



## Impact of single parenting on the development of the girl-child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Prior to this time, single parents in Nigeria were either unheard of or were treated as exceptional occurrences. Currently, single parenting is gradually becoming a norm. The proportion of children in single-parent families, especially girls, is on the increase. The rise in single parent families, particularly those with mothers and young children, may be related to a social value shift away from stable marriages toward divorce and spousal death. The objective of this study was to examine the impact of single parenting on the development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey design using quantitative procedure to gather responses from 400 research participants. The data was analyzed with the aid of simple percentage and chi-square. The results show that single parenting has significant effect on the emotional development of the girl child. The result further revealed that there is significant relationship between single parenting and girl-child academic performance. It is recommended that single mothers should encourage their girl-child to be serious with their academic activities in school.

**Key Words:** Academic performance, emotional development, single parenting, marriage, separation, the girl-child

### 1. Introduction

Prior to this time, single parents in Nigeria were either unheard of or were treated as exceptional occurrences. Currently, single parenting is gradually becoming a norm (Chukwuemeka, 2018; Yusuf et al., 2020). Therefore, when both parents share in the caring duties, the child is morally upright and emotionally secure. The family establishes the foundation of education before the child enters school, and the personality that the child brings to school is determined by the family

because the family is the first agent where the child first comes into relationship and has a great influence on the child's physical, mental, and moral development (Ihedioha, 2021).

The proportion of children in single-parent families, especially girls, is on the increase. The rise in single parent families, particularly those with mothers and young children, may be related to a social value shift away from stable marriages toward divorce and spousal death (Aramide & Akinade, 2020). Children who grow up in single-parent households are more likely to perform poorly academically, drop out of school, stop participating in the labor force, and become teen parents, repercussions that go beyond economic deprivation (Adegboyega, 2019; Aramide & Akinade, 2020).

Despite the fact that many children from single-parent households succeed, some will have a difficult time making the transition to adulthood (Chukwuka, 2018). Children in single-parent families, with relatively low income families face the greatest obstacles to overcoming their developmental, emotional, and economic difficulties.

There are several reasons for parent separation, which might leave a single parent with all of the obligations. Divorce is a common cause of single parenting in Nigeria. Every day in Nigeria's family courts and child welfare, an estimated 10 cases of marital issues and divorce are reported. Teenage or unexpected pregnancy and its consequences are two most significant factors that contribute to single parenthood (Aramide & Akinade, 2020).

Evidence shows that girls growing up with a single mother are more often described by teachers as exhibiting externalizing or acting out behaviour; girls

from single mothers are more likely to have disassociation from their classmates than those of married parents (Edin & Shaefer, 2015). Girls also tend to internalize their struggles with father-absence and the effects are more often relational (Hymowitz, 2020).

The child's emotional development is traced to his or her home environment. A child's emotional development is affected by two kinds of relationships—the parent child relationship and the child-parent relationship (Mairo, 2017). The single parent is mostly responsible for raising the child or children. The herculean task of child rearing cannot be done by a single individual (Hymowitz, 2020; Lange et al., 2014).

Nowadays, single-parent families have become even more common than the so-called “nuclear family”, consisting of a mother or father and the children (Abudu & Fuseini, 2013; Edin & Shaefer, 2015). Daughters of divorced mothers may seem to be more likely to seek the attention of the male chaperones, more likely to initiate contact with boys and more likely to spend time in the boys' areas of the recreation centre. Some effects of divorce are linked directly to the father's absence.

When a father is absent, girls have fewer opportunities to learn how to interact with males (Amien, 2022; Ekpenyong & Udisi, 2016). The effects of growing up in a single parent households have been shown to go beyond economic deprivation, increasing the risk of girl child having poor academic performances, dropping out of school, disconnecting from the labour force, and becoming teen parents. Although many girls growing up in single-parent families succeed, others may face significant challenges in making the transition to adulthood (Chukwuka, 2018).

Daughters from lower-income, single parent families face the most significant barriers to success in school and the work force. Families play a crucial role in any community. In industrialized nations, the majority of children grow up in families, even though the structure of that family may alter over the course of a person's lifetime (Chukwuka, 2018).

In general, a family gives a child the chance to grow up into a stable adult by, for instance, allowing the youngster to go to school (Marloes et al., 2014). Thus, the family that children grow up in has a significant impact on their future success. A child, however, is not in a position to select their own family and must accept if they are unable to provide them with the finest prospects (Edin & Shaefer, 2015).

Numerous factors, including institutional factors, social economic factors, motivational factors, and the family, which is regarded as the primary agent in terms of socialization, can predict the development of the girl child at various levels of social wellbeing, education, and in particular at the basic level (Onuora-Oguno & Olayinka, 2015). According to Horton and Hunt (2004), socialization is a process of lifelong learning in which individuals or groups of persons interact, pick up social norms, and form human traits. Among other things, the family, school, friends, and media are socialization agents.

A child's socialization is greatly influenced by the family because survival depends entirely on other people, especially family members. In most cases, having a single parent is seen as a risk factor for girls more often than for boys (Olayinka, 2009), but in recent years, single parenting has persisted in becoming more prevalent, making it the subject of research in regards to its influence, specifically the detrimental effects of single parenting on the girl child's development process.

The biological, psychological, and emotional changes that take place in people between birth and the end of adolescence as they move from dependence to greater autonomy are referred to as child development (Fadeiye, 2005). Child socialization and child development were used interchangeably in this study. Children of single parents may not receive adequate care, care that would prevent them from being well-cared for and from engaging in socialization, which is crucial to a child's development. This is due to the fact that the child's socialization or developing process depends on both parents playing complementary roles in their upbringing (Kapuwa, 2015). A parent who does not live with a spouse or partner is referred to as a single parent and is responsible for the most of the day-to-day aspects of raising the child or children.

Typically, a single parent is regarded as the primary caregiver, which means the children spend most of their time with the single parent of their sex (Hymowitz, 2020; Lange et al., 2014). Children reside with their non-custodial parent if their parents are divorced or separated. Single parenting used to mostly arise from the loss of a partner, but more recently, it has also been linked to broken homes and divorce (Kapuwa, 2015). Cohabitation and extramarital affairs can also result in single parenting.

Many people who live together mistakenly think that having children strengthen a marriage and increases marital happiness. On the contrary, having children while a couple is not legally married can lead to single

parenting in the future if one of them is not happy with the personality and qualities of the other (Malima & Akech, 2016). Couples who are unhappy in their relationship frequently become less so when babies arrive, and with stressors in their life, they may start to get easily disgusted, edgy, and picky on each other. This is because having children increases the strains on a couple's time, energy, money, and other resources (Marloes et al., 2014). Because it is believed in Africa that girls are more vulnerable than boys to being exposed to societal risk and negative behavior, mothers frequently have custody of the children or children of the same sex as them (girl child) when the family is separated.

This is especially true when the father also wants custody of the children (Kapuwa, 2015). Children suffer negative effects when families are split up and single parents are in charge. Some of these parents are unable to handle the demands of parenting as a result of divorce and separation, and instead rely on the children to help them deal with their own issues (Marloes et al., 2014; Olaleye et al., 2017). The result of children helping their parents cope is an "overburdened child" who must not only handle the normal stresses of childhood but also help a parent avoid depression (Marloes et al., 2014).

Most Single parents get into depression as a result of the responsibility overload, making of decisions and providing for all the needs of their families; task overload- working, housekeeping, and parenting take up so much time that there is none left to meet up unexpected demands and when these parents are stressed, overworked and drained, the sufferers are the children and this can make or mar their developmental process.

Children raised in single parent's homes who have influence from both parents show fewer behavioral problems than children raised in single parent's homes with no influence from the non- custodial parent (Jackson et al, 2010). Having paternal and maternal influence is assumed to reduce negative behavior in children (Blackwell, 2009; Jackson et al., 2010). Other consequences of single parenting that can pose as a threat to the developmental process of the girl child is the emotional and psychological stability of the parent and children.

Parents are responsible to teach children about the norms and values of society and accountable for developing psychological and emotional well-being. In our society, single parenting is not much acceptable. Societies stigmatize single parents and their off spring ((Marloes et al., 2014; Olaleye et al., 2017). When single parents are being stigmatized and criticized in

the society, it affects their thinking and psychological functioning and can result in developing negative and reckless behaviors like flirting, excessive drinking and smoking and becoming aggressive. It is against these risk factors of single parenting, that this study examined the impact of single parenting on the development of the girl-child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- Ascertain the effect of single parenting on the emotional development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria; and
- Evaluate the significant difference in the development of the girl child compared to the boy child from single parents' Homes in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

### 1.2 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives of the study:

- There is no significant difference between the development of girl child and the boy child from single parents in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria; and
- There is no significant relationship between single parents and the development the girl child compared to the boy child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

## 2. Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research survey design. the quantitative method was utilized for the data collection. The study population covers all population of Delta State, particularly adults in the Warri South West Local Government Area (56,682) in Delta State (National Population Commission (NPC, 2012). The total population of children selected from Warri South West Local Government Area was (56,682) Using Taro Yamane (1967) to derive sample size, the study adopted the simple random techniques.

Given the population of children in Warri South West local government areas to be 56782, a sample of 400 was selected from the population. This technique was adopted in order to effectively source data from the targeted respondents. As a result, four hundred copies

of questionnaires was administered across schools in the communities using simple random technique with emphasis on the impact of single parenting on the development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area.

Consequently, the sample population in Warri South West local government areas will well accessed the survey of 40 respondents from Ogbe-Ijoh, 40 respondents from Aja-Udaibo, 40 respondents from Akpikpa, 40 respondents from Gbaramatu, 40 respondents from Isaba, Madangho, 40 respondents from Ogbe-Ijoh, 40 respondents from Ogidigben, 40 respondents from Oporoza and 40 respondents from Ugborodo districts, which makes total of 400 respondents.

The major research instrument for this study was design questionnaire. Three experts from the Department of Social Work content validated the draft questionnaire based on their comments and suggestions, amendments will be made before the questionnaire will finally be administered. The study was analyzed by simple percentage, and displayed in frequency tables.

**3. Results**

**Table 1**

Data derived from research participants

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	259	65.24
Female	138	34.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note. Data computed by Authors, 2024

The table Shows that 65.24%, which translated to 259 respondents', are male, while 34.76%, which translated to 138 respondents were female. This indicates that the male was more represented than females.

**Table 2**

Data derived from research participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Under 30 years	167	42.06
31-35 years	109	27.45
36-40 years	67	16.88
41-45 years	29	7.31
Others	25	6.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>100</b>

Note. Data computed by Authors, 2024

The table above shows that 167 respondents representing 42.06% were under 30 years, 109 respondents representing 27.45% were 31-35 years, 67 respondents representing 16.88% were 36-40 years, while 29 respondents representing 7.31% were 41-45 years, while 25 respondents representing 6.30% were older than 45 years. This implies that majority of the respondents in the study areas fall within the age of less than 30 years, 31-35 years, and 36-40 years respectively.

**Table 3**

Prepared by Authors (Hypothesis One Testing)

Option/Questions	1	2	3	Total
SA	195	168	195	558
A	132	129	109	370
UN	20	18	33	71
SD	35	60	21	116

<b>D</b>	15	22	39	76
Total	<b>397</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>397</b>	1191

Note. Data computed by Authors, 2024

Expected frequency = (Column total) Row Total  
Grand total

$$R1C1 = \frac{397 \times 558}{1191} = 186.00$$

$$R1C2 = \frac{397 \times 370}{1191} = 123.33$$

$$R1C3 = \frac{397 \times 71}{1191} = 23.67$$

$$R1C4 = \frac{397 \times 116}{1191} = 38.67$$

$$R1C5 = \frac{397 \times 76}{1191} = 25.33$$

Single parenting has no significant effect on the emotional development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

**Table 4**  
Prepared by Authors (Contingency Table on Hypothesis one Testing)

O	E	(o-e)	(o-e) <sup>2</sup>	(o-e) <sup>2</sup> /e
195	186.00	9.00	81.00	0.435
132	123.33	8.87	75.169	0.608
20	23.67	-3.67	13.469	0.569
35	28.67	6.33	40.069	1.398
15	25.33	-10.33	106.709	4.213
168	186.00	-18.00	324.000	1.742
129	123.33	5.67	32.149	0.261
18	23.67	-5.67	32.149	1.358
60	28.67	31.33	981.569	34.234
22	25.33	-3.33	11.089	0.438
195	186.00	9.00	81.000	0.436
109	123.33	-14.33	205.349	1.665
33	23.67	9.67	93.509	3.961
21	28.67	-7.67	58.829	2.052
39	25.33	13.67	186.869	7.377
<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>				<b>60.747</b>

Note. Data computed by Authors, 2024

$$\text{Calculated } X^2 = 60.747$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$= (5-1)(3-1)$$

$$= (4)(2)$$

$$= 8$$

& at 0.05 level = 15.507

$$60.747 > 15.507$$

**Decision:** Calculated  $X^2$  is greater than critical  $X^2$ , therefore reject non positive relationship which states that the single parenting has no significant effect on the emotional development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area. Therefore, it can be concluded that single parenting has significant effect on the emotional development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

**Table 5**

Prepared by Authors (Hypothesis Two Testing)

Option/Questions	6	7	8	Total
SA	279	205	185	669
A	70	131	129	330
UN	15	19	13	47
SD	14	32	30	76
D	19	10	40	69
Total	397	397	397	1191

Note. Data computed by Authors, 2024

Expected frequency = (Column total) Row Total  
Grand total

$$R1C1 = \frac{397 \times 669}{1191} = 223.00$$

$$R1C2 = \frac{397 \times 330}{1191} = 110.00$$

$$R1C3 = \frac{397 \times 47}{1191} = 15.67$$

$$R1C4 = \frac{397 \times 76}{1191} = 25.33$$

$$R1C5 = \frac{397 \times 69}{1191} = 23.00$$

There is no significant difference in the development of girl child to the boy child from single parent homes in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

**Table 6**

Prepared by Authors (Contingency Table on Hypothesis Two Testing)

O	E	(o-e)	(o-e) <sup>2</sup>	(o-e) <sup>2/e</sup>
279	223.00	56.00	3136.00	1.406
70	110.00	-40.00	1600.00	14.545
15	15.67	-0.67	0.449	0.029
14	25.33	-11.33	128.369	5.068
19	23.00	-4.00	16.00	0.695
205	223.00	-18.00	323.00	1.453
131	110.00	21.00	441.00	4.009
19	15.67	3.33	11.09	0.708
32	25.33	6.67	44.489	1.756
10	23.00	-13.00	390.625	16.984
185	223.00	-38.00	1444.00	6.475
129	110.00	19.00	361.00	3.282
13	15.67	-2.67	7.129	0.455
30	25.33	4.67	21.809	0.861
40	23.00	17.00	289.00	12.565
X <sup>2</sup>				<b>70.291</b>

Note. Data computed by Authors, 2024  
 Calculated X<sup>2</sup> = 70.291

Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)  
 = (5-1) (3-1)  
 = (4) (2)  
 = 8

& at 0.05 level = 15.507

70.291 > 15.507

**Decision:** Calculated X<sup>2</sup> is greater than critical X<sup>2</sup>, therefore reject null hypothesis two which state that there is no significant difference in the development of girl child to the boy child from single parent homes in Warri South West Local Government Area. this implies that there is significant difference in the development of girl child to the boy child from single parent homes in WarriSouth West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.

**4. Discussion of Findings**

The test of research hypothesis one revealed that the calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 60.747 is greater than critical X<sup>2</sup> value of 15.507, therefore the Authors rejected null hypothesis one which states that the single parenting has no significant effect on the emotional development of the girl child inWarri South West Local Government Area. Therefore, it can be concluded that single parenting has significant effect on the emotional development of

the girl child in Warri South West LocalGovernment Area.

The analysis of research hypothesis two shows that the calculated X<sup>2</sup> value 70.291 is greater than critical X<sup>2</sup> value of 15.507, therefore the Authors rejected null hypothesis two which state that there is no significant difference in the development of girl child to the boy child from single parent homes in Warri South West Local Government Area. This implies that there is significant difference in the development of girl child compared to the boy child from single parents in Warri South West Local Government Area.

**5. Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- Single parenting has significant effect on the emotional development of the girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.
- There is significant difference in the development of girl child compare to the boy child from singleparents in Warri South West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria.
- Single parenting has negative influence on the girl child behaviour in Warri South West LocalGovernment Area.
- There is significant relationship between single parenting and girl child academic performance in Warri South West Local Government Area.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

- Single parents should try to encourage their children as they grow up as not influence their emotional development negatively, especially girl child in Warri South West Local Government Area.
- Those families where there is separation, the parental figure should make sure that the development of both sexes are checkmated as they grow so as to avoid some negative significant difference in children's development in Warri South West Local Government Area.
- Single parents should be careful of what they do in the present of their kinds because they learn fast, especially when it comes to sexual and emotional issues, if not checked can mare the girl child behaviour in Warri South West Local Government Area.
- Women who become single mothers should try as much as possible to encourage their children or get involved their academic activities as to help them cope with areas of constrains, most especially the girl child academic performance in Warri South West Local Government Area.

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