

Single Parenting and Emotional Development of Primary School Students as Viewed by Nigerian Primary School Teachers

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Abstract. This research investigated the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by Nigerian primary school teachers. A descriptive survey designed was adopted to draw 200 primary school teachers. One research question was raised and three null hypotheses were respectively postulated to guide the research at 0.05 level of significance. In addition, data analysis was done using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Furthermore, the findings revealed that low self-esteem was the most influencing emotional development of primary school students in Ilorin metropolis. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on the emotional development of primary school students in terms of gender and qualification. It is recommended that teachers of students from single parents should be more sensitive to their emotional needs and always be ready to assist them. Moreover, counsellors should collaborate with teachers and parents to minimize the negative influence of single parenting. Teachers are suggested to be more sensitive and willing to assist students whenever they have problems at home. Single parents are suggested to provide more quality time with their children to avoid them performing negative behaviors. Parents are suggested to maintain stable home by living together to enhance their children emotional development.

Keywords: counsellor, emotional development, primary school students, single parenting.

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INTRODUCTION ~ One of the phenomena that continually happens is single parenting. It is a situation where only a parent, either the father or mother is saddled with the responsibility of taking care for the child. The reasons for single parenting vary from death of a parent to parental separation/divorce. This could mean that a lone parent heads the family either in form of lone or joint physical custody.

Due to single parenting, the pressurizing responsibility of nurturing a child is left to

the available parent. This could have great impact on both child and parent. This could be why psychologists, teachers, and researchers are concerned with the impact of this type of parenting on the overall child development, particularly the emotional development (Dowd, 2002). Single parenting is caused by death of one's partner; this could either be the husband or the wife, infidelity, divorce and death (Salami & Alawode, 2000). Surprisingly, incidence of single parenting continues to increase yearly and from country to country with the most

incidences noted in the Americans, Denmark, and those in Belgium. Sadly in United States, the percentage of single parenting had risen as high as 70% in 2003 (Steck, 2009). Similarly, it was stated that about half of children in their middle adolescence have, at one time, been nurtured by a single parent.

In Africa, the family system is an extended type consisting of the father, mother, uncle, aunt, and grandparents; the child has a lot to learn from this group of people. It is pathetic that there was an increase in single parenting cases (Brunet, 2005). In Nigeria, single parenting continues to rise due to separation of parents who are in need of daily bread and greener pasture, parental death and divorce, and also the occurrence of diseases or war. This causes a bridge in the family structure. Family, as the most important form of interaction and socialization of the child, is hampered. This may make the child lack of physically, cognitively, spiritually, and emotionally development (Santrock, 2004).

For the promotion of cultural heritage, there must be child socialization that begins at home. It is the responsibility of the two parents, not only one to take the child through traditions, but also to learn about kinship, responsibility togetherness and develop in team spirit – an aspect of emotional development. However, again these are fast eroding away due to modernization and single parenting. Single parenting is becoming an order of the day

in the Nigerian society (Robinson, 2000), which is leaving children at a disadvantaged position.

The stage of childhood is a key developmental stage in the life of every individual. At this stage, children learn by involvedness, observation, imitation, and emulations of characters. Through this, they begin to form emotions towards self, others and the surrounding (Morse & Wingo, 2001). At childhood stage, children, due to the fact that they are still growing, are able to perceive, form interest, and respond to issues around them. This means that a child is presented with environmental and social tasks, which could impact his/her emotion and attitude and form the basis for progress in both academic and relationship endeavors.

A major task of primary students includes emotional development. Emotional development refers to making a meaningful and consistent identity. It has been observed that emotional development does not end in adolescence; it begins from childhood when children develop strong cognitive power to live through their self-image, which could only occur with good emotional development (Kroger, 2004). How one feels about himself is an aspect of emotional development. Anyone who does not accept him/her self could have poor emotional development and will not be able to relate well with self and others.

Children's emotional development is important that many single parents are trying their best to provide and care for their needs. It is saddening that what two people created has to be adequately done by one person. By implication, children who are brought up by a lone parent could suffer serious emotional development (Robinson, 2000). Over the years, children raised by single parents have been source of concern and issue for research across the globe (Broth et al., 2001). There is possibility that students from a single parent home will face the feelings of insecurity, loneliness, anger, and fear/phobia (Kembe, 2005). Therefore, the above consideration has become the basis that this research focuses on the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by Nigerian primary school teachers.

Emotional Development of Adolescents

Emotional development refers to how an individual feel about himself and those around him. It refers to ways the children develop the ability to observe and give meanings to feelings. It refers to the rate at which adolescents are able to adapt and achieve realistic goals, and also based on feelings, behaviour, and cognition that function as one which makes the adolescent relate well in his environment. Cognitive ability and environment of the individual have been noted to affect development of emotion. In essence, emotion develops as a result of the

environment one lives and what meaning the adolescent is able to make from the happenings in the environment. Saarni (2011) states that when an individual is emotionally developed he/she is able to do the following: (1) they are aware of their feelings; (2) having the ability to discern other peoples' feelings based on the other person's actions; (3) having pool of feelings and expressions that are present at different levels and environment; (4) having the ability to feel the pains of others and to express same to others; (5) having the skills to realize feelings that does not even tally with expressed feelings both in self and others. This implies that for adolescents to have sound emotional development, they must be raised in a balanced environment where they can perceive and obtain healthy emotion.

Problem

Single parenting is extremely common among Nigerians. This family type has troubled the emotional stability and development of the child. Due to single parenting, many children in Nigeria had poor emotional development; they may cry, be filled with anxiety, be bullied, etc. Being a child from a single parent home is very tough and challenging, as they may face challenges in school. As a result, the children did frequent absenteeism from school and extracurricular activities, reduced capacity to function in school, exhibit violence behaviors, emotional disturbances, poor attention span in

classroom, personality disorder, stress, etc., In other words, they are not likely to perform up to school's expectation.

Earlier researchers such as Kembe (2005) expressed that adolescent from single parent home exhibited personality characteristics that were detrimental to themselves and the entire society, which resulted in culmination of social vices, including delinquency, dishonesty, cultism, political thugs, kidnapping, examination malpractice, stealing, and loose sexual life in the society. Another research by Amato (2000) indicated that adolescents who had emotional development problems often demonstrated poor social, emotional, and academic success. Similarly, Kroger (2004) in another research stated that adolescents from single parent were not only at risk of fluctuating emotions but also demonstrated difficulties with social skills such as getting along with peers, following rules and regulations in school, and having poor academic adjustment.

Despite earlier researches, the problems of children from a single parent home still persist. Hence, this research aims at examining the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by Nigerian primary school teachers.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated and examined in the research:

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on qualification.

METHODS

The research adopted descriptive survey research design, which was defined according to Daramola (2006) as a method that enables a researcher to obtain information from a representative sample of the population and describes situations as they exist in a factual and accurate manner. It also focuses on the people; their beliefs, opinions, perception, motivation, attitude, and behaviors. Based on the foregoing, the descriptive survey research design was considered appropriate for a research of this nature.

The population of this research was all primary school teachers in Ilorin estimated at 60,054, while the sample for this research was 200 primary school teachers drawn from different primary school schools in Ilorin metropolis (Kwara State Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Random sampling technique was used to select 200 primary school teachers from three Local Government Areas in Ilorin metropolis

(Ilorin-west, Ilorin-east and Ilorin-south) which serve as the respondents for the research.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select one public and one private primary school from each of the three Local Government Areas. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 200 primary school teachers across the primary school schools. Six primary schools were selected across the three Local Government Areas with two schools from each of the three Local Government Areas. This made a total of six primary schools that were chosen for the research.

The instrument that was used to collect data for this research is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher entitled "Influence of Single Parenting on Emotional Development Questionnaire (ISPEDQ)" which comprises two sections (A & B). Section A elicits the demographic information of the respondents. Section B comprises 20 items that focuses on the influence of single parenting on emotional development.

In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the draft of the questionnaire was given to five experts in counselling and psychology, University of Ilorin for vetting and advice. Sequel to their suggestions, necessary amendments were made while the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using test re-tests reliability method. The instrument was administered to a group of twenty primary

school teachers in Ilorin, and after an interval of four weeks; the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of people. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation formula. The correlation co-efficient obtained was 0.86 at 0.05 level of significance. Based on these score, the instrument was adjudged reliable.

The data obtained was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. Percentage and mean were used to answer the demographic data and research question while t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentage. This is presented as follows:

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Qualification.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	82	41.0
Female	118	59.0
Total	200	100
Qualification:		
NCE	113	56.5
First	73	36.5
Degree:		
Masters	11	5.5
Ph.D	3	1.5
Total	200	100

Source: Author's Computation (2018).

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table shows that 200 respondents participated in the study; out of which 82 (41.0%) of the respondents were male while, 118 (59.0%) of the respondents were female. Also, 113 (56.5%) of the respondents were in NCE holders, 73 (36.5%) were First Degree holders, 11 (5.5%)

were Master's Degree holders, while 3(1.5%) of the respondents were Ph.D. holders.

Research Question 1: What influence does single parenting have on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 2. Mean and Rank Order of Influence of Single Parenting on Emotional Development of Primary School Students as Viewed by Primary School Teachers in Ilorin Metropolis.

Item No.	In my own view; children from a single parent family:	Mean	Rank
1.	usually feel abandoned	3.73	1 st
17.	feel sad because of my family status	3.42	2 nd
9.	have difficulty in trusting others	3.29	3 rd
18.	are easily discouraged	3.28	4 th
10.	have difficulty in expressing my concerns	3.26	5 th
3.	sometimes have feelings of guilt	3.24	6 th
16.	do not easily understand other peoples' opinion	3.21	7 th
2.	sometimes feel inferior among my peer	3.20	8 th
11.	cry often	3.19	9 th
4.	feel rejected always	3.18	10 th
8.	have poor interpersonal relationship	3.16	11 th
13.	easily develop feelings of anxiety	3.15	12 th
15.	feel lonely among my peers	3.14	13 th
14.	withdraw from social interaction	3.01	14 th
6.	feel socially isolated	2.84	15 th
12.	always get angry at myself	2.80	16 th
5.	have low self-esteem	2.97	17 th
7.	have poor communication skills	2.90	18 th
20.	find it difficult to concentrate on anything	1.75	19 th
19.	always have suicidal thoughts	1.63	20 th

Source: Author's Computation (2018).

Table 2 shows the mean and the rank of what influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as perceived by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. Item 1 stating 'feel abandoned' with mean score 3.73 ranked 1st. Item 17 stating 'sad because of my family status' with mean score 3.42 ranked 2nd. Item 9 stating 'have difficulty in trusting others' ranked 3rd with mean score 3.29. Item 19 stating 'I always have suicidal

thoughts' ranked 20 with mean score 1.63. Since the cut-off point for taking decision on the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as perceived by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis is 2.5 and 18 out of the 20 items had mean scores above the cut off; it can then be concluded that the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as perceived by

primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis was the negative aspects such as: students usually feel abandoned, feel sad because of their family status, have difficulty in trusting others and they are easily discouraged.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Influence of Single Parenting on Emotional Development of Primary School Students as viewed by Primary School Teachers in Ilorin Metropolis based on Gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal t-value.	Crit. t-value.
Male	82	41.80	9.69	198	1.37	1.96
Female	188	43.65	9.15			

Table 3 shows the calculated t-value of 1.37 and a critical t-value of 1.96. The critical t-value was greater than the calculated t-value; hence the hypothesis was not rejected. This means that was no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as

viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on qualification.

Table 4. ANOVA Result Showing the Difference in Response of Respondents Influence of Single Parenting on Emotional Development of Primary School Students as Viewed by Primary School Teachers in Ilorin Metropolis based on Qualification.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-value	Crit. F-value	p-value
Between Groups	178.74	3	82.52	1.64	2.60	0.22
Within Groups	17396.055	196	64.54			
Total	17574.795	199				

Source: Author's Computation (2018).

Table 4 indicates that the calculated F-value was 1.64 while the critical F-value was 2.60, since the calculated F-value of 1.64 was less than the critical F-value of 2.60 at 0.05 level of significance; hence, the hypothesis was not rejected. This means that there was no significant difference in the influence of single

parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on qualification.

DISCUSSION

The research revealed that the influence of single parenting on emotional

development of primary school students as perceived by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis was the negative aspects, as children expressed that their emotional development has been through feelings of being abandoned, feeling of inferiority among peers, low self-esteem, social isolation. Moreover, these feelings made them withdraw from the crowd or peers, and sometimes had suicide thoughts. If children start school in an emotionally supportive environment, they will acquire the love of learning necessary skills for success in all areas of school. The finding is in line with the findings of Rich and Kim (2002) stating that as children grow, their emotional standing also grows. The human brain is designed for learning; therefore, children should be well cared for.

Finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as perceived by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender. Although, female had shorter emotion compared to their male counterpart, but in this research, respondents did not differ based on gender. The finding of this research negates the findings of Hilton and Devall (2012) stating that boys from a single parent family suffered more from emotional disturbances because the home lack well rounded up psychological support that an intact family enjoys and that boys suffered disproportionately compared to girls when they live in family

structures that did not include their biological fathers. This finding is also in contrast with that of Eweniyi (2005); Salami and Alawode (2000) whose finding showed that a significant difference exists between academic achievement and emotional development of students.

Another finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as perceived by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on qualification. This implies that irrespective of educational attainment of the primary school teachers did not have any influence on the primary school students. The finding of this research negates Anyakoha (2016) who found that educational attainment had significant difference in the emotional development of students as expressed by teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions have been drawn. The influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis was from the negative aspects, as children expressed their emotional development through various feelings of being abandoned, feeling of inferiority among peers, low self-esteem, social isolation which make them withdraw from the crowd or peers and sometimes have with suicide thoughts. Also, there were no significant differences

in the influence of single parenting on emotional development of primary school students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender and qualification.

Based on the aforementioned findings, the proposed recommendations are:

1. The teachers of children from single parents should be more sensitive to the emotional needs of the children and always be ready to assist them.
2. The single parent should be sensitized by schools on the importance of taking quality time with their children so that they do not learn negative emotional and abnormal behaviour.
3. Parents should be encouraged to maintain stable homes by living together to enhance proper emotional, intellectual and sex role formation of their children.
4. Educated single parents should be able to cater and care for the children than those who are less educated.

Counsellors should provide support for single parents to avoid the children feel abandoned. They should also collaborate with school teachers and school administrators to provide support for children from single parents as they often develop feelings of low self-esteem. Counsellors should educate parent and guardian on how single parenting can influence negative emotional development in their children to help reducing the feelings of social isolation.

Counsellors should give assertive training, and be open minded so that children from single parenting homes can run to when the need for their support arises.

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