the highly developed could explain why results of the current study differ from those of previous research in terms of academic achievement. The lower expectations reported by participants in this research may reflect the reality of barriers that these student face in obtaining higher education.

How various experiences of Single Parenting affect Academic Expectations and Performance

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to examine how the reason for absence (immigration, separation/divorce, parental death), gender of absent parent (mom, dad, both), and length of single parenting affected academic performance and educational expectations in students from these communities. The model used gender of child, age of child, and language proficiency of child as control variables. For academic performance, gender of the child, language proficiency, parental death, length of single parenting, the absence of both parents, and the interaction of gender of child and single parenting associated with separation were significant. Students in the study who were not proficient with the English language performed worse than students who had mastered little English skills, a result consistent with prior research (Genesee & Gandara, 1999; Hernandez, 2004; Munoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1998).

However, single parenting caused by the death of a parent was significant for academic performance in those students experiencing the death of a parent had lower academic performance than those who did not lose a parent. This is consistent with studies that have documented a negative association between parental death and academic outcomes (Abdelnoor & Hollins, 2004a; Abdelnoor & Hollins, 2004b; Dowdney, 2000; Grollman, 1967; Van Eerdewegh, Bieri, Parilla & Clayton, 1982). While there is minimal previous research regarding the effects of a parental absence length on academic outcomes (e.g., Biller, 1970). Again, the current study found that students who experienced prolonged periods of single parenting performed worse than students who did not experience prolonged single parenting. In addition, findings from the current researcher demonstrated that the combination of mother and father absence increased the risk of academic failure in their students. Previous research has found that father absence increases the chance of school disciplinary problems while mother absence reduces High School expectations of children (Heard, 2007). In the current study, the absence of both parents hindered academic achievement where there was no significant effect for educational expectations. It may be that students who experienced prolonged single parenting and the absence of both of their parents were deprived of adult role models who could have invested resources that could help the child succeed (Heard, 2007; Valencia, 2000).

In addition, results also indicated an interaction effect of gender of child and single parenting resulting from migration, in boys, but not girls, who experienced serial migration and parental separation performed worse academically than their peers. This finding is quite interesting in that the majority of research that has examined the effects of parental absence on academic outcomes has focused on parental divorce, (e.g., Mullet & Stolberg, 2001). Results of the current study demonstrate, however, that single parenting resulting from serial travelling of a parent is an important factor in academic outcomes for boys. It may be that, for boys, separation from parents in the course of travelling is viewed negatively and as unnecessary, causing distress in the child that affects his academic performance. For educational expectations, language proficiency, single parenting from parental death, and an interaction of grade level and single parenting resulting from serial migration were significant.

As with academic performance, students in the current study who were not proficient with the English language had lower educational expectations than those who were proficient. Numerous researchers have concluded that language barriers can be detrimental to the academic success of these students (Genesee & Gandara, 1999; Hernandez, 2004; Munoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1998), impacting reading and writing abilities as well as performance test scores (Suarez-Orozco & Carhill, 2008). Suarez-Orozco and Carhill concluded that language barriers may also hinder access to college for students. Findings from the research expand the literature by demonstrating that language barriers impact student educational expectations regarding their future. The finding that parental death impacts student educational expectations as well as academic achievement was not surprising. Although studies on the impact of parental death on student outcomes are limited, it has been documented that educational plans of children have been postponed or forgotten altogether after experiencing the death of a parent (Adolnoor & Hollins, 2004b). Students who lost a parent had difficulty deciding on a career path and educational plans after such an experience in a prior study (Adolnoor & Hollins, 2004b).

The current dissertation, therefore, demonstrates that previous research has been inconsistent in regards to the impact of the child's age on academic outcomes. Some have speculated that parental absence occurring during childhood is more detrimental on academic outcomes than if it occurred during adolescence (Amato, 1996; McLanahan & Teitler, 1999), while others have speculated single parenting during adolescence to be more detrimental (McCabe, 1997; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988; McLanahan & Teitler, 1999; Sprague & Kinney, 1997). Results of the current study suggest that the association between age of the child and negative outcomes associated with single parenting interacts with other factors, such as migration. It may be that older children and younger children view single parenting as a

associated with an increase in family economic hardship, which is consistent with previous research (Heard, 2007; McLanahan&Teitler, 1999). Increased economic hardship, then, led to lower academic performance in students. Single parenting also impacted educational expectations via economic hardship as well as perceived school support. Economic deprivation was found to lead to a reduction in school support. This was not surprising as previous research has recognized that schools serving low-income, minority, and immigrant students tend to be at a disadvantage for academic success (Crosnoe, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Zhou, 1997).

Reduced school support resulted in decreased educational expectations, consistent with previous research that has found a direct link between school support and student achievement (Woolley, 2007), especially that of immigrant students (Han, 2008). The direct effect of single parenting on decreased educational expectations is also consistent with previous findings (Astone&McLanahan, 1991; Coley, 1998; Hernandez, 2004; Lamb, 1999; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). The expectations of students were associated with their actual achievement, in that higher expectations led to higher achievement.

Significant relationships were also documented between gender, grade level, and language proficiency and academic achievement and educational expectations. Girls performed better academically than boys, which are consistent with previous research examining academic outcomes among youth from single-parent homes (Coney & Mackey; McLanahan & Teitler, 1999). Gender also influenced educational expectations via economic hardship and perceived school support. Boys, in the current study, were more likely to report economic hardship than girls. Girls viewed their school environment as more supportive than boys, consistent with the findings of Way (2004). Increased perceived school support led to an increase in educational expectations in girls. Previous research has demonstrated how important a supportive school environment is for student success (Crosnoe, 2005; Gayton, Carhill, & Suarez-Orozco, 2007), especially that of rural students.

The current study expands these findings to include future educational expectations. Class level influenced educational expectations through parental involvement in school activities. More specifically, as students increased in grade level, the level of parental school involvement decreased. Lower levels of parental school involvement were linked to decreased educational expectations. For these students, the level of parental school involvement declines as children get older; this is consistent with prior findings (Kuperminc et al., 2007). Difficulties with the English language had a direct effect on the outcome measures. As students were more proficient in English, both their academic achievement (i.e., Genesee & Gandara, 1999; Hernandez, 2004; Munoz- Sandoval, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1998) and educational expectations increased.

Conclusions

Single parenthood continues to be a reality for many adults and almost 50% of children born today will spend significant time living with only one parent. A large body of research has documented the disadvantages of children raised in single-parent homes relative to children raised in two-parent homes. Lower high school graduation rates, lower Continuous Assessment and greater risk for drug abuse are only some of the negative outcomes associated with growing up in a single-parent home. However, despite the statistics, many children from single-parent homes do attain academic success. Scholars can help influence public policy by understanding factors which are associated with academic achievement and promote training education, and advocacy programmes which support single parents and their children. As a discipline, Counselling Psychology has been among the leaders regarding issues of diversity and inclusion. Expanding our understanding of single-parent families is crucial if we are to have significant impact on policy and be able to meet the needs of all people.

Furthermore, as more and more men and women become parents, there is need to expand research into the dynamics of single parent families headed. Counselling Psychology must continue to expand our thinking and reach out to underserved individuals and families. In addition to expanding the sphere of research, the field must do more to understand the strengths exhibited by single parents and their children. Resilience as a basic construct can be much better understood as well as the parenting skills necessary to foster academic success. The researcher's own experience of living in a single-parent, first-generation Ghanaian born, female-headed household was one filled with uncertainty at times regarding finances, my mother's emotional availability, and the social stigma of not knowing my biological father. Despite the challenges, my mother successfully completed college, provided me with key educational resources, and set an academic example to follow. She planted a belief in me that with preparation, organization, and diligence, academic achievement is inevitable. Identifying the intuitive skills my mother and other successful single parents have, and sharing those best practices with single parents in need can help to close the academic achievement gap of children from single-parent homes.

This dissertation has been a review and critique of research from the past few decades regarding single parenthood. While the economic and social costs of single parenthood have been well documented, the strengths of single parents and their children have been largely overlooked. Multiple areas for future inquiry have been suggested and it is the hope of this researcher that science can influence policy to ensure all children receive equitable resources and are given the opportunity to thrive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made: Governments, private organizations and individuals concerned with the business of education should endeavour to address the obstacles hindering effective academic performance of students. This can be done by developing achievement motivation in students through achievement motivation training.

There is the need for the recognition of individual differences in students and the need to deal with them accordingly. Counsellors should provide the necessary assistance and psychological support for students from single parent family so as to overcome their emotional problems. There is also the need to keep enlightening the parents of the importance of the home structure on the life of children. This is necessary so that parents can understand the implications and consequences of parental separation and thus mobilize all resources to curtail the problems arising from the situation.

Furthermore, parents who are neglecting the responsibilities of catering for their children, like paying their school fees, clothing them, buying school uniform for the children, should be compelled through the department of social welfare and domestic violence and victim support unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Services.

NGOs and corporate bodies should support government effort of providing quality education for all children of school going age through the provision of grant and soft loan to the needed parents especially the single parents' families. They could also support the schools, with computers, library books, pens, pencils and other teaching and learning materials to reduce the inadequate books and school materials creping Ghanaian education.

Generally, there is need to combat the continuing declining state of education by providing more funds and materials for the upliftment of our educational system. Finally, school Counsellors should be employed in institutions of learning and adequate supervision to be put in place to ensure provision of necessary guidance services to students.

Implications for Future Research

The current study attempted to bridge two bodies of literature, that on the impact of single parenting on academic performance of senior high school students by examining reasons for single parenting, factors related single parenting, and factors associated with academic outcomes for students from the Kpando Municipality. Although the results of the current study helped to answer questions regarding the academic success of students, they also pose implications for future research directions within this domain. Much research that has addressed academic outcomes of students has only touched on the effects of single parenting that result from parental issues.

Future research needs to examine the divergence of the migration process more specifically in relation to the academic achievement and educational expectations of students from the Kpando Municipality. Future research also needs to clarify how single parenting associated with these factors is viewed by the children involved and how the perception of parental separation impacts academic outcomes. It has been speculated that single parenting as a result of reasons other than parental divorce may be viewed differently by the childreninvolved (Lamb, 1999). The current study suggests that single parenting that results from these factors may be viewed differently by age and gender of the child; boys may view the absence more negatively than girls and younger children may view the absence more negatively than older children. This, in turn, affects the academic achievement and educational expectations of the child

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