

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OF BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS IN YAMORANSA CIRCUIT,
MFANTSEMAN MUNICIPALITY, CENTRAL REGION

PRISCILLA OWUSU ANSAH

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BY

PRISCILLA OWUSU ANSAH

Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Educational Foundations of the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Guidance and Counselling

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature Date.....

Name: Priscilla Owusu Ansah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature Date.....

Name: Prof. Frederick Ocansey

Co-Supervisor's Signature Date

Name: Dr. Kofi Krafona

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of basic school pupils at the Yamoransa circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population was basic school pupils in the Yamoransa Circuit. The total population was 200 made up of 80 males and 120 females. A sample of 200 was used by employing a purposive sampling. The instrument used for the study was two sets of self-designed questionnaire for students and teachers. The questionnaire comprised 26 close-ended items. The researcher's supervisors validated the instrument. Reliability was established with Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.802. Data was analysed using frequencies, percentages and the independent sample t-test. All tests were determined at 0.05 significance levels. The findings revealed that majority of the pupils in single parenting homes are supervised by their siblings when learning at home. Again it was revealed that the main area of effects of single parenting on the academic work of pupils had to do with single parents not providing all the books their children need on time. The outcome of the study was used as a basis to recommend to school authorities, community leaders, government agencies, NGOs and professional guidance and counselling coordinators to work together by organizing school durbars, parent-teacher meetings and making use of such fora to enable parents know that their supervision of their children is vital to the success of their academic work

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DEDICATION

To the Glory of God and to my loving father Pastor Francis Fosu

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The term parent refers to anyone who begets, or bring forth, offspring; a father or a mother. It also means a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom a child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare) (U. S. Department of Education, 2012). Again, it indicates any adult who plays a significant role in a student's life. Parenting is the regulation of behaviour and development of children, with the intention that they will be able to live a socially desirable life, adapt their environment, and pursue their goals. (Bradley & Caldwell, 1995).

Parents play an essential role in the growth of their children. Parenting and high standard quality education are vital in developing the right human resources to take part in the development endeavors in order to help alleviate the problems that the nation is grappled with (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Merton, 1908). Research has shown that parents are the most accurate predictors as far as student's achievement in school is concerned. The extent to which a student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning and effective communication plays very important role in education (Hara & Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill & Craft, 2003).

A body of research has developed on how changes in patterns of family structure affect children. Most research supports the notion that, on

average, children do best when raised by their two married, biological parents who have low-conflict relationships. This implies that when parents live a life free from conflict, it helps in the proper upbringing of the child (Parke, 2003). In supporting this view, Kerby, (2007) asserted that parents play a very critical role in every facet of child development and even more encompassing, parents are responsible for guiding and nurturing all facets of children's development, including their social, emotional, thinking and educational development.

The Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), is of the view that children develop simultaneously both in two systems, school and family. It is therefore no surprise that children from single-parent families are at high risk of having lower school performance and exhibiting more behaviour problems compared to children from nuclear families (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003). Parents are their children's first and foremost teachers, guidance counsellors and nurturers. Parents are responsible for providing the basic resources that are needed, like home, and clothing. They are also responsible for taking good care of these resources, such as insuring that the home environment is safe and clean, and that children take foods that are healthy and nutritious. Parental support is essential in maintaining a healthy relationship with children. Support can stem from being a good role model, talking to a child about their lives, becoming active in a child's education, creating a regular set of disciplinary rules and by loving and encouraging the child. The most important thing is setting time aside for the children which will help build a good relationship and emotional support. The care and attention a child receives at home, to a large extent influences the academic achievement of the child either negatively or positively (Sanders, 1996).

Studies have shown that children who live with both parents grow up with more financial and educational advantages than youngsters raised up by one parent (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Single-parenting is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today.

A study conducted in the United States of America indicated that one third of the present children will have to live in a single-parent family before they reach age 15 (Andersson, 2002). The study further stated that single-parent families have become more common than the nuclear family over the past twenty years, though the phenomenon is not new.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2012), the population for individuals who are 12 years and older constitute 16,886,306. Out of the total, 7,237,730 (42.9%) of them are married; 315,910 (1.9%) are separated; 574,271 (3.4%) are divorced while 823,562 (4.9%) of them are widowed. This indicates that in Ghana about 1,713,743 (10.2%) of the people are single parents (i.e. those people separated, divorced and widowed). In the Central Region, the population which is 17 years and older constitute 1,180,896. Out of the total, 589,376 (49.3%) are married, 28,991 (2.4%) are separated, 74,654 (6.3%) are divorced and 487,875 (41.3%) are widowed (GSS, 2012).

Despite successive governments' attempts to make education the hub of socio-economic development of the country, so many factors are militating against academic performance of basic school pupils. Some studies have enumerated many factors affecting the performance of basic school pupils to include: inadequate supervision by school teachers and authorities (Etsey, Amedeha & Edjah, 2004), the attitude of some public school teachers and

authorities to their duties (Okyerefo, Fiaveh, & Lamptey, 2011). It is a common knowledge that inadequate motivation for teachers (Young, 1989), class size (Cochran-Smith, 2006) and inadequate infrastructures, among other things also affect the teaching and learning process which ultimately impedes the performance of the pupil. According to Sanders (1996) and Alhassan (2001), the mediating factors which influence the academic performance of the child include parental support, teacher support and personal achievement motivation among others.

Harris and Chrispeels (2006) asserted that, there are beliefs that parental involvements in their children's education make a significant difference in the outcome of young people and that parents have a key role to play in raising educational standards. The more engaged parents are in the education of their children, the more likely their children are to succeed (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006). Parental involvement is one of the key factors in securing higher student achievement and sustained school achievement.

In many homes, children's schooling may be affected by several factors irrespective of the child's parental status, that is whether the child is from single or both parent homes. The socio-economic background of parents and their perception and attitudes towards schooling, the child's view about parents and parenting style may accelerate or impede the child's performance in school (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006). Besides, there are other mediating factors which are normally hidden but can enhance or impede the academic pursuit of the child. The care and attention a child receives at home, to a large extent influences the academic achievement of the child either negatively or positively (Sanders, 1996).

It is an indisputable fact that parents are the most immediate relation of a child. As such parents' committed efforts and their own education, among others, are crucial to a child's education and academic performance to the largest extent. It has been observed widely that educated parents better understand the educational needs and their children's aptitude. They, thus help their children in their early education which affects their proficiency in their relative area of knowledge. Parents' education or academic background definitely contributes immensely toward the academic life of children. According to Grissmer (2003), parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) submits that parents' educational background influences the academic achievement of students. This, according to him, is because the parents would be in a good position to act as second teachers to their children; and even guide and counsel them on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by them.

Musgrave (2000) argues that children who come from an educated home would like to follow the steps of their family and by this, work actively in their studies. Jeynes (2002) also asserts that a child from a well -educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This he suggests apparently because children from an educated family are seen to have lots of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. Eamon (2005) again claims that virtually in all nations, children of parents high on the educational, occupation and social scale have far better chance of getting into good

secondary schools and from there into the best colleges and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers.

In fact, the most important factor associated with the educational achievement of children is not race, ethnicity or immigrant status; instead the most critical factor is parents' education (Considine & Zappala, 2002). It is against this background that this research seeks to find out the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of some selected basic school pupils in Yamoransa Circuit of the Mfantseman Municipality.

Statement of the Problem

There is often some problems or great psychological and academic effect on children when they are raised by single parents worldwide (Downey, 1994; Balcom, 1998). Majority of research concerning single parenthood have revealed a number of disadvantages faced by children raised in the absence of their father or mother and poor academic performance of such children has been discovered as one of the major disadvantages. Many studies done on single parenting have documented differences between children raised in father-absent (FA) and father-present (FP) homes (Biller, 1970; Chapman, 1977; Fry & Scher, 1984; Milne, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986; Daniels, 1986; Downey, 1994; Balcom, 1998; Downey, Ainsworth-Darnell, & Dufur, 1998). Some studies have shown that children from homes without the father graduate from high school and attend college at a lower rate (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004), perform worse on standardized tests (Bain, Boersma, & Chapman, 1983), and are more likely to use drugs (Mandara & Murry, 2006) than children from homes where the father is present. Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan, (2004) as well as Mandara and Murry (2006) further opined that

growing up without a father seems to have a greater negative effect on boys as compared to girls.

Also, many African researchers have emphasised that, with the upsurge in the rate of divorce, teen parenting and separation, many young people of school-going age face a lot of challenges which as a result affect their academic performance. Studies by several authors such as Abudu and Fuseini (2013) and Chowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012) give evidence of the fact that single-parenting is a major cause of poor academic performance among pupils in Africa.

Poor academic performance of pupils in Ghanaian education system has been attributed to many factors by educationists, politicians and the government. Sometimes, teachers are the first to be accused when there is a fall in academic standard while nothing or very little is said about other factors such as single parenting, perceived parental involvement and the child's own academic motivation. In Ghana, the government has put in place useful strategies to encourage enrolment, daily attendance and retention of pupils in basic schools across the country in an attempt to realise the objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy as well as the provision of Education for All (EFA) agenda. These strategies include the provision of teaching and learning materials, school uniforms, the school feeding programme and the introduction of the capitation grant per child enrolled. The government has also instituted best teacher awards and other teacher career development programmes as motivation to teachers to ensure the delivery of quality of education to its children (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports [MOESS], 2007). In spite of all these

laudable achievements by the government, the education sector continues to face many challenges. According to ISSER (2008) the performance of many children is failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies. According to the Mfantseman Municipal Education Office (2015), the performance of most of the children are failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies at the basic level of education. Again, empirical evidence in the Yamoransa circuit also indicates that there has been a remarkable low academic performance of basic school pupils over the past three years and this attest to the BECE Results Analysis (Mfantseman Municipal Education Office, 2012-2015). It has been asserted by Alhassan (2001) that children's learning experiences differ as a result of variables such as single parenting, parental support, emotional status and motivation.

Single-parenting is not a myth in Ghana. Studies by several authors such as Abudu and Fuseini (2013), and Chowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto(2012) give evidence of the fact that single-parenting is a major cause of poor academic performance among pupils in Ghana. Abudu and Fuseini (2013) revealed that the sample from two parent homes have most of their parents helping them in their academic work as compared to those from single parent families. In a similar vein, the findings of Chowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto(2012) revealed that married parents in Ghana are more likely to engage in their children's education than single parents.

The aggregate of single parents in the Central Region who are 15 years and above is 188,858 (12.5%) (GSS, 2012). Similarly, in the Mfantseman Municipality, the study area, 12.5% are single parents (i.e., those separated,

divorced and widowed). Taking into consideration these high figures of single parenting in Ghana and the Mfantseman Municipality in particular, little is known about how single parenting affects pupils' academic performance. In the Yamoransa Circuit, cursory observations from teachers in the schools showed that a good number of the children come from single parented homes. They attribute this situation to long truck drivers who park their vehicles to take rest after their long drive and as a result give birth with some mothers without taking any responsibility of these children. These children are noted for behavioural problems such as lateness to school, absenteeism, sleeping during lessons, and others and all these affect the academic performance of the children. Interaction with some opinion leaders in some of the communities in the Yamoransa Circuit showed that there is a growing awareness of the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of basic school pupils in the Yamoransa circuit. Some of the children complained about the negative effects of single parenting on their academic performance. Many of our young people who are single parented may not be receiving the needed attention and support from significant others such as the guidance personnel and other school officials. There is a possibility that these children can be helped when they are given the chance to tell their ordeal. Much as the situation described here causes concern, it is not yet known to the Yamoransa community why most of their pupils fail to meet the academic standard expected of them. It is, therefore, imperative that diagnostic studies are carried out to identify the major effects of single parenting that are associated with academic performance with a view of instituting corrective measures in some

selected basic schools in the Yamoransa Circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of single parenting on pupil's academic performance in Yamoransa Circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality. Specific objectives include:

1. To find out the nature of families and homes of single parented pupils.
2. To determine the prevalence of single parented pupils in the schools
3. To examine the challenges of single parented pupils.
4. To find out the influence of single parenting on academic performance of pupil.
5. To find out how gender of single parented pupils influence their academic performance

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What is the nature of families and homes of single parented in Yamoransa circuit pupils?
2. How prevalent is the single parenting situation in the Yamoransa circuit schools?
3. What are the challenges of single parented pupils in Yamoransa circuit?
4. How does single parenting affects academic performance of pupils in Yamoransa circuit?

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils in Yamoransa circuit.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils in Yamoransa circuit.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will provide information on the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of pupils in some selected basic schools and suggest ways of bringing the effects of single parenting under control.

Also it will enable policy makers to find ways to implement all kinds of laws relating to the rights of children especially those who are single parented. Again the findings of the study will be directly applicable to and supplement the knowledge base of guidance and counselling personnel in our basic school. It will also be used to educate all else who have close contacts with basic school children both within and outside our educational institutions such as school authorities, teachers', parents, social workers and religious leaders to better be informed on the effects of single parenting on school children and enabled them to plan programmes for the children which will cater for areas on the need to help curb the effects on children. Finally, the study will create awareness among significant others, opinion leaders and educational authority on the effects of single parenting on the basic school child and its implication to the Ghanaian society so that they will formulate good policies to protect single parented children in our society.

Delimitations

The study was limited in scope and geography. The study focused on single parenting and its effects on academic performance of all basic schools' pupils in the Yamoransa Circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality. Geographically, this study was limited to pupils in the selected four public basic schools in Yamoransa circuit.

Limitations

Only selected single parented pupils from the four public schools out of the ten in the Yamoransa circuit were used. Hence generalisation of the findings of the study to the entire school children in Yamoransa was limited. In addition, generalisation of the findings to all basic school children in other communities is limited, as there is likely to be differences in the types of effects of single parenting between basic schools' children in Ghana.

Secondly, the current study relied on self- reporting by respondents and as a result, respondents might not be willing to disclose the actual effects they may be going through in spite of anonymity and confidentiality.

Definition of Terms

The main terms in the study are operationally defined as to the meaning within the context of the study.

Family: In this study family refers to a group of individuals who are bonded together by blood, marriage or legal adoption. It includes both the nuclear and extended family.

Family structure: In this study refers to the state and nature of an individual's family. In essence, it shows whether all the members in the family are present or not, especially the parents.

Parenting: In this study, parenting involves the act of raising or taking care of the children in the home. It is a call of duty.

Single parent families: Single parent families in this study refer to the families that are being managed and taken care of by a single parent. Thus, in essence, only one of the two parents is available while the other is absent for varied reasons such as divorce, separation or death.

Two-parent families: The two parent families also known as intact families in the study, refers to the families in which both parents are existent in the family. The task of parenting is being done by both the mother and the father.

Academic performance: In this study, academic performance refers to the overall academic work and achievement of the pupils.

Organisation of the Study

This study was organised to facilitate easy reading and understanding. The Chapter One focused on the introduction of the study. It involved the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses. The significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, definition of terms and the organisation of the study made up the rest of the first chapter.

Chapter Two of this involves the review of literature related to the study. The chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. Again, the second chapter reviewed related empirical studies. The Third Chapter focuses on the methodology for the study. This chapter describes the research design, the population, the sample and sampling procedures used as well as the instruments and procedures involved in the collection and the analysis of data.

The presentation and discussion of the results of the study are reported in Chapter Four. The collected data is interpreted and discussed in relation with the reviewed literature. Finally, the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study are made in the fifth and final chapter of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature related to the study. It was done in three sections, the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and the review of empirical studies.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study reviewed theories which give explanation to how single parenting influences the academic performance of students. Theories that were reviewed include the Family Deficit Model, Risk and Protective Factor Model, The Social Exchange Theory, Family Socialization Perspective Model, The Theory of Social Network Paradigm, The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, Economic Deprivation Theory and other perspectives (No-Impact Perspective and Systems Perspective).

Family Deficit Model

The Family Deficit Model was propounded by Hetherington and Kelly (2002). This model viewed the intact or two-parent home as the ideal home or family structure. The model assumes that the lack of a nuclear family structure in single-parent families is what results in a negative impact on the children hence the proponents of the Family Deficit Model postulate that single parenting is bad for children. Marsh (1990) indicated that early research into the effects of single parenting focused on a "family deficit model". It was

assumed that single parenting can cause deficits in children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural development. The model plays down the effects that economic and other background factors could have on the academic attainments of the learners (Donahoo, 2003). Moreover, it has been opined by Hill (2006) that the family deficit model holds the belief that single-parent households are deficient in various critical ways for effective child training. Hill argued that this could be so because there may not be any single parent (father or mother) that can fully play the roles of the father and mother in the raising of a child in all areas such as feeding, clothing, shelter and education. On this basis, the Family Deficit Model assumes that single parent homes can have an influence on the academic performance of pupils.

Risk and Protective Factor Model

The Risk and Protective Factor Model was developed in the early 1990s by Raiter and colleagues as cited in Amoakohene (2013). The Risk and Protective Factor Model describes the family structure as having many risk factors which can be either background characteristics or life events that may have a negative effect on the development of the child. The foundation for the model is that all families have both strengths and weaknesses and as such this model does not regard single-parent families as irregular. It is these strengths and weaknesses, they propose, that lead to differing outcomes in children's adjustment (Marsh, 1990). The Risk factors are the quantifiable attributes that have the tendency to reduce the effective and appropriate accomplishment of a family's goals. Protective factors, on the other hand describe all measurable potentials that can ensure the success and appropriate family achievement. Several researchers have suggested with this model as their basis that there are

several risk and protective factors which work together to influence a child's academic performance positively or otherwise (Donahoo, 2003; Ushie, Emeka, Ononga, & Owolabi, 2012). The researchers take this stand instead of seeing single parenting as the sole predictor of academic success or failure for children.

Single parents can indulge in child abuse which includes venting out their anger, pain or problematic state of mind on their children. This can result in a devastating effect. However, the effect of a single parent turning out to be abusive can be negated by having both parents around. This is so because there can be hope and moral support as the child can look up to the good parent. Single parenting can therefore be viewed in the overall framework of the risk and protective factor model. Thus, rather than being defined as the cause of problems during development, single parenting can be identified as one risk factor that can lead to unsuccessful outcomes. Effective interventions can then be designed by practitioners with knowledge of which protective factors can deal with the risk. Single parents can strive to enhance the protective factors in the case when single parenting is identified to be one risk factor in the development of children.

The Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory has its origins in Structural Anthropology (Levi-Straus), Behavioural Psychology (B. F. Skinner, Albert Bandura), Utilitarian Economics (D. Ricardo, Adam Smith, J. S. Mill), Sociology (George Homans, Peter Blau) and Social Psychology (Thibaut & Kelly). When two parents or intact homes separate, the children often lose both the financial and emotional support of their fathers, which can have a negative

impact on academic performance. The social exchange theory suggests that economic hardship in single-parent families is likely to require adolescents to work long hours and to take greater responsibility for younger brothers and/or sisters.

Schneider and Coleman (1993) emphasized that family structure can constrain the availability of economic and social resources such as the parents' ability to spend time with their child, get involved in their children's educational activities, and use monetary resources in ways that can promote positive educational outcomes. As a result, these time-consuming activities are likely to be related to lower school achievement. In this sense then, exchanging time spent with children for some economic and financial gain, has the tendency to affect the life of the children in the house.

Family Socialization Perspective Model

The Family Socialization Perspective model by Bowen (1971) as cited in Amoakohene (2013) proposes that the absence of a parent is probably associated with a decrease in total parental involvement, which is in turn related to poorer school outcomes. It has been revealed by Santrock (as cited in Berns, 2007) that girls who live with fathers and boys who live with mothers tend to be less well-adjusted than those who live with the same sex parents. In explaining further, boys who live with fathers tend to be less demanding, more mature, independent, sociable, and have self-esteem than girls in the fathers' custody situation. Likewise, girls who live with mothers tend to be less demanding, more mature, independent, and sociable and have higher self-esteem than boys in mothers' custody situation. When children live with their parents of the same sex, they are able to freely ask questions

pertaining to their sexuality. Female children might not feel comfortable to ask their fathers questions related to their sexuality as they could do when they were living with their mothers. In this same line of understanding, boys will not feel comfortable talking to their mothers about their sexuality. In terms of being more specific, it is often claimed that the absence of fathers has particularly negative socialization influences, which may be especially detrimental for boys. It is very practical for children to be curious on the things that they watch on television and hear from friends. As a result, Brusius (1989) admonished that “there is a great need for parents to teach clear values regarding sexuality because the society is teaching its own values”. This therefore behooves on parents to make issues more understandable for them so that they can take the necessary precautions. Children need the ideas of both parents; therefore, single parenting has a great impact on them.

The Theory of Social Network Paradigm

The theory of social network paradigm highlights the value of significant others in an individual’s social system who make available support and resources such as information and money (Blau, 1964, Barnes, 1972). Although there are several definitions of social network, the most common mention is to the linkages between individuals, groups, and institutions with which a person has contact and on which a person perceives he or she can depend for support (Bott, 1971). One of the primary functions of an individual’s social network is to provide a buffer against negative stresses, thereby promoting greater psychological and personal wellbeing (D’ Abbs, 1982). In educational research, it has been found that children with well-developed social networks have more positive educational outcomes than

children without them (Coates, 1987). It has been opined by Clark (1991) that social networks provide social support which is defined as the availability of people on whom others can rely, people who let others know that they care about, value and love them. Clark asserts that the greater a child's social support, the greater the likelihood that he or she will succeed in school. With this in mind, it can be inferred that the family structure (single or two-parent homes) can affect the achievement of pupils in school. The parental support will serve as a source of social network.

The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence

Epstein (1987) propounded the theory of overlapping spheres of influence. The theory of overlapping spheres of influence emphasizes the vital role of schools, families and communities working together to meet the needs of children. This theory integrates educational, sociological, and psychological perspectives on social organizations as well as the effects of family, school and community environment on educational outcomes. It acknowledges the interlocking histories of the major institutions that socialize and educate children. A principle central to this theory is that certain goals such as students' academic success, is of mutual interest to people in each of these institutions, and is best achieved through their cooperative action and support. This theory acknowledges the fact that support from families, teachers and other significant factors such as achievement motivation are responsible for the socialization of children which influence their school attitude, behaviours and academic achievement. In this regard, the structure of the family is likely to have an effect on the overall academic performance of pupils.

Economic Deprivation Theory

The economic deprivation theory suggests that economic hardship in single-parent families is likely to require adolescents to work long hours and to take greater responsibility for younger brothers and/or sisters. As a result, these time-consuming activities are likely to be related to lower school achievement. In the view of Lanier and Huff-Corzine (2006), family disruption can be a factor to young people's behaviour. They argue that young people who are from female headed households where the spouse is absent will more likely feel at a disadvantage than their peers and engage in more violence. Black, Howard, and Nina (1998) opined that interventions for youths who face economic deprivation should not be focused solely on economic deprivation indicators. They made use of an ecological approach to examine the precursors of violence and direct attention to risk and protective factors at the individual, parent, family, and neighbourhood levels. Black et al. argue that preventative interventions for young people particularly those in poverty should be implemented in childhood. The interventions should also promote positive options for young people and help to develop life and employment skills. From this point of view, it can be argued that when there is only one parent in the home, children are likely to be affected because there will be a deprivation of resources and thus affecting their behaviour and academic work.

Other Perspectives

No-Impact Perspective

The no-impact perspective claims that the association between changing family structures and children's academic outcomes can be attributed

to a combination of family background factors such as parents' education and incomes and the ethnicity/race of the family. Further, some researchers propose that much family structure research is inconclusive because it has failed to differentiate among various types of single-parent families such as whether they result from marital disruption (divorce or separation), parental death, or a never-married parent. In addition, it is suggested that many studies fail to take into account the timing in a child's life of a family disruption, the duration of the effects of that disruption, and whether the lone parent is the father, mother, or a guardian.

Systems perspective

Several perspectives have been considered by researchers in studying structure of the family and its impact. However, researchers began looking at Single Parent homes from a Systems perspective in the 1980's. They tried to determine the actual reasons why children from Single Parent homes were disadvantaged in comparison to children from two-parent (TP) homes. It was found by Milne, Myers, Rosenthal and Ginsburg (1986) that parental expectations, number of books in the home, and income were significant predictors of academic performance of children and especially so in children of Single Parent Homes. In a similar fashion, Teachman (1987) discovered four important educational resources that play a significant role in determining level of schooling for both men and women. This generated further research when Downey (1994) used the study of Teachman as a foundation and identified 11 key educationally related objects. These included: a place to study, a daily newspaper, regular magazine, encyclopedia, atlas, dictionary, typewriter, computer, more than 50 books, calculator and one's own room.

Downey argued that the presence or absence of these things predictors of the academic performance of children in the future.

Further, in the systems perspective, Krein and Beller (1988) studied the differences of the effect of living in a Single Parent homes on educational achievement by gender and the length of parent absence. In terms of gender it was revealed that the negative effects were greater for boys than girls. Negative effects of living in a Single Parent home also was found to increase with the total time spent in a Single Parent home. Kim (2004) reported that while family income is important, other factors have a greater influence on academic performance. Parental expectations, family size, and the quality of the parent child relationship were seen as stronger predictors of future academic success than income. The focus for this perspective is that there could be several reasons responsible for the effects of living in a single parent home. With this in mind, the effect cannot be attributed to only one thing.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used for the study is an adapted model of the framework developed by Amoakohene (2013). The model is related to the model of parental involvement by (Nechyba, McEwan, & Older–Aguilar, 1999) as cited in Amoakohene (2013). In the view of Nechyba et al., the academic achievement and adjustment of pupils are influenced by people, processes and institutions. In the current model, single parent families is considered as an institution that can influence academic performance, however, being also influenced by some intervening or mediating variables such as gender.

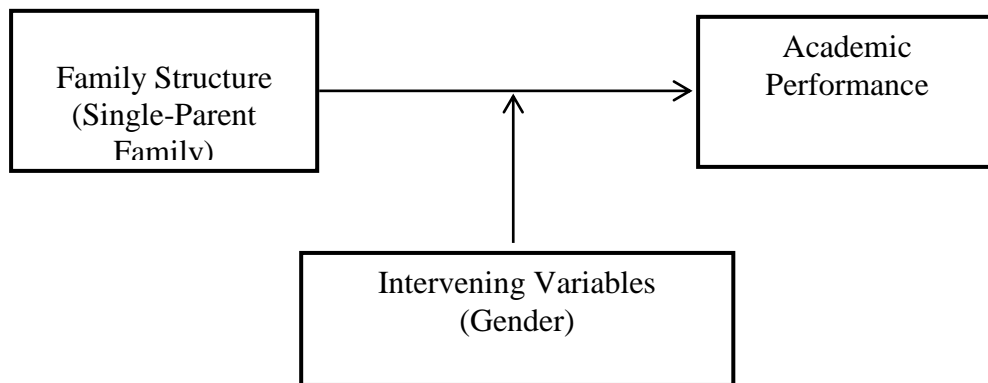


Figure 1: Effects of Family Structure on Academic Performance

Source: Adapted from Amoakohene (2013). The variables in the model are explained as to how they all fit together as a conceptual framework for the study.

Single Parent Family

Single-parent family is a social phenomenon which has become more common over the past few decades (Gucciardi, Celasun and Stewart, 2004). A single parent is the parent who has the day to day duty in the raising of his or her children alone without the help of the wife or husband. It has been indicated by Eweniyi (2005) and Tenijbanije (2009) that single parent families' results from issues such as divorce, loss of one parent, never married, and separation. Lee, Kusher, and Cho (2007) viewed single-parent family unit as threats to a child's development. This they argue is so because single-parent families are unable to fulfill the appropriate responsibilities towards the child. Bellavia and Frone (2005) have also indicated that single parents struggle with most family demands. Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi and Bianchi (2004) report that even though single parents suffer from the

highest rates of time-strain based conflicts, they are not more likely to report spending insufficient time with their children.

Further, family structures have been widely identified by several studies to have a significant influence on learners' overall performance including cognitive attainment level (Eweniyi, 2005; Tenibiaje, 2009). This can be verified to be true since Osunloye (2008) opined that family background including family structure size, socio-economic status and educational background play important roles in the educational achievement and level of social development of individuals. From the foregoing, the place of single parent family in the framework as having predictive linkage to academic success can be supported.

Intervening Variable (Gender)

The gender of a particular child can be an intervening or mediating variable between the effects of single parenting and academic performance. In some instance it can have an influence or otherwise. Thus, it can either mediate the effect of single parenting positively or negatively. This means whether an individual is male or female is likely to determine the degree to which the individual child is affected by living in single parented home.

Academic Performance

Onzima (2011) opined that children of single parent homes have the tendency of not finishing up their studies at the high school and college levels. They also have less parental care, parent monitoring of school work and less social supervision. In the view of Dreyer (1994) and Zangqa (1994) there are three requirements for Academic Achievement that should be met by the school. They are:

- a. Children must be helped to recognize their potentials
- b. They should have to be motivated to utilize these potentials
- c. The school must recognize learners' potentials.

These requirements indicate that the school is the place where adolescents can realise or actualise their academic potentials. However, the achievement of academic success is not the work of the school alone; parents have to play their part. Getting time of their commitments, their office work, and businesses to get involved in the academic work of their children is vital for the children to succeed. Therefore, it is expedient that parents do not overlook their teens irrespective of tight their schedules, they should devote their time to be with their children at home.

Other Concepts Related to the Study

This section reviews other concepts that are related to the study.

Factors that can affect student performance

Several factors affect the academic performance of pupils and so when society refuses to take responsibility and when children themselves behave inappropriately towards their studies they may fail to meet a passing standard. Regardless of the fact that there can be many factors responsible for why children or pupils might struggle with academic work, by grouping factors according to sources, you can begin to identify where specific performance factors come from and how they are connected to each other.

The factors can be grouped into the following:

Student-related factors

There are some reasons for poor performance that are specific or related to the students and not related to external factors. One issue as that can

be bullying especially cyber bullying. The evolution of technology and social media communication has, in some countries if not most, made it easier than ever for young people to be exposed to environments that can make bullying unbearable and even more threatening than ever before.

Other student related issues can involve self-motivation and learning disability. The issues are student-centered and may create an obstacle to reaching certain academic standards. The role of motivation in performance is visible in the sense that a student may be fully capable of earning high grades but might simply not care enough about education to exert the effort. Issues of motivation could be placed upon the parents or even the school, but sometimes a child simply does not enjoy learning.

Teacher-Related Factors

Teachers play a significant role in student performance and also can be responsible for poor student performance. For instance, if a teacher lacks experience or is dispassionate about teaching, the children might not be able to develop comprehensive understandings of the subject material. Furthermore, if the teacher has classroom management problems, such as extreme authoritarianism, the classroom environment might hinder fruitful class discussions and collaborative learning. Poor classroom management can also deter students from applying themselves to the best of their abilities.

School-related factors

Schools themselves can then be contributors to pupils' performance. In an environment where learning is not conducive, pupils usually put forth less effort because the expectations placed upon them have been lowered in order to cope with increased demand for education. In schools that can't afford

more teachers or building expansions, classes sometimes become overcrowded to the point that children learn under trees and teachers have to spend more time on ‘classroom’ management than on teaching, which can result in lower student performance. Rural and township schools are the most affected and in these areas you also find the highest levels of poverty.

Family-related factors

Finally, family-related factors can play a critical role in a student’s academic performance. This is the main focus of the study.

Family

Generally, family can be seen as a group of people who have biological, emotional or legal ties to each other (McDaniel, Campbell, & Seaburn, 1990). The concept of family has changed from the large extended family to smaller units, the nuclear family, and nowadays to even smaller single-parent families. Family was earlier seen as an institution, but nowadays, the family is based on the intimate relationship between two adults and as such if the relationship is not working, the family will probably be broken (Jallinoja, 2000).

The concept of parenting

Parenting can be simply defined as the process or the state of being a parent (Brooks, 1987). You are involved in the process of parenting, once you have a child. However, it is not that simple and Morrison (1978) defined parenting as the process of developing and utilizing the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to, rearing and/or providing care for offspring. This definition implies that parenting starts when there is a plan for it and it involves not just bringing up the children but also providing

care for them. Parenting has been seen as a ‘task’ that includes the dimensions of sensitivity to a child’s needs, social communication and emotional expressiveness and disciplinary control (Rutter, 1985). Parenting is also viewed as being situated within a relationship which is affected by a wide variety of factors. The interaction of these ‘determining factors’ in increasing risk or acting as compensatory ‘buffers’ is crucial to an understanding of the parenting process (Woodcock, 2003). Further, Bornstein (2002) viewed parenting in this sense “parents create people; is the entrusted and abiding task of parents to prepare their offspring for the physical, psychological and economic conditions in which they will eventually fare, and it is hoped, flourish; parents are the final common pathway to children’s development and stature, adjustment and success” (p. 9).

The purpose of parenting is to facilitate the child’s optimal development within a safe environment (Reder, Duncan, & Lucey, 2003). It is important to recognise that the qualities a family is expected to encourage and develop in a child are culturally determined and thus will differ. For example, in the view of Small (2004), self-reliance and independence are seen as important for parents of children in western cultures to foster, whereas reliance on others and community interdependence can be viewed as important in other cultures. It is generally accepted that the role of parents is to ensure the successful socialization of children.

Based on a comprehensive review of the research on parenting competence, Teti and Candelaria (2002) noted general areas of agreement in the empirical literature about strategies that assist in the successful socialization of children. They include:

1. parental warmth, sensitivity, and acceptance of children's basic needs are core features of parenting associated with positive outcomes in children, irrespective of their developmental stage
2. harsh, coercive parenting is regarded to be detrimental to children, although the extent of negative impact depends on the age and temperament of the child
3. parental involvement appears to be better than no involvement at all, although involvement by itself is not a good indicator of parenting competence
4. parental control in the context of high parental warmth and sensitivity produces better adjusted children than circumstances in which parental control is not accompanied by warmth
5. the most successful disciplinary strategies enable children to internalize the message behind the discipline attempt. Excessive control can raise a child's arousal to the point where greater attention is paid to the parent's emotion than the message he or she is wishing to convey.

Some core elements of parenting have been enlisted by Hoghughu (1997) as cited in White (2005):

1. *Care*: This involves meeting the child's needs for physical, emotional and social well-being and protecting the child from avoidable illness, harm, accident or abuse.
2. *Control*: Involves setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries.
3. *Development*: This involves realizing the child's potential in various domains.

In order to be effective, the parent needs to have:

1. *Knowledge*: Involves knowledge of how the child's care needs can best be met, the child's developmental potential, how to interpret the child's cues and sources of harm.
2. *Motivation*: Having the motivation to protect, to sacrifice personal needs.
3. *Resources*: Includes both material and personal resource.
4. *Opportunity*: The right time and space.

These elements are not static but need to be achieved within the evolving relationship between parent and child.

The Concept of Single Parenting

Single-parenting can be defined as a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is being responsible for the upbringing of the child (Henslim, 1985; Whitting & Child, 1993). Single-parenthood may also arise when either the male or the female decides to produce and raise a child or children outside wedlock (Ortesse, 1998). This implies that the other partner is possibly alive but has neglected his or her responsibilities to the child. Single parent families are either headed by mothers, fathers, and/or grandparents raising up grandchildren.

The Chambers English Dictionary (2007) also define single-parenting as a mother or father bringing up children alone. The definition however ignores those who legally adopt children as parent. Therefore, single-parenting in this study refers to a situation where one of the two individuals who brought a child to the world or legally adopted a child is dead or alive but

does not perform any responsibility in the nurturing and upbringing of the child.

Single-parenting is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. According to Parent Easy Guide Series [PEGS] (2011), parenting in a single or sole parent household is different in many ways from parenting in a two parent household. Some people choose single parenting; others have it thrust upon them. PEGS (2011) went ahead to say that, there are those who choose to raise a child alone, those who decide to leave a two parent relationship and to become a sole parent and those who are left behind with the children. Each path has its own issues to deal with.

The increase of the proportion of children living only with one parent especially 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 step-parent family

It has been estimated that most of the single parents remarry a few years after a divorce or death of a former spouse (Bumpass & Raley 1995, Piha 2000). A new family is formed with one parent and his/her biological children and a step-parent. Thus, children receive a new “social parent “. Sometimes both parents bring their children from the previous marriage to a new family and may even have new children together.

Factors responsible for single parenting

The 21st century has witnessed an increase in single parent families which is deemed to have emerged from circumstances such as divorce,

separation, hospitalization, imprisonment, desertions, out of-state employment, and so on (Hamner & Turner, 1990). Ambert (2009) revealed that one of the causes of single parenting is divorce. Other factors responsible include the loss of one partner through death (Maier & Lachman, 2000), separation of partners (Burke, McIntosh, & Gridley, 2009) and imprisonment of a partner (Glaze, Maruschak, & Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). These same factors have been reported by Salami and Alawode (2000) who asserted that single parenting results from factors such as divorce, separation, having children from wedlock and death of one spouse. The findings of Salami and Alawode further confirmed the findings of Ortese (1998).

According to Holakooi, Gotbi and Jazayeri (2004) the reasons for divorce could be lack of mutual understanding between couples, addiction, interference from extended family, financial problems, demographic factors and parental psychopathology which leads to an unstable relationship between the family. Further, Amato (2000) pointed out that single parent families were historically as a result of parental death, as it was shown that about one-fourth of children born around the turn of the nineteenth century experienced death of a parent before they reached the age of fifteen. In developing countries, it has been found by Kinnear (1999) that divorce is not common compared to desertion, death, and imprisonment in producing single-parent families, mainly under the care of women. Several factors that are responsible for single parenting were identified in the review, such as divorce, separation, death, imprisonment etc. Comparatively, however, single parenting in developing countries may be less caused by divorce as in the developed countries. This may be due to the fact in places like Ghana, there is much

cultural relevance to staying married and as such seeking official divorce can be seen as shameful.

Effects of single parenting on children

Children from single-parent families may be more likely to experience less healthy lives, on the average, than children from intact families. For instance, children growing up with only one parent are more likely to drop out of school, bear children out of wedlock, and have trouble keeping jobs as young adults. One factor that may be responsible for this variation between the lives of children from intact families and those from single parent families is income. Lack of income has been identified as the single most important factor in accounting for the differences in children from various family forms (Lindblad-Goldberg, 1989).

Specifically, it will not be surprising that in most mother-only families are more likely to be poor because of the lower earning capacity of women, inadequate public assistance and child care subsidies, and lack of enforced child support from non-residential fathers. Poor, single, working parents often are forced to choose between quality and flexibility of child care arrangements. Many jobs offering adequate pay require long and/or irregular hours. As such, for many single parents, this may mean using caregivers and other less well-trained or experienced child care providers who are working long hours or supervising too many children.

Influences of Family structure

McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) found that other things being equal, teenagers who spent part of their childhood apart from their biological father were twice as likely to drop out of high school, twice as likely to become

parents themselves before age twenty and one and a half times as likely to be idle in their late teens and early twenties. McLanahan and Sandefur revealed further that low incomes and sudden drops in income are the most important reasons that children in single-mother families fare worse than other children. Specifically, McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) summarised their research by writing: “Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents’ race or educational background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born, and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries” (p. 1).

Another factor behind the disadvantages faced by children in single-parent families is inadequate attention and guidance from the single parent. Children need more than just economic security to thrive; they require parents who have the time to help them with their homework, read to them and listen to how their day went in school. They also need parents who can supervise their activities outside of school. One parent alone might not have the time to do these things, whereas two parents working together could have the time for this.

Other specific areas of influence of the family structure are:

Educational attainment: Family structure is related to educational attainment. Ginther (2004) indicated that individuals from intact families completed, on average, more years of schooling and were also more likely to graduate from high school, attend college and complete college compared to peers raised in single-parent families.

School behaviour: Adolescents in intact families may be less likely to exhibit problem behaviour in school and may tend to have higher levels of academic achievement compared to children living in single parent families.

Special needs classes: On average, a greater proportion of children who are in special education classes may come from single-parent households.

Parental marital disruption and academic achievement: Parental divorce or separation is related to youths' academic performance and educational expectations. Compared with their peers from intact families, students who had experienced parental marital disruptions scored lower on academic tests and had lower educational aspirations both before and after the disruptions (Sun & Li, 2002).

Parental involvement in education: Family structure can be associated with parents' educational expectations and involvement with their children's school work. Astone and McLanahan (1991) found that children of single parents reported that their parents had lower educational expectations for them compared to reports from children in intact families. The children from single-parent families group also reported that their parents are less likely to monitor school work and provide "less overall supervision of social activities" compared to reports from children in intact families.

Divorce and school attendance: Compared with their peers in intact families, children from divorced single-parent households tend to have greater levels of absenteeism, tardiness and truancy in school (Demo & Acock, 1988). Parental divorce altered daily routines and work schedules while imposing additional demands on both adults and children living in single-parent households. This is because most adolescents might have to assume extra domestic and

childcare responsibilities. These are what might cause children from single parent households to be involved in greater levels of absenteeism, tardiness and truancy in school.

Other Influences on Children

Home environment

It has been found that even when students live in comparable neighborhoods and do not differ on traditional measures of socioeconomic status, home environment variables still explain a significant amount of achievement variance (Levine, Lachowicz, Oxman, & Tangeman, 1972). Dave (1963) examined the relationship between the family environment and academic achievement of children at age 11. He identified six process variables as characterizing the educational "press" of the family environment: (1) achievement press, (2) language models, (3) academic guidance, (4) activeness of the family, (5) intellectuality in the home and (6) the work habits of the family.

Clark (1982) used a case study approach to distinguish between surface structure of families (traditional socioeconomic indicators such as income, occupation, and education as well as family intactness and ethnicity) and internal structure of families (personality characteristics, communication patterns, and learning opportunity structures). Three types of home activities that appear to be more relevant for school achievement: (1) explicit literacy-nurturing activities, which include studying, reading, writing, and explicit social etiquette practices; (2) cultural literacy-enhancing activities that serve leisure needs such as watching television and engaging in hobbies and (3) home and personal health maintenance activities such as chores, caring for

children and other household members, and attending to one's own personal upkeep and well-being.

There is some disagreement over the extent and direction of the interactive influences of home environment variables and individual child characteristics on achievement outcomes. It has been suggested by Mercy and Steelman (1982) that it is possible that bright children select intellectually stimulating activities or encourage their parents to provide such experiences. However, it is also possible that parents' aspirations for their child, parental concern for academic achievement, and other achievement "press" variables are based on parents' perceptions of their child's ability or potential. It can therefore be realised that it is unlikely that the home environment effect represents a one-way flow from parent to child.

Parental involvement

There is a general view that children of parents who are more involved in their children's education adapt better to the demands of school than do the children of less-in-involved parents. Epstein and Becker (1982) pointed out however that not all forms of parental involvement are equally effective or equally welcomed by school personnel. Participation in PTA meetings and conferences and as classroom volunteers typically involves relatively few parents who show up to be involved. But almost all parents can be involved in their children's educational activities at home. As a result, Epstein and Becker (1982) opined that of all types of parental involvement, supervision of learning activities at home may be the most educationally significant. This view was supported by Bronfenbrenner (1974) that there is some evidence that intervention programs based on the principle of parental involvement,

either as home educators of their own children or as teacher aides or tutors, have been relatively successful.

Child-parent centers that stress parental involvement have been particularly effective in enhancing the achievement of low-income inner-city minority children (Fuerst, 1977). Combining a warm, supportive home atmosphere with a warm, supportive school setting was found to enhance the achievement of children in Project Head Start (Shipman et al., 1976). Comer (1980) also stressed the importance of parental involvement in contributing to effective student outcomes.

Poverty's effects on parenting

Income loss appears to affect the well-being of children indirectly through negative impact on family relations and parenting. Single parents experience a variety of stressors related to poverty (i.e., financial, emotional, social). The link between economic stress and mental health has been documented in various studies.

Financial strain appears to be one of the strongest predictors of depression in single parents. Higher levels of depression is predictive of more punitive disciplinary practices and decreased parental nurturance, support, and satisfaction with the parenting role (McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, & Borquez, 1994). This is because single parents must obtain sufficient money to cover the most basic needs, such as food, shelter, and clothing. The chronic strains of poverty combined with task overload significantly increases vulnerability to new life stressors. Poor single mothers often experience a cycle of hopelessness and despair which is detrimental to both themselves and their children.

Overcoming difficult circumstances as single parents

Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges facing poor single parents, many families have increasingly demonstrated themselves to be viable, well-adjusted and alternative family forms (Lindbald-Goldberg, 1989). Most single parent families are able to function well and to promote education, resourcefulness, and responsibility in their children.

Successful single parent families have adopted more adaptive functioning styles. This includes:

1. more available personal resources, which enhances their coping effectiveness;
2. better family organization, which balances household responsibilities and decreases task overload;
3. a positive family concept, which values loyalty, home-centeredness, consideration, communication, and closeness;
4. an ability to highlight positive events and place less emphasis on negative aspects of stressful events and
5. possessing less stress-producing, supportive social networks.

Parenting among other factors to academic performance of pupils in Ghana

Parenting has been identified as a major or most crucial factor to a child's education and academic performance. Agyeman (1993) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and the professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. However, he further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavorable

conditions of service would be less dedicated to his work and thus be less productive than a teacher who is unqualified but works under favorable conditions of service.

Neagley and Evans (1970) were of the view that effective supervision of instruction can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) in a study of 60 schools from peri-urban (29 schools) and rural (31 schools) areas in Ghana found that academic performance was better in private schools than public schools because of more effective supervision of work.

Another factor is motivation. A highly motivated person puts in the maximum effort in his or her job. Several factors produce motivation and job satisfaction. Young (1989) examined the job satisfaction of Californian public school teachers in the USA and found that one of the overall job predictors was the salary one earned from it. Studies by Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes towards students which in turn affect the performance of students academically. The availability and use of teaching and learning materials affect the effectiveness of a teacher's lessons. According to Broom (1973), the creative use of a variety of media increases the probability that the student would learn more, retain better what they learn and improve their performance on the skills that they are expected to develop.

Ausubel (1973) also stated that young children are capable of understanding abstract ideas if they are provided with sufficient materials and concrete experiences with the phenomenon that they are to understand. Class sizes have also been identified as determinants of academic performance.

Studies have indicated that schools with smaller class sizes perform better academically than schools with larger class sizes. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on effective teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on students' achievement. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) indicated that since children have differences in motivation, interests and abilities and that they also differ in health, personal and social adjustment and creativity generally good teaching is best done in classes with smaller numbers that allow for individual attention.

Butler (1987) has also found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes when it is relevant to learning objectives, assigned regularly in reasonable amounts, well explained, motivational and collected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students. Another school factor that can affect performance in schools was when Churchill (1965) as cited in Etsey (2005) found a positive relationship between the location of a school and the student and teacher performance.

Review of Empirical Studies

This section deals with the review of related empirical studies. The review is done under headings related to the research questions and objectives of the study.

Parental Involvement and Pupils Academic Performance

Most empirical evidence suggests that parental or guardian involvement is associated positively with students' performance in school (Nyarko & Vorgelegt, 2007; Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010). A

study conducted by Abudu and Fuseini (2013) revealed that the sample from two parent homes have most of their parents helping them in their academic work as compared to those from single parent families. In a similar vein, the findings of Chowa et al. (2012) revealed that married parents in Ghana are more likely to engage in their children's education than single parents.

To further endorse the influence of parental involvement Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez and Bloom (1993) carried out a study that revealed that family and parental interactions in the house are more significant to pupils' academic work than the socio-economic background of the pupils. In the formulation of a model of human development, Ceci, Rosenblum, de Bruyn and Lee (1997) proposed that parent-child interactions are the forces that lead to academic performance. In furtherance, Gutman and Akerman (2008) revealed that the level of educational achievement of adolescents depends on the level of parental and children's attitudes and aspirations. Parents who have high aspirations tend to be more involved in the education of their children in order meet up with their set goals for the family. Undeniably, it has been found that adequate parental investments in the education of their children are a common factor to determine the level of success made by the children at school (Yeung, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002; Gershoff, Aber, Raver, & Lennon, 2006).

In terms of the involvement of single parents, Bondenhorn (2006) as cited in Ochonogor (2014) posits that single parents are not easily in charge over their children compared to the intact parents. Single parents have a lot of engagements to cover hence they might not be able to meet up children's academic demands. They can tend to be less involved in outside activities of

children education. The studies reviewed indicate that parental involvement is vital to the success of students or pupils in their academic work. However, because of the several tasks that single parents have to undertake it was seen that single parents can sometimes become less involved with their children.

Nature and Level of Parental Involvement

Chowa et al. (2012) investigate the nature and level of parental involvement—including engagement and monitoring—by comparing parents who had never been engaged in their children’s education to those who had been involved both in the school environment and at home. Their study based in Ghana reviews that while Ghanaian parents often have engaged in their children’s schooling in one form or another, their involvement historically has been limited to school related activities at home (e.g., ensuring completion of homework) and that this is changing as more parents are interacting with the school environment by attending school meetings and recreational events (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1994).

Their study and other empirical research consistently have found associations between a host of socio-demographic factors (e.g., economic circumstances, personal priorities, self-interest, child’s and parents’ level of education, family structure, and family size) and the nature, extent, and educational outcomes of parental involvement (Schmitt & Kleine, 2010; Schimpl-Neimanns, 2000).

Parental Involvement and Socio-demographic Characteristics of Parents

Nearly every empirical study on parental involvement finds that parents’ engagement in their children’s education varies by socio-demographic and economic circumstances, such as marital status, educational

level, and the child's gender (Georgiou, 2007; Schimpl-Neimanns, 2000; Schmitt & Kleine, 2010). These differences are consistent with findings from the Ghana Experiment baseline data by Chowa et al. (2012). They present differences in parental involvement found for parents' marital status, education level, and gender and the child's gender:

Parents' Education Level

According to Chowa et al. (2012) a comparison of parents' educational level and involvement in their children's education shows parents are more engaged when their own educational level exceeds their children's current level of education. However, parents less educated than their children are more engaged within their children's school environment than parents who have a level of education equivalent to or greater than their children's. Less educated parents are more involved perhaps because many would like to see their children attain higher education than they did. Similarly, parents more educated than their children are more engaged at home than those whose education is equivalent to or lower than that of their children.

Other studies have also observed that parents are the most immediate relation of a child and that educated parents better understand the educational needs and their children's aptitude. They, thus help their children in their early education which affects their proficiency in their relative area of knowledge. Parents' education or academic background definitely contributes immensely toward the academic life of children. According to Grissmer (2003), parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) submits that parents' educational background influence the academic achievement of students. This, according to him, is

because the parents would be in a good position to act as second teachers to their children; and even guide and counsel them on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by them.

Musgrave (2000) argues that children who come from an educated home would like to follow the steps of their family and by this, works actively in their studies. Jeynes (2002) also avers that a child from a well -educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This he suggests apparently because children from an educated family are seen to have lots of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. Eamon (2005) again claims that virtually in all nations, children of parents high on the educational, occupation and social scale have far better chance of getting into good secondary schools and from there into the best colleges and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers.

In fact, the most important factor said to be associated with the educational achievement of children is not race, ethnicity or immigrant status; instead the most critical factor is parents' education (Considine & Zappala, 2002).

Parents' Gender

Chowa et al. (2012) found slightly higher involvement at home among mothers (72.66% of 2,371 interviewed) than fathers (71.6% of the 2,205 interviewed). More fathers talk about their expectations (90.3%) than discuss school work, assist with homework, or ensure homework is done. Reflecting a contrary trend, 67.18% of fathers engage at school contrasted with 64.56% of

mothers. Overall, engagement at school is low contrasted with engagement at home.

Marital Status

Married parents are more likely to be involved in their children's education than single parents. Using a scale of 1 (never involved) to 5 (very often involved), Chowa et al. (2012) found that married parents report checking whether their children have done their homework more frequently ($M=3.51$) than single parents ($M=3.37$; $p<.001$). Among the 1,270 single parents, 38.7% assist their children within homework, but 44.8% of the 3,291 married parents provide more direct assistance with homework.

Child's Gender

Chowa et al. (2012) found that overall, parents' involvement is fairly consistent for male and female children. However, parents are more involved at home than at school for female children and more involved at school than at home for male children, and that this gender difference may be a consequence of social norms that long favored active participation in school for boys and at-home schooling for girls. This disparity is changing as Ghana attempts to eliminate the gender gap in education (ICF Macro, 2010).

Earlier Studies on Single Parenting

Many research studies have documented the challenges faced by single parents and the disadvantages of their children relative to children raised in two-parent households. Although some studies have been inconclusive, a large majority of studies show that children from single-parent (SP) homes score lower on tests of cognitive functioning and standardized tests, receive lower GPAs, and complete fewer years of school when compared to children

from two-parent (TP) homes (Bain, Boersma, & Chapman 1983; Balcom, 1998; Biller, 1970; Chapman, 1977; Daniels, 1986; Downey, Ainsworth-Darnell, & Durlfur, 1998; Fry & Scher, 1984; Man-dara & Murray, 2006; Milne, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986; Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004). Even when controlling for economic and racial differences of the family, children from two-parent households outperform children from one-parent households across a variety of measures (Downey, 1994; Kim, 2004; Krein & Beller, 1988; Mulkey, Crain, & Harrington, 1992; Teachman, 1987).

McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) summarize their research by writing that Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents' race or educational background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born, and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries.

Father Absence

In his literature review Barajas (2012) notes that early research of single parent homes focused on “father absence” (FA) and that the interest in FA homes was due to the large number of single-parent female headed households and to the influence of psychoanalytic theories that called attention to the importance of the presence of a father in the development of a child's personality (Hetherington et al., 1983). In a 1970 literature review, Biller reported evidence showing a correlation between FA and juvenile delinquency. He also showed evidence that FA boys have more difficulty forming peer relationships and long lasting heterosexual relationships as compared to boys raised in a father present (FP) home. Chapman (1977)

reported lower SAT scores among FA males compared to FP males, and Bain et al. (1983) showed that FA third graders performed significantly worse in reading achievement and scored lower in a measure of internal locus of control than FP children. In 1984, Fry and Scher found evidence suggesting poor ego development, low motivation, and an external locus of control among ten year-old children from FA homes.

Daniels (1986) in her study of young African American men, discovered that the length of father absence from the home was the strongest predictor of future employment for the young men. In a more recent study, Mandara and Murray (2006) reported that boys raised in FA homes were much more likely to use drugs than were boys from FP homes.

Prevalence of single parenting situation in the schools

The findings of Kinnear (1999) give a lot of information about percentage of single parent families. The findings revealed that in countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago more than 25 percent of households are single parent families, primarily headed by women. Udansky (2008) as cited in Amoakohene (2013) identified single parenting as a major social problem that is on the rise. In a study reported by The Adoption MediaLLC (n.d) as cited in Amoakohene (2013), it was revealed that more than 60% of children born since 1984 will spend an average of 5 years of their childhood in a single-parent family. The report continued that 30% of all children in the United States spend their entire lives with single parents. The findings of Andersson (2002) as cited in Barajas (2011) from his study in The United States of America indicated that one third of the present children will have to live in a single-parent family before they

reach age 15. The findings further states that single-parent families have become more common than the nuclear family over the past twenty years. He revealed that though the phenomenon is not new there are numerous factors that contribute to single parenting.

Single parenting can therefore, on the basis of the findings above be seen as more common in this era even though has existed for a long period of time.

Effect of single parenting on pupils' academic performance

Research on the effects of single parenting on pupils' academic performance has been more directional. In the study of Yongm and Yuanzhang (2008) cited in Amofa (2013) makes clear that in some cases children in homes of separation or divorce do not always perform well academically. Studies such as those of Nyarko (2007) and Nyarko and Vorgelegt (2007) revealed that children's academic performance improve when both parents are actively involved in their education. In this sense the reverse can be presumed to be true. Uwaifo (2008) examined the effects of family structure and parenthood on the academic performance of Nigerian university students. The study found that differences in academic performance of children existed in terms of those from single parent and those from two parent families. Abudu and Fuseini (2013) after their study found that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of pupils from single parent homes and pupils from two parent homes. Abudu and Fuseini continued that there is evidence that single parenting has a negative effect on the academic performance of pupils.

The amount of money which parents invest in a child's studies influence the academic achievement of children. Single motherhood diminishes the economic resources available to families (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Page & Stevens, 2002) as non-custodial fathers provide less money in their children's household. These are deemed to be true since Brooks-Gunn et al. (1999) discovered that there is a link between family income and children's attainment. It can therefore be gathered from these that the academic performance of pupils from single parent homes can be low compared to those from intact homes.

Students learn more and perform better at school when there is strong parental involvement (Goldring & Shapira, 1996; Ho & Willms, 1996). In this light, the study by Downey (1994) have found that the low parental involvement at school such as attendance at school functions and meetings and providing help in school chores are responsible for the low academic performance of children living in single parent (mothers) families. In the findings of Usher et al (2012) cited in Ochonogor (2014), respondents in their study with excellent and brilliant performances revealed that 2.6% came from single parent homes while 7.9% came two parent homes. Their findings show the evidence of low academic achievement of single parent children. In contrast to all the findings above, the findings of Debell (2007) as cited in Amofa (2013) suggest that conventional wisdom may exaggerate the detrimental effects of father absence. Almost being a general consensus, the studies reviewed have shown that single parenting affects the academic work of children in a negative way.

Challenges of single parented pupils

Several studies have been carried out into the challenges that pupils face in a single parent home. Agbo (1997) and Salami (1998) are of the view that adolescents' from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic records. There is a likelihood of the child becoming a misfit in the society when the remaining parent cannot cope with the problem of single parenthood. This finding substantiates the findings of other researchers such as Bokan and Akinade (1994) and Stephens (1997) as cited in Salami and Alawode (2000) who found that children from single-parent homes have low self-esteem, low achievement motivation and low tolerance for delay of gratification than those from intact families where father and mother are present. Further, in single-parent families, most of the affected people are confronted with several stressors and changes which prevent them from enjoying a healthy lifestyle (Marziyeh & Khaidzir, 2009). Characteristically, McLanahan et al. (2001) revealed that single parent families can have limited human capital and financial resources.

Again, it has been identified by Furstenberg and Cherlin (1991) and Edin and Kefalas (2005) that non-custodial fathers which include fathers of children born out of wedlock and divorced fathers result in decreased involvement with their children as time progress. Farrell (2001) suggested that children who lived with their fathers had a greater sense of well-being than those who lived with their mothers. This finding is in support with the findings of Hilton and Devall (1998) that there are challenges in well-being when it comes to living in single parent homes. Additional research by Biller and Kimpton (1997) are in this same line of findings. McLanahan and

Sandefur (1994) claimed that divorce leads to the loss of social and economic resources that cause such drastic changes occurring in the life of a child produce social stress.

They attributed loss of resources to a loss in the household income, residential movement and meeting with the non-custodial parent. In this sense, children who are raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parents (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002). Uwaifo (2008) further states that children from intact families show less anxiety about their academic activities because they are emotionally more stable with less emotional problems. In comparison to the view of Uwaifo, Schultz (2006) revealed that higher levels of emotional, social and academic problems are recorded among children from uneven households than from intact households.

The review suggests that it has been proven by several researchers that single parent homes breeds more problems for young people compared to two-parent or intact homes. The view of Johnson (2005) that higher levels of emotional risks and failures are commonly observed among learners from separated families and all forms of single parenthood sums it up. However, Johnson believes that there could be some exceptions to such a claim since there are still some learners that are gifted and so no matter the conditions surrounding their home background, they fight hard and become successful. Several challenges can be identified on the bases of the previous studies reviewed, behavioural challenges, financial and economical challenges and of course academic challenges.

Gender Studies (differences between boys and girls raised in SP homes)

In terms of gender, several studies have sought to identify how males and females have fared in single parent homes. A number of studies have documented differences between boys and girls raised in single-parent (SP) homes. In their review, Hetherington et al. (1983) concluded that “the intellectual and social development of males may be seen as more adversely affected by living in one-parent homes than that of females from similar family circumstances” (p. 271). Studies published since Hetherington et al. have reported similar results. Fry and Scher (1984) discovered that the achievement motivation scores of boys declined significantly over a five-year period of living in a SP home while the scores of girls in similar home environments remained stable.

In 1998, Krein and Beller documented a significant negative effect of the number of years spent in a SP home on educational attainment for all groups except Caucasian women. According to their findings, Caucasian males spending 18 years in a SP home complete 1.7 fewer years of school as compared to Caucasian males spending 18 years in a TP home. African American males complete 1.26 fewer years of school, and African American females complete 0.73 fewer years of school when compared to their counterparts living in TP homes. For Caucasian women, the difference was only 0.03 years. In their recent study of African American adolescents, Mandara and Murray (2006) found FA to be a significant risk factor for drug use among boys but not among girls. They reported that African American boys in a FA home were almost six times more likely to use drugs than African American boys in a FP home, while the risk factor for African

American girls was the same regardless of the number of parents in the home. Uncovering a reason to explain the greater negative effect of family disruption on boys compared to girls is a compelling future line of research and will be discussed later.

The study of Salami and Alawode (2000) on influence of gender on the academic achievement of adolescents revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic achievement of male and female adolescents from single parent homes. Specifically, they found that girls were scoring higher than boys. However, regarding males and females from intact or two parent homes, Salami and Alawode found that there was no significant difference in the academic achievements of males and females from two parent homes. In examining the impact of family structure on academic performance, Eweniyi (2005) found that there was a significant difference in academic performance of male and female students on the basis of family structure thus single and two parent homes.

Eweniyi also discovered that there is a significant difference between the academic achievement of the male and female adolescents from single parent homes with girls scoring higher or performing better than boys. Similarly, Pong et al. (2003) compared the achievement gap between children in Single Parent homes and those in Two Parent homes across 11 countries. They found that the United States had the largest gap between the academic achievement of children from Single Parent homes and children from Two Parent homes. The findings of Abudu and Fuseini (2013) revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of male pupils and female pupils from single parent homes. In terms of direction, it was revealed

that the female pupils from single parent homes perform better academically than the male pupils from the same family. In contrast to popular view in most of the studies reviewed, a meta-analysis of 37 studies which examined the long-term consequences of parental divorce for adult well-being, Amato and Keith (1991) found no support for the contention that parental divorce has more detrimental consequences for males than females.

Differences have been identified by most of the studies between the academic performance of male and female students who live in single parent homes. Even though they both live in the same house, majority of the studies reviewed point to the fact that they react to the single parenting issue in different ways and as such are affected by it in very different ways.

Resiliency and strength

Not all studies, however, have focused on the disadvantages of single parenting. A few researchers have focused on resiliency (Hunter & Chandler, 1999; Rutter, 1990) and the strengths of single parent (SP) homes (Amato, 1987; Hanson, 1986; Murry, Bynumm, Brody, Willert, & Stephens, 2001; Richards & Schmiede, 1993; Shaw, 1991). Hurtes and Allen (2001) created a scale for measuring resiliency in youth and identified commonalities in Single Parenting homes where the children achieve academic success. For many years, theorists have suggested a greater emphasis on strength based research of families of all types (Giblin, 1996).

Barajas (2012) has argued that understanding the disadvantages focuses only on half of the issue: the other half is to understand the strengths and resiliency factors exhibited by children raised in a father absent (FA) homes. Although children raised in a home where a father is present graduate

from high school and attend college at much higher rates than children raised in a fatherless home, nearly 70% of children from FA homes do graduate from high school and 50% of them attend college (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004). Barajas believes there is a great need for research focusing on the strengths of these academic achievers from FA homes.

Summary

The review of related literature was done in three main sections. The first section was the theoretical framework, the second section was the conceptual framework and the last section was the review of related empirical studies. The theoretical framework of this study reviewed theories such as the Family Deficit Model, Risk and Protective Factor Model, The Social Exchange Theory, Family Socialization Perspective Model, The Theory of Social Network Paradigm, The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, Economic Deprivation Theory and the other Perspectives. The conceptual framework was based on an adaptation of the framework of Amoakohene (2013). The framework had bearings and relations with the parental involvement framework of Nechyba et al. (1999) as cited in Amoakohene (2013).

The review of empirical studies was done based on themes that were derived from the research questions and objectives for the study. The studies reviewed indicated that parental involvement is vital to the success of students or pupils in their academic work whiles it was also found that single parents were less involved with their children because of the several activities they had to undertake. Several factors that are responsible for single parenting were also identified in the review, such as divorce, separation, death, imprisonment

etc. Divorce was identified to be less common in developing countries. Single parenting was again identified to be more common in this era even though it has existed for a long period of time. Behavioural challenges, financial and economical challenges and of course academic challenges were some of the challenges that were identified to be associated with single parenting. In terms of the effects of single parenting on academic work of children, the studies reviewed revealed that single parenting had a negative effect on the academic work of children. Differences were also identified between the academic performance of male and female students who live in single parent homes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter contains information about the research method and techniques that were used in the study. Specifically, it covers the research design, study population, the sample size and sampling procedures that were employed for the study. It also describes the research instruments, procedures for data collection and how the data collected were analyzed.

Research Design

This study is a descriptive research incorporating a case study in order to specifically describe a subject matter pertaining to a specific environment. With the descriptive research, Zikmund (2003) did explain that a researcher tries to describe the characteristics of certain groups, to estimate the frequency or proportion of subjects in a specified population, to analyse relationships between variables, or to make specific predictions.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design method to understand the issues embedded in single parenting and academic performance of pupils. The descriptive study design as said by Burns and Grove (2003) presents the current picture of the situation being studied in its natural form as it happens. Descriptive study is normally used to study a phenomenon at a specific time when time or resources for more extended research is limited (Creswell, 2003). Descriptive design has the potential of providing or giving information from quite a large number of individuals. It is practical and applicable in that

it identifies a present condition and points to present needs. It is believed that descriptive survey is basic for all types of research in assessing the situation as a pre-requisite for conclusions and generalizations. Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) hold the view that the descriptive design has the difficulty of ensuring that questions are reacted to during interviews because they are often explicit. They further state that data gathered could produce untrustworthy results because they delve into private and emotional matters which respondents might not be completely honest about. For these reasons, the researcher concentrated on the use of questionnaire alone to solicit for the necessary information needed for the study. Since the study intends to find out single parenting and its effects on academic performance of pupils, descriptive design is seen as the most appropriate and adequate research design in describing and documenting the effects of single parenting on academic performance.

Population

One major step in the process of completing any research is the approach that goes into designing and planning the research as well as the ability to choose the right target population from which the sample size is selected. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) define population as the group to which the researcher would like to generalise the result of the study. Researchers differentiate between target population and study population. According to Amedahe (2002), the target population in research is the aggregate of cases about which the researcher would like to make generalisation. For the purpose of this study, the target population was all the single parented pupils in the Mfantseman Municipality. The accessible

population was single parented pupils from the ages nine and above and teachers in the four selected public basic schools in the Yamoransa circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality.

I contacted the heads of the various schools to get the number of single parented pupils in the schools. The total population was 200 pupils. The reason for choosing pupils at the basic school is that pupils in the basic school are younger and they may be dependent on their parents and teachers than those in the Senior High Schools who are older. The total population for pupils from single parented families in the four selected schools was 200 while the total population for teachers in the selected public basic schools was 60.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The schools were selected through purposive sampling. Bryman (2004) explained that purposive sampling technique is a strategic approach where respondents are selected according to their relevance for the topic of study. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) also explained that purposive sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select participants who have experience with the central phenomenon or the key concept being explored. This assertion of the purposive sampling technique is affirmed by Sarantakos (1998) as cited in Amedahe (2002), who also reiterated that for purposive sampling technique the researchers deliberately choose respondents who, in the opinion of the researcher, are assumed to be relevant to the research topic and objectives.

Patton (2002) asserted that the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. The purposive

sampling procedure enabled the researcher to sample views from different categories of people who could provide the needed information. This sampling technique enabled the researcher to target those perceived to have information about the topic raised. Four schools were selected from a total of 10 schools. These schools were selected purposively from the ten schools based on their performances in the BECE. Their performance in the BECE over the period of concern (2012-2015) was poor as compared to the other schools. But the census sampling technique was used to select all the 200 pupils from single parenting families for the study. For the teachers, simple random sampling was used in selecting 50 respondents for the study. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size a sample of 50 respondents is appropriate for a population of 60.

Data Collection Instrument

To successfully study the effects of single parenting on academic performance of pupils, data was collected to help achieve the objectives of the study. The data was collected from the single parented pupils and teachers using a self-designed questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research instrument used in a survey made of carefully constructed questions to obtain self-reported answers about general and personal issues (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). Regardless of the disadvantage of being limited to a population who can read and write, the questionnaire was considered appropriate for the study because it is less expensive and economical in time. There is also the advantage of ensuring anonymity since there is no face to face interaction as in interview (Kumar, 1999).

Two sets of self-designed questionnaire were used for the study. One set of the questionnaire was for the pupils while the other set was for the teachers. The questionnaire contained four sections each. Section A covered the background or demographic data of respondents consisting five items for pupils and one item for teachers. The Section B solicited information from the respondents on the prevalence of single parenting, consisting four items for pupils and two items for teachers. The Section C also sought to find out the effects of single parenting on academic performance, consisting seven items for pupils and eight items for teachers. Section D also sought to find out the challenges of single parented pupils. It was made up of eight items for pupils and six items for teachers with one open ended question. The section c and d of the questionnaire were a four point likert-type scale with the grading Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Validity and Reliability

Joppe (2000) provides the following explanation of what validity is in quantitative research: Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions, and will often look for the answers in the research of others.

The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's supervisor by checking the content validity. Thus checking if the items were measuring what the questionnaire was intended to measure.

Again, Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

The reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) was obtained by calculating the Cronbach coefficient after the pilot test. The reliability coefficient for the questionnaire for the pupils was 0.802 while the reliability coefficient for the questionnaire for teachers was 0.901. The reliability figures meant that the instruments for the collection of the data were appropriate for the study.

Pre-Testing

In finding out if the instrument would obtain the required responses and devoid of ambiguity, a pilot test was conducted at Biriwa Methodist Junior High School, a town in the Mfantseman Municipality which shares similar characteristics with Yamoransa. The pilot test was also done in order to provide the ideas, approaches, and clues the researcher may not have foreseen before conducting the main study. Such ideas and clues increased the chances of getting clearer findings in the main study. Also the pilot test was done so as to reduce the number of unanticipated problems because there was an opportunity to redesign parts of my study to overcome difficulties that the pilot test revealed. For example, the part of the questionnaire for students

dealing with the demographic data of the respondents was redesigned to include the number of the siblings of the respondents in school.

Data Collection Procedure

In order to successfully collect data for the study, an introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Educational Foundations introducing the researcher and the purpose of the research to the authorities in the four selected schools in the Yamoransa Circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality.

Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher made preliminary enquires in the selected schools to obtain permission from head teachers and teachers to conduct the study. An appropriate time was agreed on to administer the questionnaire. In each school, the selected pupils were grouped together and the purpose of the study was made known to them. The respondents were guided as to how to answer the questionnaire. In order not skip some of the response, respondents were encouraged to read the questionnaire before selecting the appropriate responses. Respondents were given the opportunity to ask any question that baffles them in order to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was collected on the day of administration. All the questionnaires were completed and returned giving 100% return rate.

Ethical Issues

An ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board to be able to carry out the study. Again, the consent of the respondents was obtained before administering the data collection instrument to them. They were assured of their anonymity, confidentiality, security and privacy of their

responses. Once the pupil may not be able to give their consent, their parents were informed for such permission before carrying on with the data collection.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data was checked for accuracy and then entered into the computer and transformed. Descriptive Statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data. The independent samples t-test was used in finding the gender difference in the effects of single parenting on academic performance. The open ended questions were analyzed by doing thematic analysis. The statistics provide simple summaries about the samples and the measures. Simple tables and figures have been used to organize and present the data in an easy-to-read way. Percentages and frequencies were used to investigate questions and hypotheses to make generalizations.

Summary

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out using 200 single-parented pupils and 50 teachers in the Mfantseman Municipality in the Central Region. The sampling procedures which were used for the study were purposive, census and simple random sampling. Two sets of self-designed questionnaires were used for collecting data from the sampled pupils and teachers. The pilot testing was done in the Biriwa Township in the Mfantseman Municipality with reliability figures of 0.802 Cronbach alpha co-efficient for pupils and 0.901 Cronbach alpha co-efficient for teachers. The main data was collected and analysed using the Statistical Product and Services Solution (SPSS). The main limitation encountered during the study was the small nature of the sample size.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to find out the effects of single parenting on academic performance of pupils in the four selected basic schools in the Yamoransa circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality in the Central region. The design was the descriptive survey. The study was made up of a sample size of 250 involving 200 students and 50 teachers. The 200 students were made up of 120 females and 80 males. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies

This chapter presents the results obtained and discusses the findings of the study. The results are presented, interpreted and discussed in relation with relevant literature. The results are presented in two sections namely section A and section B. Section A deals with the demographic data while the section B concerns the main data.

Section A: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

This section shows the socio-demographic data on respondents' gender, age, level of education, parents they stayed with, birth position among siblings, number of siblings in school and how long they have stayed with single parent. Table 1 and Table 2 summarize the socio-demographic data of pupils and teachers.

Table 1- *Socio-Demographic Data of Pupils*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	80	40.0
Female	120	60.0
Age		
6-11years	6	3.0
12-17years	185	92.5
18years and above	9	4.5
Level of Education		
Primary	60	30.0
JHS	140	70.0
Who do you stay with		
Mother	114	57.0
Father	19	9.5
Grandparent	49	24.5
Other	18	9.0
Length of Stay		
1-5 years	87	43.5
6-11years	56	28.0
12-17years	57	28.5

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

From Table1, it is seen that 80 (40%) of the respondents were males while 120 (60%) of the respondents were females. Again, it can be observed that 6 (3%) of the respondents were within the age range of 6 to 11 years, 185 (92.5%) respondents were within the age range of 12 to 17 years while the remaining 9 (4.5%) of the respondents were 18 years and above.

In terms of the level of education, it was shown that 60 (30%) of the respondents were in Primary school while 140 (70%) of the respondents were in Junior High School (JHS).

Respondents were again asked to indicate who they stayed with. It is shown that 114 (57%) of the respondents stayed with their mothers, 19 (9.5%) of the respondents stayed with their fathers, 49 (25%) stayed with their grandparents while 18 (9%) of the respondents stayed with other people such as their siblings, relatives (aunts) and guardians. It was also shown that 87 (43.5%) of the respondents had stayed with a single parent for 1 to 5 years, 56 (28%) of the respondents had stayed with a single parent for 6 to 11 years and the remaining 57 (28.5%) respondents had stayed with a single parent for 12 to 17 years.

The results from the socio-demographic data of the respondents imply a balanced representation of respondents across the various demographic variables.

In furtherance, the socio-demographic data of teachers was made up of only the gender of teachers. It is shown in Table 2.

Table 2- *Gender of Teachers*

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	20	40.0
Female	30	60.0
Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

It can be seen from Table 2 that 20 (40%) of the teachers who responded were males while 30 (60%) of them were females. This showed a

representation of both male and female teachers in the study. The difference in proportion of male to female shows that there are more female teachers in the area of study than male teachers.

Analysis of Main Data

Section B: Main Data

This section presents the results for the analysis of the main data. The results of the main data have been presented according to the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Again, the responses for each research question have been categorized into those for pupils and those for teachers.

Research Question 1

What is the nature of families and homes of single parented pupils?

The respondents (pupils) were asked some questions to indicate the nature of their homes and families. The results are presented in Tables 3 to 6.

Table 3- *Supervision of Pupils Learning at Home*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Mother	65	32.5
Father	26	13.0
Siblings	70	35.0
Others	39	19.5
Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 3 shows the persons who normally supervise the learning of pupils at home. It is shown that 70 (35%) of the respondents are supervised by their siblings. Again, 65 (32.5%) of the respondents are supervised by their

mothers. Fathers are also found to supervise the learning of 26 (13%) of the respondents while 39 (19.5%) of the respondents are supervised by other people such as their aunts and guardians. The findings imply that among pupils in single parent homes, learning is mostly supervised by siblings. This is understandable since siblings might have more time than the single parent who might be doing several jobs to take care of the home. However, in the comparison of fathers and mothers, the current study found that mothers were more involved in the supervision of learning than fathers.

This result confirms the findings of Cheowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012) which found slightly higher involvement at home among mothers than fathers in the academic work of their children. This finding was because fathers spoke more about their expectations rather than discussing school work, assisting with homework or ensuring that homework is done.

Onzima (2011) opined that children of single parent homes have the tendency of not finishing up their studies at the high school and college levels. They also have less parental care, parent monitoring of school work and less social supervision. In the view of Dreyer (1994) and Zangqa (1994) there are three requirements for Academic Achievement that should be met by the school. The three requirements are: children must be helped to recognize their potentials; they should be motivated to utilize these potentials; the school must recognize learners' potentials. These requirements indicate that the school is the place where adolescents can realise or actualise their academic potentials. However, the achievement of academic success is not the work of the school alone; parents have to play their part. Getting time of their commitments, their office work, and businesses to get involved in the

academic work of their children is vital for the children to succeed. Therefore, it is expedient that parents devote their time to be with their children at home.

How often pupils learn at home in a week

The pupils who responded were asked to indicate how often they learn in a week. The responses are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4- *How Often Pupils Learn at Home*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Everyday	60	30.0
Twice a Week	94	47.0
As and when I feel like	16	8.0
When I have homework	26	13.0
During exams	4	2.0
Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 4 shows how often or the various periods of time pupils learn in a week. It is seen that 94 (47%) of the respondents learn twice a week, 60 (30%) of the respondents learnt every day, 26 (13%) of the respondents learnt when they had homework, 16 (8%) of the respondents learnt as and when they feel like and the remaining 4 (2%) of the respondents learn during examinations.

The findings have revealed that most pupils in a single parent homes usually learn twice in a week 94 (47%). Learning only twice within the whole week but not every day confirms several studies about poor learning and reading habits of Ghanaians. Offei (1997) observes that Ghanaians have a poor book-buying culture, which stems from the country's past history of the free textbook scheme that was left with Ghanaians after independence. However, Onyinah (2008) attributes the poor reading habit of Ghanaians to

the growing habit of watching of television programmes, video shows, and playing games on the internet as well as misplaced priorities

A number of psychological and material resources are necessary to learning by students. Downey (1994) for instance used the study of Teachman as a foundation and identified 11 key educationally related objects. These included: a place to study, a daily newspaper, regular magazine, encyclopedia, atlas, dictionary, typewriter, computer, more than 50 books, calculator, and one's own room. Downey argued that the presence or absence of these things is a predictor of the academic performance of children in the future.

Occupation of Pupils' Parents

The pupils were asked to indicate the occupation of their parents. The responses are summarized in Table 5 below:

Table 5- *Occupation of Pupils' Parents*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Teaching	11	5.5
Farming	39	19.5
Fishing	5	2.5
Trading	131	65.5
Others	14	7.0
Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 5 shows the occupation of the pupils' parents. It is observed that the parents of 131 (65.5%) of the respondents were traders, 39 (19.5%) were farmers, 11 (5.5%) of them were in teaching, 5 (2.5%) were in fishing and the remaining 14 (7%) were in other occupations like banking and driving.

Several empirical research consistently has found associations between a host of socio-demographic factors (e.g., economic circumstances, personal priorities, self-interest, child’s and parents’ level of education, family structure, and family size) and the nature, extent, and educational outcomes of parental involvement (Schmitt & Kleine, 2010; Schimpl-Neimanns, 2000). It is an indisputable fact that the occupation of single parents determines to a large extent their nature and level of involvement in their children’s academic work.

The pupils were asked to indicate whether their parents can read and write. The responses are summarized in Table 6 below:

Table 6- *Literacy of Parents*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	106	53.0
No	94	47.0
Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 6 shows that the parents of 106 (53%) of the respondents are literates (they could read and write) while 94 (47%) of the respondents indicate their parents are illiterate (cannot read and write). The responses of the pupils imply that majority of the pupils should at home be supervised by their parents to study and do their homework. However, this is not the case as previous response to the question of who usually supervises pupils’ studies at home reveals that it is their siblings. Table 3 shows that 70 (35%) of the pupils who responded are supervised by their siblings; 65 (32.5%) of the respondents are supervised by their mothers; 26 (13%) supervised by fathers while 39

(19.5%) are supervised by other people such as aunts and guardians. This could stem from the fact that most of the pupil's parents are traders as indicated by pupils and as such they are busy and do not have enough time to supervise the studies of their children at home. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Bondenhorn (2006) cited in Ochonogor (2014) that single parents have a lot of engagements to cover hence they might not be able to meet up children's academic demands. As such supervising the studies of their children would be difficult to do for majority of single parents

Literacy (formal education) of Parents

The literacy or educational levels of parents determine to a large extent their level of involvement in the academic work of their children. According to Chowa et al. (2012), a comparison of parents' educational level and involvement in their children's education shows parents are more engaged when their own educational level exceeds their children's current level of education. However, parents less educated than their children are more engaged within their children's school environment than parents who have a level of education equivalent to or greater than their children's. Less educated parents are more involved perhaps because many would like to see their children attain higher education than they did. Similarly, parents more educated than their children are more engaged at home than those whose education is equivalent to or lower than that of their children. Other studies have also observed that parents are the most immediate relation of a child and that educated parents better understand the educational needs and their children's aptitude. They, thus help their children in their early education

which affects their proficiency in their relative area of knowledge. Parents' education or academic background definitely contributes immensely toward the academic life of children. According to Grissmer (2003), parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) submits that parents' educational background influences the academic achievement of students. This, according to him, is because the parents would be in a good position to act as second teachers to their children; and even guide and counsel them on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by them.

Research Question 2

How prevalent is the single parenting situations in the Yamoransa circuit schools?

Questions were put to teachers to find out how prevalent the single parenting situation is in the study area. To answer this research question, the respondents were asked some specific questions. The results are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

The teachers were asked to indicate whether they knew the homes of all the children in their classes. The responses are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7- *Knowledge of Teachers of the Homes of their pupils*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	8.0
No	46	92.0
Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 7 shows that 46 (92%) of the teachers who responded did not know the homes of all the children in their class while 4(8%) of the respondents knew the homes of all the children in their class.

As a follow-up question to find evidence of the prevalence of single parents in the Yamoransa circuit – the study area – the teachers who responded were asked to indicate how many of the children in their class were from single parent homes. The responses are shown in Table 8 below:

Table 8- *Number of Children (Pupils) from Single Parent Homes*

Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1-10	29	58.0
11-20	14	28.0
21-30	7	14.0
Total	50	100

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 8 shows how many of the children in the teachers’ class were from single parent homes. It is shown that 29 (58%) of the respondents had one to ten children in their class who were from single parent homes, 14 (28%) of the respondents had 11 to 20 children in their class who were from single parent homes and the remaining 7 (14%) of the respondents had 21 to 30 children in their class who were from single parent homes.

The responses from the teachers imply that majority of teachers had about ten children in their class who were from single parent homes. This means that on the average there were about 25% children from single parent homes in the classes of the teachers. This is because the teachers had an average of 40 children in each of their classes. The findings are in line with

the findings of Kinnear (1999) that in countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, and Tobago more than 25 percent of households are single parent families. Again, the findings are not very far from the findings of Ketteringham (2007) that the U.S. Census Bureau reported that about 30 percent of American families were headed by only one parent.

Several research studies such as the findings of Kinnear (1999) give a lot of information about percentage of single parent families. The findings revealed that in countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago more than 25 percent of households are single parent families, primarily headed by women.

Research Question 3

What are the challenges of Single Parented Pupils?

In line with research question three (3), questions were asked to help find out what are the challenges of single parented pupils. Respondents were provided with some statements to which they had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement in answering this question. For ease of understanding, responses for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) were put together as Agree whiles responses for Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were put together as Disagree. The results have been presented in Table 9.

Table 9- *Challenges of Single Parented Pupils (Reported by Pupils)*

Statement	SA+A		D+SD	
	F	%	f	%
1. Single parent cannot control their children	91	45.5	109	54.5
2. My parent does not monitor me	63	31.5	137	68.5
3. My parent abuses me verbally most of the time	66	33.0	134	67.0
4. My parent is more concerned with his/her job than me	73	36.5	127	63.5
5. I attend social gathering with my parent	83	41.5	117	58.5
6. I feel shy to socialise with my peers	94	47.0	106	53.0
7. I will be happier if I were living with both parents	176	88.0	24	12.0
8. My parent is unable to provide all my school needs on time	86	43.0	114	57.0

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 9 shows the challenges of single parented pupils as reported by the pupils. It is shown that 109 (54.5%) of the pupils disagreed that single parent cannot control their children. Again, it was revealed that 137 (68.5%) disagreed that their parent does not monitor them. In response to the statement ‘My parent abuses me verbally most of the time’, 134 (67%) of the pupils disagreed. It was also reported by 127 (63.5%) of the pupils that their parents are not more concerned with their jobs more than them. Further, Table 9 shows that more than half of the respondents (58.5%) disagreed to the statement, ‘I attend social gathering with my parent’. Again, more than half (53%) of the respondents also disagreed with the statement ‘I feel shy to socialize with my peers’. In response to whether respondents would be happier living with both parents, majority (88%) of the respondents agreed. Finally, majority of the pupils (57%) disagreed that their parent is unable to provide all their school needs on time.

The findings of the study imply that the main challenges encountered by single parented pupils included the indication that they would be happy if they were staying with both parents and the inability to attend social gatherings with their parents. These findings could be explained to be due to the fact that most pupils are young and like comparing themselves with their age mates and so would generally be unhappy if they compare their homes to the homes of their peers from intact homes.

Also the findings of the current study confirm the findings of Marziyeh and Khaidzir (2009) that in single-parent families, most of the affected people are confronted with several stressors and changes which prevent them from enjoying life. In a similar vein, the findings of the current study give support to the findings of Bokan and Akinade (1994) and Stephens (1997) as cited in Salami and Alawode (2000) that children from single-parent homes have low self-esteem and so do not enjoy life like those from intact families where father and mother are present. The lack of contradiction among the findings could be because generally there are challenges in single parented families.

Several studies have been carried out into the challenges that pupils face in a single parent home. Agbo (1997) and Salami (1998) are of the view that adolescents' from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic records. There is a likelihood of the child becoming a misfit in the society when the remaining parent cannot cope with the problem of single parenthood. This finding substantiates the findings of other researchers such as Bokan and Akinade (1994) and Stephens (1997) as cited in Salami and Alawode (2000) who found that children from single-

parent homes have low self-esteem, low achievement motivation and low tolerance for delay of gratification than those from intact families where father and mother are present. Further, in single-parent families, most of the affected people are confronted with several stressors and changes which prevent them from enjoying a healthy lifestyle (Marziyeh & Khaidzir, 2009). Characteristically, McLanahan et al. (2001) revealed that single parent families can have limited human capital and financial resources.

View of Teachers on the Challenges of Single Parented Pupils

In answering this question, some statements were provided to which respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. For clarity, responses for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) were put together as Agree while responses for Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were put together as Disagree. The results have been presented in Table 10.

Table 10- *Challenges of Single Parented Pupils (Reported by Teachers)*

Statement	SA+A		D+SD	
	F	%	f	%
1. Single parent cannot control their children	20	40.0	30	60.0
2. Single parents do not monitor their children	21	42.0	29	58.0
3. Single parents abuse their children verbally most of the time	26	52.0	24	48.0
4. Single parents are more concerned with their job than their children	28	56.0	22	44.0
5. Single parented pupils feel shy to socialise with their peers	16	32.0	34	68.0
6. Single parents are unable to provide the school needs of their children on time	29	58.0	21	42.0

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 10 shows the challenges of single parented pupils as reported by the sampled teachers. It is shown that 30 (60%) of the teachers disagreed that single parent cannot control their children. Again, 29 (58%) of the teachers disagreed that single parents do not monitor their children. In response to whether single parents abuse their children verbally most of the time, 26 (52%) of the teachers agreed.

It was also revealed by more than half of the respondents (teachers) (56%) that single parents are more concerned with their jobs more than their children. Moreover, Table 10 shows that 34 (68%) of the teachers disagreed that single parented pupils feel shy to socialize with their peers. Finally, majority of the teachers (58%) agreed that single parents are unable to provide the school needs of their children on time.

The findings in Table 10 imply that the main challenges of single parented pupils as reported by the sampled teachers included inability of single parents in providing the school needs of their children on time, single parents being more concerned with their jobs than their children and single parents abusing their children verbally most of the time.

The findings of the current study support the findings of McLanahan et al. (2001) that single parent families can have limited human capital and financial resources. As a result, provision of school needs for children could be difficult. Again, the findings are in line with the findings of Furstenberg and Cherlin (1991) and Edin and Kefalas, (2005) that staying with non-custodial fathers which include fathers of children born out of wedlock and divorced fathers result in decreased involvement with their children as time

progress. The results of the current study are not surprising since support is given to several other previous studies.

The visible contradiction between the views of the pupils and teachers could be explained to be due to the pupils responding in ways that will make them appear to be desirable.

Research Question 4

How does single parenting affect the academic performance of pupils?

In answering this question, some statements were provided which respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. For clarity, responses for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) were put together as Agree while responses for Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were put together as Disagree. The results have been presented in Table 11.

Table 11- *Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Pupils*
(From the Perspectives of Pupils)

Statement	SA+A		D+SD	
	F	%	F	%
1. My school fee is often paid on time	141	70.5	59	29.5
2. My parent provides a the books I need to me on time	134	67.0	66	33.0
3. My parent normally supervises my studies at home	95	47.5	105	52.5
4. My academic performance has gone down of late	86	43.0	114	57.0
5. My academic performance has improved over time	139	69.5	61	30.5
6. My parent is interested in my welfare	175	87.5	25	12.5
7. I do not get anybody to support me with homework	82	41.0	118	59.0

Source; Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

The table shows the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of pupils as reported by the pupils. It shows that 141 (70.5%) of

the pupils agreed that their school fee is often paid on time. Again, it was agreed by 134 (67%) of the pupils that their parents provide the books they need on time. In response to the statement 'My parent normally supervises my studies at home', 95 (47.5%) of the pupils agreed while 105 (52.5%) of the pupils disagreed.

Furthermore, the table shows that more than half of the respondents (57%) disagreed that their academic performance had gone down of late. This was confirmed when majority (69.5%) of the pupils agreed that their academic performance has improved over time. In response to the statement 'My parent is interested in my welfare', 175 (87.5%) of the respondents agreed. Finally, majority of the pupils (59%) disagreed that they do not get anybody to support them with their homework.

The results from the pupils imply that the main effect of single parenting on academic performance for pupils had to do with single parent not normally supervising their studies at home as indicated by more than half of the respondents (pupils). This is not surprising since the single parent may be too occupied or busy and as such might not have enough time to supervise the studies of the child at home.

The findings of the study confirm the findings of Drowney (1994) have that the low parental involvement such as providing help in school chores in the academic work of children living in single parent homes. The findings of the current study that there is no direct negative effect of single parenting on pupils' academic performance confirm the findings of Debell (2007) cited in Amofa (2013) which suggest that conventional wisdom may exaggerate the detrimental effects of a parent's absence. Thus, it is not always

too bad to be living in a single parent family. The similarities among the findings could be explained to be due to a general consensus about the effects of single parenting on academic performance.

Views of Teachers on the Effects of Single Parenting on the Academic Performance of Pupils

Teachers were similarly asked the question of how single parenting affects pupils' academic performance. Respondents were provided with some statements to which they had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement in answering this question. For ease of understanding, responses for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) were put together as Agree while responses for Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were put together as Disagree. The results have been presented in Table 12.

Table 12- *Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Pupils (From the Perspectives of Teachers)*

Statement	SA+A		D+SD	
	F	%	f	%
1. Single parents pay their children school fee on time	13	26.0	37	74.0
2. Single parents provide all the books their children need on time	8	16.0	42	84.0
3. Single parents normally supervise studies of their children at home	14	28.0	36	72.0
4. Pupils from single parented homes perform poor academically	10	20.0	40	80.0
5. Single parents do not have time for their children's welfare	16	32.0	34	68.0
6. Single parents do not get time to support their children's homework	28	56.0	22	44.0
7. Single parents do not normally attend PTA meetings	29	58.0	21	42.0
8. Single parents do not visit the school when they are needed	26	52.0	24	48.0

Source: Fieldwork, Owusu Ansah (2016)

Table 12 shows the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of pupils as reported by the teachers. It is shown that 37 (74%) of the teachers disagreed that the school fee of the pupils is often paid on time. Again, it was disagreed by 42 (84%) of the teachers that the parents of the pupils provide the books they need on time. In response to the parent normally supervising the studies of the pupils at home, 36 (72%) of the teachers disagreed.

Furthermore, Table 12 shows that majority of the teachers disagreed that the academic performance of pupils was poor. In response to the statement 'Single parents do not have time for their children's welfare', 34 (68%) of the respondents disagreed. Majority of the teachers (56%) agreed that the single parents do not get time to support their children with their homework. Finally, more than half of the teachers (58%) agreed that single parents do not normally attend PTA meetings and a similar majority (52%) agreed that single parents do not visit the school when they are needed. The results from the teachers imply that the main area of challenge in terms of academic performance for pupils had to do with single parents not providing all the books their children need on time, not paying their children school fee on time, not normally supervising the studies of their children at home, not normally attending PTA meetings, not getting time to support their children's homework and not visiting the school when they are needed. This could be explained to be due to the single parent being the only person handling all the chores and the issues in the family. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Drowney (1994) that there is low parental involvement at school such as attendance at school functions and meetings

and providing help in school chores are responsible in single parent families. This similarity among the findings implies that across cultures the effect of single parenting could be the same. Comparing the report of the pupils with the report of the teachers, there appears to be a contradiction between the reports of the pupils and the report of the teachers. This could be explained to be due to the pupils not willing to come out with the truth regarding the real conditions of their home and their academic work. On the other hand, it could also be because the teachers might not know the actual situation of the homes of the single parented children since it had been found earlier that most of them did not even know the homes of the single parented children.

A large majority of studies show that children from single-parent (SP) homes score lower on tests of cognitive functioning and standardized tests, receive lower GPAs, and complete fewer years of school when compared to children from two-parent (TP) homes (Bain, Boersma, & Chapman 1983; Balcom 1998; Biller 1970; Chapman, 1977; Daniels, 1986; Downey, Ainsworth-Darnell, & Durfur, 1998; Fry & Scher, 1984; Man-dara & Murray 2006; Milne, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986; Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan 2004). Even when controlling for economic and racial differences of the family, children from two-parent households outperform children from one - parent households across a variety of measures (Downey, 1994; Kim, 2004; Krein & Beller, 1988; Mulkey, Crain, & Harrington, 1992; Teachman, 1987). McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) summarize their research by writing that Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents' race or educational

background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born, and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries.

Married parents are more likely to be involved in their children's education than single parents. Using a scale of 1 (never involved) to 5 (very often involved), Chowa et al. (2012) found that married parents report checking whether their children have done their homework more frequently ($M=3.51$) than single parents ($M=3.37$; $p<.001$). Among the 1,270 single parents, 38.7% assist their children with homework, but 44.8% of the 3,291 married parents provide more direct assistance with homework.

Married individuals may be able to share the burden of engaging with their child, but Donkor (2010) cautions that this relationship is complex and depends on whether they are the child's biological parents and whether the child belongs to a polygamous family. Non-biological and polygamous parents may have divided attention and be less likely to be involved in the child's schooling.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils.

H₁: There is a statistically significant difference between the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils.

In testing this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to find out whether there is significant difference in how single parenting affects the academic performance of male and female pupils. The responses for the statements under the segment 'Effects of single parenting on academic performance' of the questionnaire were computed together to

represent how single parenting affected academic performance of pupils. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14- *Independent Samples t-Test for Gender Difference in effects of single parenting on academic performance*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Male	80	20.68	3.14	198	1.307	.193
Female	120	20.05	3.56			

Source: Fieldwork Owusu Ansah (2016) $p > .05$ significant level

Table 14 shows the independent samples t-test performed on the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils. It was revealed that the mean for the males was 20.68 while that of females was 20.05. Again, the standard deviation (SD) for males was 3.14 while the standard deviation (SD) for females was 3.56. It can be concluded from Table 13 that there is no statistically significant difference in the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils ($t = 1.307$, $df = 198$, $p = 0.193$, 2-tailed). The probability value (p-value) of 0.193 is greater than the 0.05 significant level. Therefore, based on the result above the null hypothesis is not rejected. This finding implied that there is no statistically significant difference in the effects of single parenting on academic performance of male and female pupils. Thus, the effects of single parenting on academic performance is the same or similar for males and females. The findings could be explained to be due to the pupils not opening up about their real issues and thereby not reporting the actual situations.

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Amato and Keith (1991) that there was no support for the contention that parental

divorce has more detrimental consequences for males than females. In other words, there was no difference in the effects of single parenting on the academic work of male and female pupils.

Other Comments of Teachers

Respondents were asked to write any other comments aside the statements in the various segments of the questionnaire. The various comments were grouped in themes and presented according to the groupings.

Assistance for single parented pupils

Most of the teachers indicated that single parented pupils need extra assistance to enable them go through the academic work successfully. Since they lived in single parented homes, they had some financial difficulties and as such would fare better if the government and non-governmental organizations came to their aid. Specifically, it was indicated by the teachers that females mostly needed this assistance.

Most single parents are doing well despite the challenges

Most of the sampled teachers indicated that most of the single parents were doing their best to support and help their children. The teachers indicated that the parents did well despite the difficulty of being the overall head of the family and being responsible for the running for the family.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study are given. Suggestions for further study were also given in this chapter.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of single parenting on pupil's academic performance in Yamoransa Circuit in the Mfantseman Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to test three research questions and one hypothesis: prevalence of the single parenting situation in the schools, how single parenting affect academic work of pupils, the challenges of single parented pupils and the statistically significant gender difference in the effect of single-parenting on the academic work of pupils. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 200 pupils and 50 teachers were selected through the census and simple random sampling procedures for the study. Two sets of self-designed questionnaire were used as the instruments for data collection, one each for pupils and teachers.

Major findings

The findings of the study showed that majority of the pupils in single parenting homes are supervised by their siblings when they are learning in the home. Again, most of them learnt twice in a week. The parents of majority of the pupils were found to be capable of reading and writing.

The results again showed that majority of teachers had about ten children in their class who were from single parent homes representing about 25% of the pupils in the classes of the teachers. This is because the teachers had an average of 40 children in each of their classes.

The findings showed again that the main area of effect of single parenting on the academic work of pupils as reported by the pupils had to do with single parent not normally supervising their studies at home. However, the report of the teachers revealed that the main area of effect of single parenting on the academic work of pupils had to do with single parents not providing all the books their children need on time, not paying their children school fee on time, not normally supervising the studies of their children at home, not normally attending PTA meetings, not getting time to support their children's homework and not visiting the school when they are needed.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that the main challenges encountered by single parented pupils as reported by the pupils included the indication that they would be happy if they were staying with both parents and the inability to attend social gatherings with their parent. Again, the findings showed that the main challenges of single parented pupils as reported by the sampled teachers included inability of single parents in providing the school needs of their children on time, single parents being more concerned with their jobs than their children and single parents abusing their children verbally most of the time. Finally, there was no statistically significant difference in the effects of single parenting on academic work of male and female pupils.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that pupils of single parented homes encounter challenges and can affect their academic work. Some specific conclusions from the findings include the following:

1. Majority of the pupils in single parenting homes are supervised by their siblings when they are learning in the home. Thus, the siblings most probably the older siblings were the people who mostly supervised their learning at home.
2. About ten children in basic school classes were from single parent homes representing about 25% of the pupils in each class since there is an average of 40 children in each of their class. This means that teachers must have knowledge as to how to successfully deal with all students in their classes especially those who might be negatively affected by their home structure.
3. The main area of effect of single parenting on the academic work of pupils self-reported by pupils from single parent families involves single parent not normally supervising their studies at home. This is not surprising since one parent would probably be occupied by so many things and so might not have time to supervise learning.
4. Teachers view the main area of effect of single parenting on the academic performance of pupils as involving single parents not providing all the books their children need on time, not paying their children school fee on time, not normally supervising the studies of their children at home, not normally attending PTA meetings, not

getting time to support their children's homework and not visiting the school when they are needed.

5. The main challenges encountered and self-reported by single parented pupils include the indication that single parented pupils would be happy if they were staying with both parents and the inability to attend social gatherings with their parent.
6. The main challenges of single parented pupils reported by teachers include inability of single parents in providing the school needs of their children on time, single parents being more concerned with their jobs than their children and single parents abusing their children verbally most of the time.
7. Male and female pupils experience similar effects of single parenting on their academic work.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings above:

1. School authorities and community leaders should work together to organize seminars and workshops for parents to enable them know that their supervision of their children's learning is vital to the academic work of their children.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to pay attention to single parented pupils so as to help them adjust better and successfully pursue their academic work.
3. Government agencies and NGOs should provide some form of assistance to pupils from single parent homes to enable them cope with

the financial burden that comes with single parenting so that they can get the needed books and materials for academic work.

Implications for Counseling

1. School counselors should engage in occasional talks with pupils from single parent homes to be able to identify any social or behavioural issues they might be battling with and in so doing provide the necessary counseling assistance since single parented pupils might not spend much time with the single parent.
2. School counsellors should organise study skills seminars or workshops for pupils to help pupils from single parent homes to study effectively without the supervision of the parent.
3. School counsellors can also work together with the class teachers so that if class teachers identify any issues that single parented pupils are battling with, the class teachers can refer the pupils to the school counsellors.

Suggestions for Further Studies

It is suggested that for further studies, a larger sample size be used to increase the ability to generalize the findings. Again, further studies can sample single parents to find out the actual situations to serve as a form of validating the reports of the single parented pupils and the teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING CENTRE
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Please kindly spend about 20 minutes of your time to respond objectively to the following questions to support the study with the title “**Effects of Single Parenting on Pupils' Academic Performance in Yamoransa Circuit of the Mfantseman Municipality**” This research is purely for academic purpose and any information provided would be treated with the maximum confidentiality it deserves. Respondents are also assured that their identity will not be associated with any aspect of the research report. Please tick the appropriate answer(s) or specify where necessary. Thank you in anticipation of your maximum support.

A. **Socio-Demographic Data**

1. Sex: a. Male [] b. Female []
2. Age:
 - a. Childhood Stage 6-8 years []
 - b. Early Adolescents 9-11 years []
 - c. Late Adolescent 12- 18 years[]
3. Level of education a. Primary [] b. JHS []
4. Which of your parents do you stay with? a. Mother [] b. Father []
c. Grandparent [] d. Other (specify).....
5. Indicate your birth position among your siblings.....
6. How many of your siblings are in school?
7. How long have you been staying with your single parent?

SECTION B: Prevalence of Single Parenting in Basic Schools in the Yamoransa Circuit

8. Who normally supervise your learning at home?
 - a. Mother [] b. Father [] c. Siblings []
9. Others (specified):

12. How often do you learn in a week?
- a. Every day []
 - b. Twice in a week []
 - c. As and when I feel like []
 - d. When I have homework []
 - e. During exams []
13. What is the occupation of your parent you live with live?
- a. Teaching [] b. Farming [] c. Fishing [] d. Trading []
 - e. Others (specify).....
14. Can your parent read and write? Yes [] No []

Section C: Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the effects of single parenting on your academic performance by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Strongly Agree =4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1.

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	My school fee is often paid on time				
16	My parent provides all the books I need to me on time				
17	My parent normally supervises my studies at home				
18	My academic performance has gone down of late				
19	My academic performance has improved over time				
20	My parent always remind me to study				
21	I do not get anybody to support me with homework				

Section D: Challenges of Single Parented Pupils

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the challenges you face by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Strongly Agree =4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1.

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22	My parent cannot control me				
23	My parent does not monitor me				
24	My parent abuses me verbally most of the time				
25	My parent is more concerned with his/her job than me				
26	I attend social gathering with my parent				
27	I feel shy to socialize with my peers				
28	I will be happier if I were living with both parents				
29	My parent is unable to provide all my school needs on time				

Any other comment (s):

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APPENDIX B

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING CENTRE
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

Please kindly spend about 20 minutes of your time to respond objectively to the following questions to support the study with the title **“Effects of Single Parenting on Pupils' Academic Performance in Yamoransah Circuit of the Mfantseman Municipality”** This research is purely for academic purpose and any information provided would be treated with the maximum confidentiality it deserves. Respondents are also assured that their identity will not be associated with any aspect of the research report. Please tick the appropriate answer(s) or specify where necessary. Thank you in anticipation of your maximum support.

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Data

1. Sex: a. Male b. Female

SECTION B: Prevalence of Single Parenting in Basic Schools in the Yamoransa Circuit

2. How many pupils/students are in your class? A. 30 -40students b. 45-60 students

3. Do you know the homes of all the children in your class?

a. Yes b. No

4. How many of them are from single parent homes: ?

5. The answer you have given to question 3 constitute what percentage of the class?

6. Who are they living with?

- (i) Intact parents
- (ii) Single parent
- (iii) Step-parents
- (iv) Other relations

Section C: Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the effects of single parenting on academic performance by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Strongly Agree =4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	Single parents pay their children school fee on time				
6	Single parents provides all the books their children need on time				
7	Single parents normally supervise studies of their children at home				
8	Pupils from single parented homes perform averagely academically				
9	Single parents do not have time for their children's welfare				
10	Single parents do not get time to supervise their children's homework				
11	Single parents do not normally attend PTA Meetings				
12	Single parents do not visit the school when they are needed				

Section D: Challenges of Single Parented Pupils

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the Challenges of Single Parented Pupils by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Strongly Agree =4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1.

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13	Single parent cannot control their children				
14	Single parents do not monitor their children				
15	Single parents abuse their children verbally most of the time				
16	Single parents are more concerned with their jobs than their children				
17	Single parented pupils feel shy to socialize with their peers				
18	Single parents are unable to provide the school needs of their children on time				

Any other comment (s):

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APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Telephone: 233-3321-32440/4 & 32480/3
Direct: 033 20 91697
Fax: 03321-30184
Telex: 2552, UCC, GH.
Telegram & Cables: University, Cape Coast
Email: edufound@ucc.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA
5th March, 2016

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

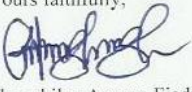
THESIS WORK
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. PRISCILLA OWUSU ANSAH

We introduce to you Ms. Ansah, a student from the University of Cape Coast, Department of Education and Psychology. She is pursuing Master of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counseling and is currently at the thesis stage.

Ms. Ansah is researching on the topic:
"Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Basic School Pupils in Yamoransa Circuit, Mfantseman Municipality."

We would be grateful if she is given all the needed assistance toward this necessary academic exercise. Please, any information provided will be treated as strictly confidential.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


Theophilus Amuzu Fiadzomor (Mr.)
Senior Administrative Assistant
For: HEAD