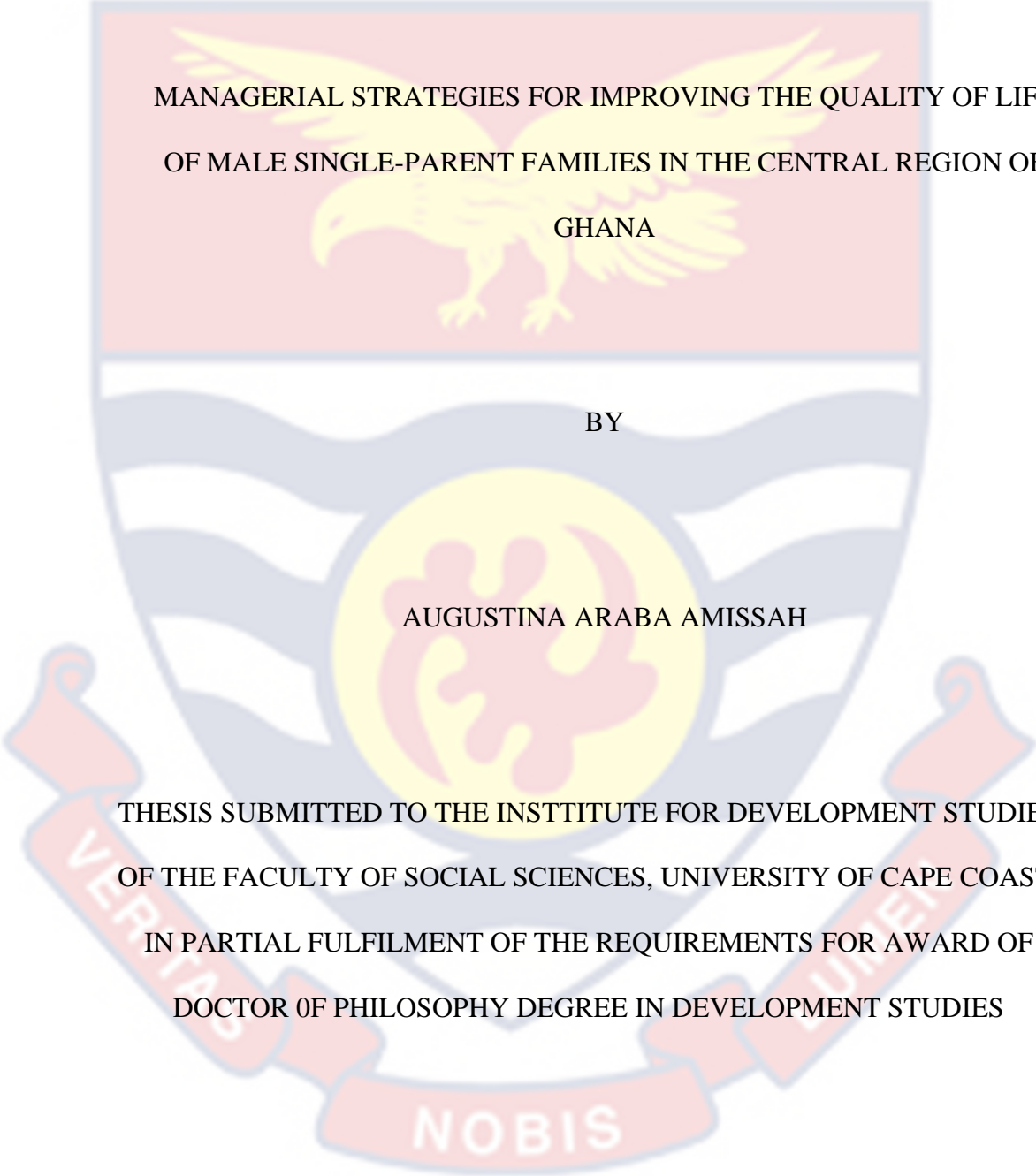


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE
OF MALE SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF
GHANA

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

AUGUST, 2014

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Name: Augustina Araba Amissah

Signature Date

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 Name: Professor C. K. Brown

Signature Date

Co-supervisor's Name: Professor J. V. Mensah

Signature Date

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the managerial strategies for improving the quality of life of male single-parent families in the Central Region. The study used the descriptive and evaluative survey designs. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure, 300 male single-parents were selected for the study. Pretested structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect the data. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) (Version 16.0) software was used to analyse the data to generate frequency distribution tables, bar charts and binary logistic regression. Kaiser's criterion or Eigen value rule was used to decide on the number of factors to extract. Pearson's correlation was also used to assess the correlation among the indicators of quality of life.

The major findings of the study were: the performance of instrumental and expressive roles had affected aspects of respondents' lives; the major challenges faced by the respondents included time constraints, fatigue/tiredness and loneliness; and respondents employed different managerial strategies for managing their households.

It was recommended that outreach programmes could be organized by governmental and non-governmental organizations for male single-parents to equip them with appropriate managerial strategies for effective management of challenges to improve the quality of their lives. The central government should conduct quality of life surveys in the Central Region to generate data on indicators of quality of life that can be used to create awareness among all stakeholders.

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I wish to express special thanks to my principal supervisor, and co - supervisor, Professor C. K. Brown and Professor J. V. Mensah respectively both of the Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast who expertly supervised the thesis. Their advice, suggestions, corrections and constructive criticisms were extremely helpful in clarifying my own ideas and thoughts to improve both the initial and final drafts.

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I cannot end this expression of gratitude without making mention of Messers Christopher Dick-Sagoe of IDS, Michael Manford of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and Esther Grantson also of IDS, who helped in inputting the data and formatting the document respectively.

Finally, my warm thanks go to my family. Their prayers, support and love helped me to complete the thesis. And to all others who contributed in diverse ways to put together this thesis, I say bravo.

DEDICATION

To William Brew, my son and Dr Willie Bray, my special friend.



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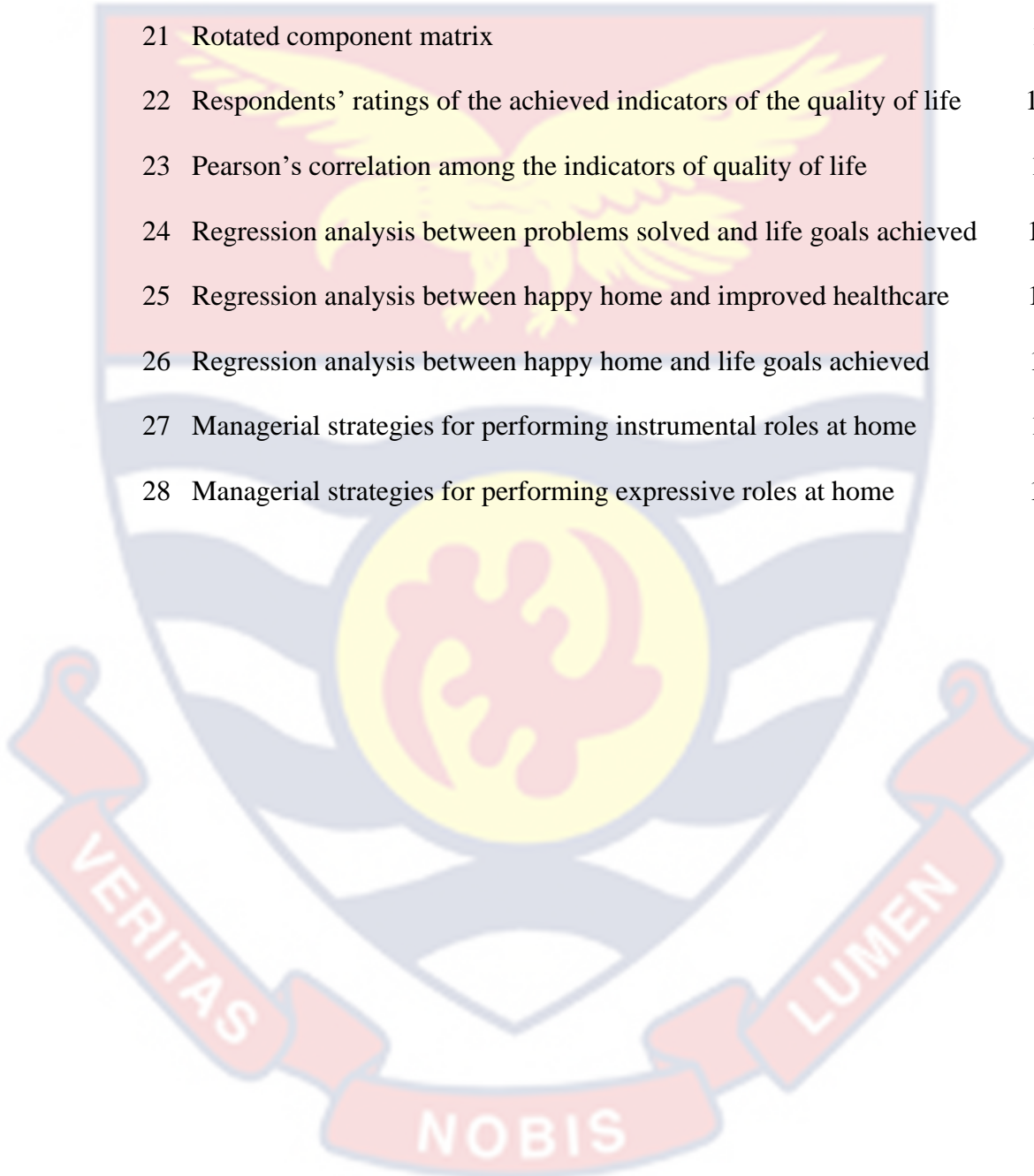
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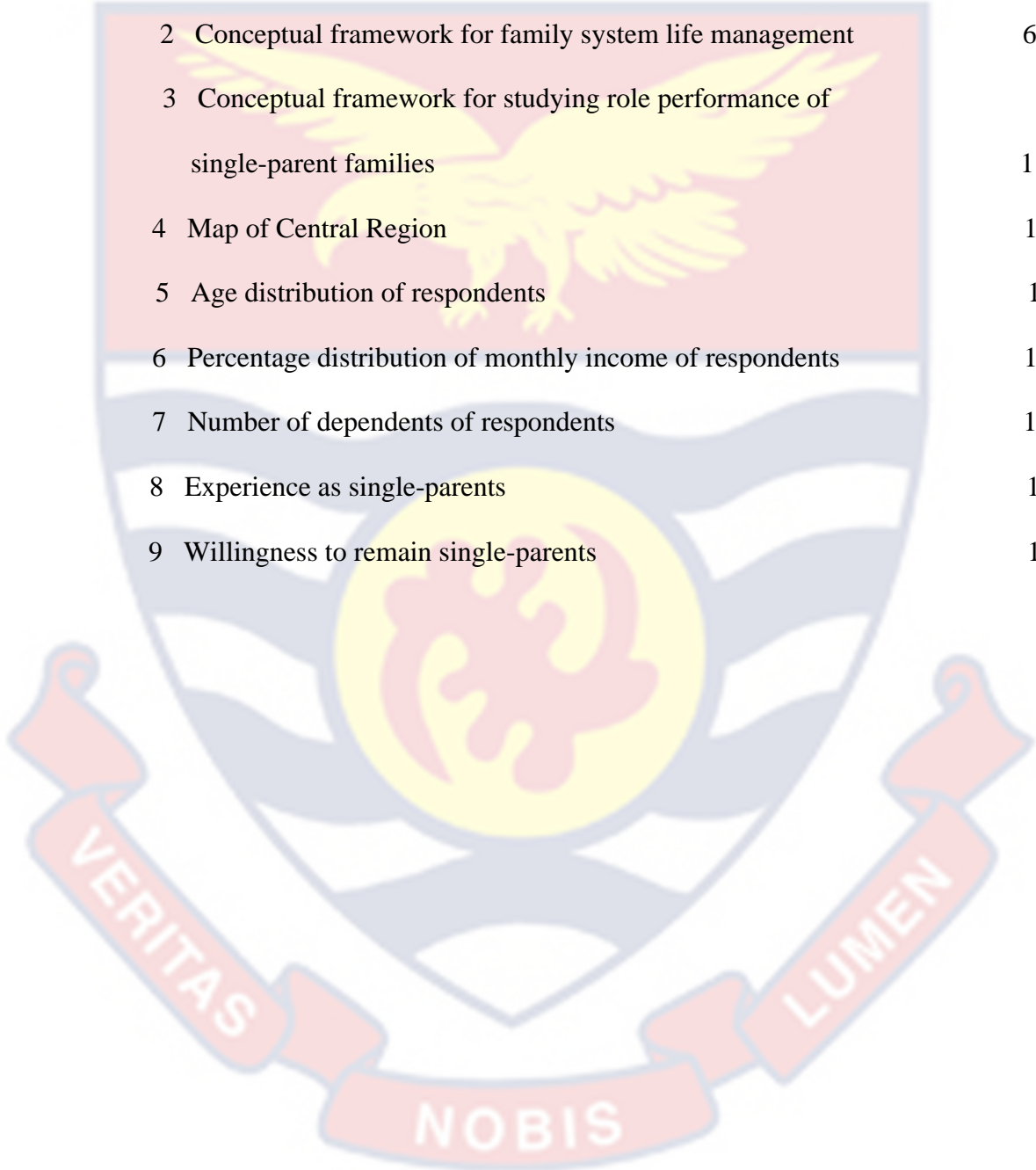
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LIST OF ACRONYMSThe background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the University of Cape Coast logo. The logo is a shield-shaped emblem with a yellow eagle with outstretched wings at the top. Below the eagle is a yellow circle containing a stylized red and pink figure. At the bottom of the shield is a red banner with the Latin motto "VERITAS NOBIS LUMEN" written in white capital letters.

AHEA	-	America Home Economics Association
CWIG	-	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire
GNA	-	Ghana News Agency
IFHE	-	International Federation of Home Economics
MMDAs	-	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MLGRD	-	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organisation
NSFH	-	National Survey of Families and Households
PWP	-	Parent Without Partners
SPSS	-	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
SWB	-	Subjective well-being
TANF	-	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
WHO	-	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

In the family, individual members, as subsystems in various positions play significant roles using resources available for the mutual benefit of the group. When individual members play their roles effectively, the family as a unit becomes self-directed and self-driven in interacting with various environments for achieving the quality of life (Paolucci, Hall & Axinn 1977). The United States Federal Environmental Protection Agency (1973) defines quality of life as the state of well-being of people as individuals, or in groups, as well as the characteristics of the environments in which people live. Society is composed of individual family units. Both individuals and societies matter because societies function better when their members are happy and positively evaluate their lives. Well-being is often synonymous with the attainment of the quality of life. The pursuit of happiness or virtuous living, the product of which is happiness, is a perennial theme in all of the great world religions and is typically seen in each of these as the fruit of right living and union with a higher Being or purpose. Joy, peace, light, life, freedom and redemption from suffering and oppression are key themes in the writings and sayings of various prophets or holy persons from Buddha to Isaiah, Jesus or Kahlil Gilbrain.

How people differentiate between the important and the unimportant, as well as how people establish priorities in their lives and use available resources, can determine the direction of life in a changing world. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have asserted that the quality of life is due, in a large part, to

the quality of management used, and is depended on the quality of decisions made in each process of the management system. Decisions are made about which inputs will affect management, the activities and resources needed to reach goals, and in evaluating satisfaction with the output of the management system. Managing family resources is essential to the family's achievement of its desired lifestyle and improvement with the quality of life. As families cope with the ever-changing economy, their life satisfaction is often affected by their perceptions of responsibilities and their evaluation of the household performances of family members.

Rice and Tucker (1984) have identified certain managerial strategies for managing the home and its activities for improving the quality of life. One way is to start with a refined goal-setting technique and a framework for creating and allocating resources. Learning to make realistic decisions and developing skills in clarifying values, that is coming to grip with personal values, meshing them with those of the family, and resolving any conflicts that may exist between personal and group values are very important.

Additional strategies that are needed in life management are: effective time and energy management; ability to locate and process information; developing a managerial philosophy that encourages the use of community facilities, effective communication; and the ability to work with others. Personal resources - values, desires, time, energy, and skills of the members also determine outputs as well as the satisfaction that will be derived from the management process. The result is worth the effort; that is the quality of life that will be affected.

The quality of life is both the output of the life management system and a standard for measuring the satisfaction people gain from their lifestyles. It involves the use of resources and decision-making about how much of resources to be used. Families must therefore, combine the use of resources and decision-making to achieve family goals of improving living standards.

Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have explained management as a basic tool for creative living for achieving desired goals and purposes to advantage. Family management involves the effective and efficient use of available family resources to achieve the life desired. It is concerned with the proper planning, implementation and manipulation of resources in the home to achieve family goals for improving the quality of life.

According to Rice and Tucker (1986), family life management can be defined as a system whereby a person's values, goals, and standards direct the person's resources, through everyday decisions and purposeful action to improve the person's quality of life in relation to others. It is a goal-oriented behaviour, using decision-making, valuing, planning and organising processes to guide resource use to improve the quality of life. Families, persons living alone, or individuals choosing other group affiliations can through the use of management, not only adapt or accommodate change, but control or direct that change to support and strengthen their well-being.

People who live together and hold similar values may direct their shared resources through everyday living to improve the quality of life of the group. This means recognizing and coming to grip with one's personal value system and sharing that system with living partners. Life management means planning goals relating to the everyday living environments and establishing

patterns of action and interaction with others that are directed toward a more satisfying lifestyle. The interdependence of family members on one another for quality of life, the relationship among the interacting members, and the process of planning and implementing the use of resources to achieve goals in adapting to the environment are concepts of both life management and ecosystem. Systems are directed toward a common purpose. The purpose of life management is to develop a pattern of living that is satisfying to the participants and that assists personal development while improving the group's quality of life without encroaching on the rights of others (Rice & Tucker, 1986).

Paolucci et al. (1977) have explained that persons who live together and share resources for the benefit of the group constitute a household. Most commonly, a household is a family unit of some kind. A family is the basic unit of any society. This idea is shared by Ardayfio-Schandorf and Kwafo-Akoto (1990) who indicate that the family is the basic social institution to which every individual belongs. It is the family that perpetuates society and the society benefits from the individual members of the family and the family as a whole. For family and their members to be able to perpetuate society, the family needs to survive, must be sustained and maintained. These are major and broad goals towards which individuals and families work.

The family unit forms the foundation of the society. Therefore, a society is made up of many families. Thus, the welfare of any nation depends on that of each of the individual families therein. Societies, therefore, attach great importance to families. Almost every individual was raised in a family setting of some sort where skills were learnt and experiences shared. Mead

(1990), as cited in Glick (1984), has asserted that the family, as the cultural cornerstone of any society, transmits its cultural history, installs its prevailing value systems, and socialises the next generation into effective citizens and human beings.

There are different types of families and they also come in all patterns and sizes. Even though families have different patterns they function basically as a unit to meet goals and desires of members. Conventional families have been nuclear and extended families. A nuclear family consists of a mother, father, and their children (adopted or biological) who share household responsibilities. An extended family includes relatives other than the parents and children. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are all part of an extended family. Although the lifestyles of yesterday's families were different in many ways from those of today, there are certain similarities. Families have always worked to provide for themselves, and the basic needs of families are not much different from what they were years ago. The primary difference is in what people and society are doing to meet these needs (Mead 1990).

According to Rice (1999), the family, as a unit, carries out many important functions in a society. Individual family members carry out specific functions, within and outside the family for the survival of the group. These members also relate to each other in special ways. It regulates sexual conducts and ensures the replacement of the members of society through reproduction. The family is the basic economic unit of production and consumption. It socialises the young, while it serves as the source of political power. Families enforce norms and laws, transmits cultural heritage and serves as the first line of social security. They provide the basic necessities of food, shelter and

clothing and care and protect the young from harm by outsiders. The family also provides the physical closeness and enduring interaction needed to develop intimacy and the sense of being emotionally close to people. In the intimacy of family relationship, people support one another and share things they might conceal from strangers, casual acquaintances, or even friends.

In spite of the positive traits the family provides, society is being profoundly undermined by modern sociological changes that are taking place. Presently, a common set of forces, including urbanisation, industrialisation, modernisation and increased communication, are changing radically the quality of living among people. Such transformation will continue, in so far as human society remains dynamic. From one perspective this trend may be called progress or development. But as is the case with all progress, it means the transformation of the old order and the introduction of new and complex problems, which may defy easy and ad hoc solutions (Alan 2000).

Research by Paolucci et al. (1977) has revealed that, when the subsystems who are independent and also interdependent work for the family's survival, the family moves towards development. According to Alan (2000), development may entail disruption of established patterns of living. It implies increased living standards, improved health and well-being for all, and the achievement of whatever is regarded as a general good for all and society at large. Development means improving the quality/wellbeing of people's life due to change factors and so whatever is done to improve life is development.

When family resources are judiciously utilized for goal attainment, family members enjoy a satisfying life. This is development (good change). Development should be measured by certain indicators such as progress,

growth, change, well-being and quality of life. As individual's well-being is improved, society is also improved. Worldwide, the family is acknowledged as the bedrock of human society. It is one of the principal instruments whereby the critical tasks of social living are organized, directed and executed (Rice, 1999).

Owing to recent trends and changing attitudes, a wider variety of family forms have become common in society. People are increasingly likely to encounter - and become part of - other types of families as well. Whatever their form, families have existed throughout history and in every society because they serve a most important purpose. The function of families is to nurture each member or to promote development in all areas - physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and morally (Sasse 1994).

There are two people at home, the father and the mother who may be able and willing to meet children's needs and nurture them to be able to fit in the society. Good parenting will contribute to the national development agenda. Normally, parents are expected to jointly take care of the upbringing of their children, using family resources. Sasse 1994 has reiterated that, overall, the quality of parenting and family relationship strongly affects the children's social, psychological, and academic adjustments in both traditional and non-traditional families.

Brown (1995), cited in Ardayfio-schandorf (1995), has posited that, within the traditional household structure, there was a clear division of economic and social roles and responsibilities as to who was supposed to do what. That is, the division of labour was clearly defined in a system based on age and sex roles. With increasing social change, brought about by

mordernization, industrialization and commercialization, several changes have taken place within the structure of the Ghanaian household at different levels, in its composition and in its social and economic organization. With regard to the household structure, it is now evident that a new type of single-headed household has emerged and formed both from necessity and by choice. The change in the structure of the household has brought about with it a change in the parttern of dividing the work and sharing responsibilities within it.

In recent times, the household has come to occupy an important position in development studies. This is because it is seen as the social mechanism through which, at least to some degree, all individuals' welfare and labour allocation decisions are determined. It is also seen as the link between macro and micro-economic changes and changes in personal welfare, and between price or incentive policy reforms and individuals' resource allocative behaviour (Kabeerr & Joeekes, 1991).

In many societies, the man's primary family role is that of economic provider. The traditional father's minimal participation in the day-to-day care of children has been well documented (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Levant, Slattery & Loiselle, 1987). Few fathers accept the responsibility of their children when the marriage is broken. Such fathers live with their children as single-parents. They combine instrumental and expressive roles in the household. Women assume responsibility for the day-to-day care and supervision of children and are more likely to provide children with emotional and physical comfort. Arkinson (1987) has, however, contended that children benefit if both parents share in meeting their needs.

Rice (1999) has indicated that children from families with two biological parents are more likely to be well-adjusted than are children from any other family configurations. Data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) indicate that 10 percent of children born between 1998 and 2006 were born outside of marriage. Another 19 percent experience the dissolution of their parent's marriage. When parental death and other causes of family disruption are also considered, 36 percent of the children in that age cohort had been separated from at least one parent before they reached age six.

The United States Census Bureau (2007) has reported that overall, about half of all children born between 1980 and 2000 are likely to spend some time in mother/father only family. The census report indicated that there are approximately 13.6 million single-parents in the United States today, and those parents are responsible for raising 21.2 million children. Of these, approximately 84 percent of custodian parents are mothers and 16 percent are fathers. The prevalence of single-parent families represents one of the most significant social changes. Today, the one-parent family represents a major segment of the population. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) indicated that 40 percent of children would be in single-parent families due to divorce, 12 percent due to premarital birth, five percent due to long-term separation of their parents and two percent due to the death of a parent. These projections were based on an assumed continuation of the current divorce and premarital birth rate.

Similarly, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997) found out that the number of male single-parents employed part-time with dependents was 7,700

and 35,800 for full-time workers, making a total of 43,500. Of all unemployed males 1.4 percent were single-parents and, of all parental payment recipients, seven percent were men.

The trend in Africa is not very different. Recent studies in gender issues and other social and economic trends in Africa and developing countries indicated a rise in the proportion of households maintained by single-parents of which women are a majority (Addison-Sackey, 1992; Lloyd & Brandon, 1991). Addison-Sackey (1992) reported that the proportion of households headed by single-parents in Africa has risen from approximately 7 percent to 29.4 percent over a period of 30 years. According to Addison-Sackey, divorce rates and single-parent households are on the increase in the Ghanaian family. A report by the Ghana Statistical Service (2003) Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) indicated a rise in the proportion of male single-parent households in the Central Region.

Similarly, Addison-Sackey (1992) has said that the Ghanaian family is going through traumatic changes, especially during the last two decades. The rate of cohabitation, unrecognized sexual unions, teenage births, divorce rates and single-parent households are on the increase. The implications for the personal and managerial subsystem relations are extensive. The changing significance of single-parenthood is the culmination of a variety of factors of social change not fully understood.

In single-parent families, only one parent has custody of the children who bears the burdens of multiple roles. Hanson (1986) has contended that single-parents have special needs, especially for support and education that will help them succeed as parents and heads of households. Segall, Dasen,

Bery and Poortinga (1999) have asserted that single-parents tend to be more socially isolated than married parents; they work more hours and receive less emotional and parental support. They tend to have less stable social networks and experience more potentially stressful life changes. However, even though experts agree that a happy two-parent home is the ideal, many studies have shown that children are better off in a happy single-parent home than in an unhappy two-parent home.

Single-parent families may occur as a result of divorce or separation, unwedded parents or death of one of the spouses (Paolucci et al., 1977). Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have also said that varied circumstances accompany single-parenthood, such as premarital pregnancy, separation or divorce, death of a spouse, and adoption, which are all directly related to the single-parent status. Each of these factors has special conditions surrounding the single-parent and parenting roles that make them unique with respect to the responsibilities, problems, and benefits that pertain. If the nuclear family is considered ideal, then the single-parent family is considered an abnormality by reason of the general breakdown of the social and moral systems.

Rice (1999) has contended that ineffective parenting is significantly more likely in single-parent households than in traditional households. In comparison to children in families with two biological parents, single-parent children in divorced families score higher on measures of problem behaviour and lower on measures of social competence, academic achievement, and self-concept. Therefore, a number of variables have been associated with single-parenting, including less effective parenting, reduced finances, excessive

levels of stress, less affection, less consistency in discipline, and poorer control of children.

The structural-functional theory looks at the family structure and then studies the contributions of the various subsystems. It further looks at family roles and role differentiation. It points out that there are fundamental roles for a nuclear family (father, wife, and children), each member occupying a specific position with a different role to perform. The father is supposed to work and provide for the family, the mother is supposed to care and perform household duties, while the children are to contribute to the performance of chores.

In the Ghanaian socio-cultural context, responsibilities of the male and female, as parents, are enshrined in traditional gender roles. Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995), indicates that, usually, while the man is responsible for the instrumental roles, such as provision of money for food, clothing, shelter, security, discipline and major physical infrastructure that provide comfort and pleasure for the home, the female plays expressive roles, such as cooking, performing household chores, and caring for the daily needs of the household. These roles are shared when the two spouses are living together. However, on separation by death or divorce or by any other reason, only one of the parents has to take custody of the children, with the accompanying responsibilities. The single-parent, thus, has to combine both the instrumental as well as the expressive roles to cater for the upkeep of the family.

The dynamism of everyday living presents challenges to male single-parent families and their members. The challenges require adequate supply of

resources that are accessible and the application of managerial skills to be able to meet them. Male single-parents and their members have varying needs which require the use of resources. However, the availability of resources may be influenced by factors which make it easy or impossible for the family and its members (either as a group or individuals) to satisfy a particular need or needs.

Resources are never in adequate supply, they may be scarce one time or another, or may not be available at all. These include: financial resources, time, and family support, among others. There is, therefore, the need to create what is needed, look for alternatives or make use of what is available wisely and efficiently. This implies the application of managerial strategies, knowledge and skills to the use of resources to be able to derive maximum satisfaction and the quality of life desired. Resource identification, creation, availability, accessibility, assessment and judicious use are management situations that individuals and families have to contend with.

Management becomes effective and efficient if problems were identified and analyzed to determine whether resources, including information, capability, knowledge, skills, money, energy and time, were available to be harnessed and used. It is, however, important to recognize that the processes of management, namely planning, directing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation, will have to be followed for the achievement of goals and derivation of satisfaction which lead to the achievement of the quality of life.

Statement of the problem

Household headship is an important demographic and economic variable in every society. However, the economic consequences of the changing global environment have received little attention in African countries in general and Ghana in particular. International development programmes have targeted several aspects of life and development, and have made great impact on the quality of family life, work output and even human relations. An examination of the categories of people who have benefited from interventions and human resource developmental programmes reveals that male single-parents are clearly ignored.

The United States Census Bureau (2007) reported that 31 percent of all single mothers received public assistance and only six percent of fathers received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Similarly, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997) found out that, of all parental payment recipients, seven percent were men. In Ghana, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection provided some form of intervention for female single-parents through the Women's Development Fund during the period 2002-2008. However, there is hardly any literature to support whether male single-parents received some form of assistance.

Society supports the female single-parent over the male single-parent. For example, an internet search for the term 'single mother support' pulls up information on government grants, support groups and magazine articles. The same search for 'single father support' pulls up multiple website forums. Culturally, the gender roles of males do not include the activities that are performed as expressive roles by women. It is puzzling to imagine what

coping strategies are adopted by male single-parents in managing the household without a woman to play expressive roles. Regrettably however, few works have been done on households in Ghana and even that, the emphasis was on females rather than males. Whenever male single-parenthood was mentioned in any study it was not extensively dealt with. Little attention has been drawn to the study of male single parents and how they perform their parental as well as home management roles.

Most of the attention has been focused on studying the female single-parent, perhaps as a result of what appears to be the prevalence of female single-parents. There is also no human resource development programmes in Ghana that seek to equip male single-parents with the necessary skills and attitudes to play their useful role as single-parents. The way men manage the home and carry out their responsibilities as single-parents had almost been neglected as an issue. The paucity of information on the managerial strategies of male single-parenthood for improving the quality of life has become the stimulus of this study.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to examine the managerial strategies used by male single-parent families in the Central Region of Ghana for improving their quality of life.

Specifically, the study sought to;

1. determine how the performance of both the instrumental and expressive roles affect certain aspects of life of male single-parents;

2. identify the challenges faced by male single-parents in combining the instrumental and expressive roles;
3. examine the kind of support male single-parents receive to take care of their families;
4. evaluate how male single-parents perceive the quality of life;
5. determine the correlations among the indicators of quality of life;
6. evaluate the managerial strategies that male single-parents employ to improve their quality of life; and
7. make recommendations for the improvement of the managerial strategies of male single-parents.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does the performance of both instrumental and expressive roles affect certain aspects of life of male single-parents?
2. What challenges do male single-parents face in combining the instrumental and expressive roles?
3. What are the kinds of support male single-parents receive to take care of their families?
4. How do male single-parents perceive the quality of life?
5. What correlations exist among indicators of quality of life?
6. Which managerial strategies do male single-parents employ to improve their quality of life?

Scope of the study

The study was limited to investigating the managerial strategies of male single-parent families in the Central Region of Ghana. This was in anticipation of the fact that they were vulnerable in combining the instrumental roles of men and the traditional expressive roles of women. The study investigated only males living with children alone. To this end, males who were widowed, divorced, or separated but not living alone with children were excluded from the study. The findings and the recommendations that were made from the study are, therefore, applicable to those males only.

Significance of the study

The study has provided helpful information for single-parents and others concerned about single-parenting. It has addressed common problems faced by single-parents. The study has also provided information on how male single-parents manage their families, combining instrumental and expressive roles. It has unveiled changes in the perceptions male parents have about parental roles.

The study has provided information to the government, non-governmental organisations, gender, and human rights activists to address the issues relating to male single-parenting. It will serve as a useful guide in the development of programmes and the implementation of national policies to avert problems of male single-parenting. It has provided information to researchers of Home Economics, Family Studies, Development Studies and other related fields for further research into the hitherto limited area. Children living with male

single-parents will find useful information to help them cope successfully to improve their quality of life.

The study is also relevant to human resource development practitioners for planning human resource development programmes that are intended to equip male single-parents with the necessary skills and attitudes for good performance as single-parents. The study has also created public awareness and attention about the phenomenon of quality of life. It may also provide guidelines for family specialists wishing to assist families in improving the quality of their lives by showing how management can change their lives in a positive way. Again, it will serve as a reference document to those who would choose to study the same or similar problem.

Finally, the study has contributed to the building of knowledge on male single-parents' managerial strategies which could be used by other researchers in future.

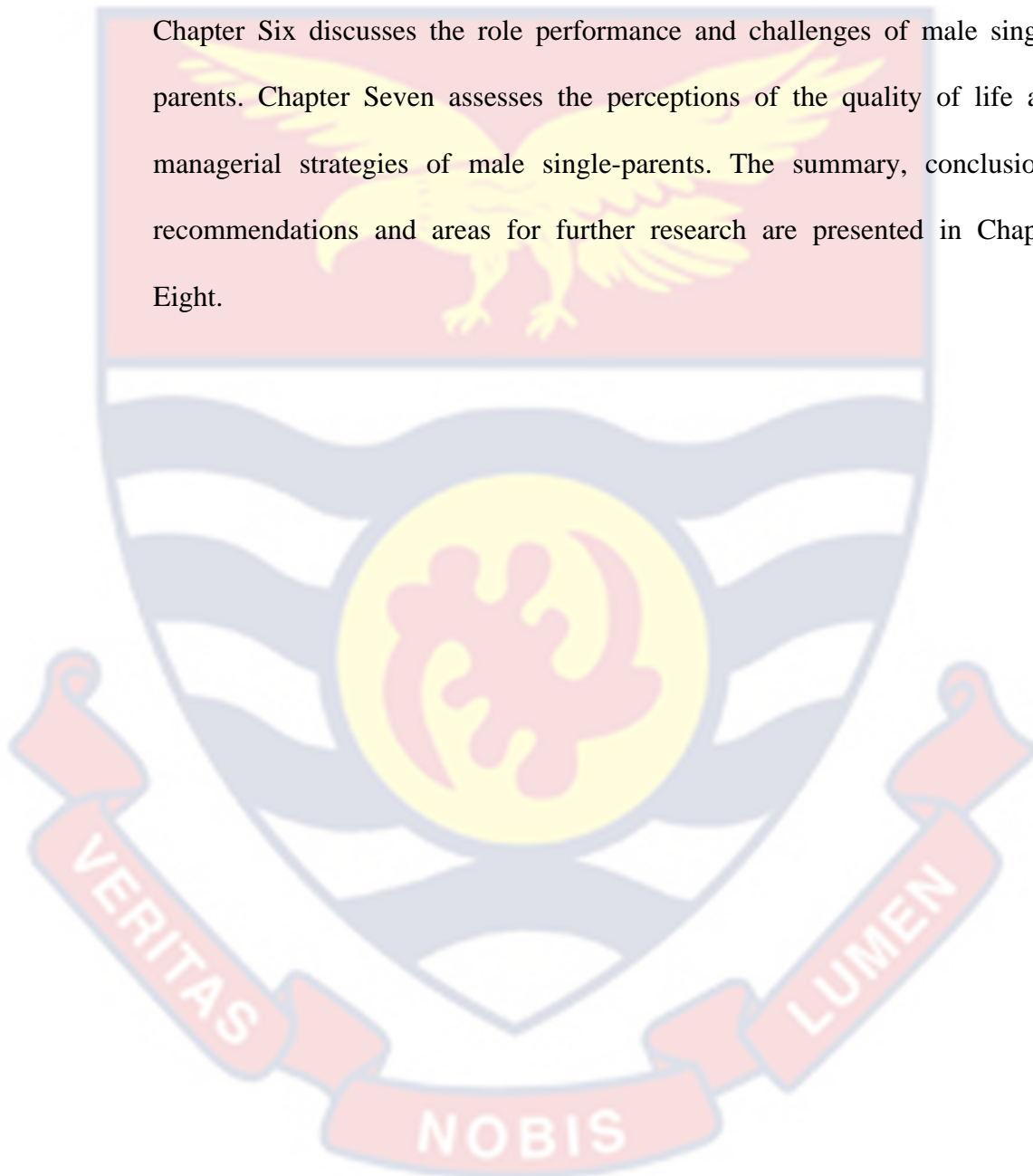
Organisation of the thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter One deals with the introduction which covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope and significance of the study, Chapter Two covers related literature on the conceptions about the family, the family in transition and theories on the family. Chapter Three reviews parenthood, parenting and managerial strategies for improving the quality of life, and provides the conceptual framework. Chapter four consists of the methodology employed in carrying out the study. It covers the study area, research design, study population, sampling procedures, data types

and sources, instrumentation, pre-test, fieldwork and data processing and analysis.

Chapter Five discusses the results presented on the background characteristics of respondents and willingness to remain single parents.

Chapter Six discusses the role performance and challenges of male single-parents. Chapter Seven assesses the perceptions of the quality of life and managerial strategies of male single-parents. The summary, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research are presented in Chapter Eight.



CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTIONS AND THEORIES ON THE FAMILY

Introduction

This chapter explains the concept of family and describes the types of families. It also looks at families in transition and the theories of the family. It is in this context that concepts, works of scholars and theories which relate to the present study are reviewed.

The concept of family

The family is the basic unit of any society. A society is made up of many families. There are different types of families, each passing through a definite life cycle. The family, as a unit, carries out many important functions in a society. Individual family members also carry out specific functions within and outside the family for the survival of the group. These members also relate to each other in special ways. The family is often composed of a man, his wife and their children.

The major family structure commonly discussed today, the nuclear family, which is sometimes called the monogamous family, is made up of a man, his wife and their children. It has many variations, such as the one-parent family and the childless couple. The second major structure is the extended family which includes aunts, cousins, uncles, grandparents, wives of sons and their children as all members of the family. With these different types of families, it is not surprising that even family specialists, do not all agree on one definition of the family (Sasse, 1994).

A family, as explained by Rice (1999), is any group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship, in which the adults cooperate financially for their mutual support and care of the children; the people are committed to one another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship; and the members see their identity as importantly attached to the group with an identity of its own. Mead (1980), cited in Glick (1984), referred to the family as the cultural cornerstone of any society transmitting its cultural history, instilling its prevailing value systems, and socialising the next generation into effective citizens and human beings. The unit, referred to as a family, shares common values and resources. Each family member is responsible for certain decisions, and they all share emotional bonds.

Households involving two or more persons with perceived long-term commitment may qualify as families, if the definition of family developed by the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) (1907, p. 108) is accepted; that it is “a unit of intimate, transacting, and interdependent persons who share some values and goals, responsibility for decisions and resources and have commitment to one another over time.” According to this definition, a childless couple, a single parent with children, a cohabiting couple, a commune, or a divorced man and his children living with a divorced woman and her children may each be classified as a family, if their commitment is one of sharing resources and responsibility for the well-being of members on a somewhat lasting basis.

Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) consider as a family system, individuals who are independently responsible for themselves, as well as related or

unrelated individuals who share at least some portion of their day-to-day interests and necessities through mutual interaction. The definition specifies mutual interaction and sharing of day-to-day interests and necessities as functions of the system. It is the system of lifestyle functions and concomitant relationships used in sharing human and material resources to satisfy daily well-being that is the focus of life management. It may be applied to all lifestyles, including those of singles, mingles, marrieds, fragmented families, reconstituted families, single-parent families and communal family units. Each lifestyle utilises a system for living based on values that provide meaning for what is desirable and give continuity to decisions and actions.

Rice (1999) defined a family as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption: constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles (husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister); and creating and maintaining a common culture. This definition eliminates those cohabiting, though not legally related or married. It seems to assume that individuals in a family must conform to some types of prescribed social roles.

None of these definitions seems to cover all types of family situations: non-married cohabiting couples, gay and lesbian couples, single-parent households, couples without children, group marriages, and communal living situations, among others. A more comprehensive and encompassing but less stereotyped definition has been given by Sasse (1994). It states that a family is any group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship, in which the adults cooperate financially for their mutual support and care of the children, the people are committed to one

another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship, and the members see their identity as importantly attached to the group with an identity of its own, This definition includes a variety of family structures: the traditional married couple with or without children; single-parent families; and families consisting of blood relatives, such as extended family members.

Sasse's definition also includes persons not related by marriage, blood, or adoption, who have a sexually expressive relationship; an unmarried cohabiting couple; a gay male or lesbian couple; a group marriage; and a communal family. Because the definition insists that the persons be committed and in an intimate, inter- personal relationship, it eliminates cohabiting couples who live together for practical reasons, without commitment, and those who have only a casual relationship even though they may have sex together. The members must see their relationship and identity as importantly attached to the group, and the group must have an identity of its own.

Types of families

Families exist in a variety of forms based on structure and the relationships among the people in them. As far as family forms are concerned, no form is better than another. Family functions can be served regardless of the form, as long as people find the will and the way. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) opined that what truly counts in any family is not its form. It is what goes on inside that is important. It is within the family that people gain the skills, strength, insights, creativeness, foundation and knowledge that enable them to cope in society and build new families for society to carry on.

Sasse (1994) has indicated that families today live in a rapidly changing world. Change took place in the past years, but the pace has increased with time. Some trends have become apparent regarding family patterns, and the changing picture of the family has given rise to many family configurations and challenges. Sasse classified family patterns such as: single-people, blended families, and single-parent families.

Single-people are those individuals who remain single or choose single living over marriage. Waiting to marry at older ages contributes to the growing number of singles. Couples who live on their own also make up a large segment of households today. More couples than in the past postpone having children, have fewer of them, or have none at all. Another class is blended families. Many marriages today end in divorce. Many divorced people with children remarry, producing a growing number of blended and stepfamily families.

The single-parent family is the fastest growing household category. Divorce or separation, death of a spouse, and unwed parents, all account for many of the single-parent families. Some observers have suggested that single-parent families are problem families. This generalization is inaccurate. Indeed, many divorced single parents do an excellent job of raising children who thrive at home and at school. So do many stepfamilies. This is not to say that single-parent families and stepfamilies are problem-free. Single-parent families and stepfamilies also face many of the same challenges that other families face (Sasse, 1994).

Sasse (1994) observed that each of these types of families passes through a definite life cycle. The family life cycle describes the stages of

development that families go through. Ideally, the family life cycle begins with two relatively young people (husband and wife), children are born, they are nurtured, and they grow up, become independent, leave home and establish their own families. There are different demands and problems at each stage so there is the need to plan effectively to meet the demands and solve problems accordingly.

Rice (1999) has identified the following types of families: nuclear family; extended family; blended or reconstituted family, binuclear family; a single-parent family; adoptive family; and a gay male or lesbian family.

The nuclear family is what many people imagine when they think of a typical family. It consists of a father, a mother and their children. One of the advantages of a nuclear family is that the responsibilities of raising children can be shared. Although fathers used to spend less time with their children, today many are actively involved. Fathers have learned that they have much to gain by close interaction with their children, and the children do, too. Two incomes are often needed to make ends meet in nuclear families today. When both parents are employed, the family may need child care of some type. Sometimes one parent is not employed outside the home. For these families, child care may not be a problem. Although mothers have commonly stayed at home with children in the past, some fathers do so today. In a nuclear family, household as well as child-raising responsibilities can be shared.

The extended family consists of a spouse, possibly a mate and children and other relatives who may or may not live together. An extended family includes relatives other than the parents and children. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are all part of an extended family. Such relatives are part

of the extended family whether they live with the family or not. Extended family members, regardless of where they live, can be an important resource for each other. Most relatives expect to be there for each other when they are needed. Most people believe that nothing can replace family ties. Therefore, working together to keep the bond close is worthwhile (Rice, 1999).

The blended or reconstituted family is formed when a divorced person, with or without children, remarries another person who may or may not have been married before and who may or may not have children. A blended family consists of a husband and wife, at least one of whom has children from a previous relationship. If either the remarried husband or wife has children from the previous marriage, a step family is formed. When blended families form, family members become stepmothers, stepfathers, stepsisters, and stepbrothers. These individuals become related by the marriage rather than by blood. Any children who are born into the family are half-brothers or half-sisters to the existing children, which means that the children share one, but not both parents. Sometimes the couple may have children resulting in “my children“, “your children” and “our children” relationships. Adjustments are needed by both adults and children in their relationships for being part of such a family configuration. They need to make an effort to make new routines and the relationships work (Rice, 1999).

The binuclear family is an original family divided into two by divorce. It consists of two nuclear families: the maternal nuclear family headed by the mother, and the paternal family headed by the father. The families include whatever children were in the original and may be headed by a single-parent or two parents if former spouses remarry.

A single-parent family consists of one parent and his or her children. Many single-parent families result from divorce. Others are formed when a parent dies or leaves home. Some people who head single-parent families have never married but have or adopted children. Single-parenting can be rewarding as well as challenging. The greatest challenge, perhaps, is in juggling all the responsibilities. Many single-parents must provide and manage all the income for the family. Unless the children are old enough to help, the parent must take care of all household tasks. The parent must also give guidance and love to children. Finding the time and energy to do all this may not be easy. The relationship between parent and child is strengthened in this way. Like all busy parents, single-parents must regularly set aside some special time for children. Single-parents also need contact with other adults. Children need contacts with other adults, too, so they can learn the roles of both men and women. Not everyone agrees on how children fare in single-parent families. In all likelihood, it depends on the situation.

In the adoptive family, some children are not biologically linked to their parents. That is, they were not born to them. Instead, the parents have gone through a legal process to make the children part of the family, creating an adoptive family. Sometimes families have both birth and adopted children. The adopted child usually takes the family's last name and is legally protected by all the same rights that a birth child has. People adopt children for many reasons. Often they do so because they cannot have children of their own, yet they wish to raise a child. Some people want children, but they prefer to take care of those with a need rather than bring additional children into the world.

When an infant is adopted, much of the adjustment is made by parents,

who are often thrust into parenting role almost overnight. This can be awesome, although exciting. If the child is older, adjustment comes on both sides. Whatever memories and experiences the child has will be brought along. Patience and understanding may help. Acceptance can come in time if family members make the child feel safe and secure (Rice, 1999).

A gay male or lesbian family consists of a couple of the same sex, living together, sharing sexual expression and commitment. Some gay male or lesbian families include children adopted or from one of the spouses, who are committed to their relationship without formal marriage.

Traditional roles of the family

Nearly all of behaviour involves playing different roles. A role, as explained by Smith and Apicelli (1982), is simply a set of expectations about how you will behave and what you will do. Each society has its own culture, a set of characteristics, beliefs and norms. These give rise to the society's norms or standards and expectations of how people should behave to the society running smoothly. Smith and Apicelli reiterated that some norms are considered so necessary to society's survival that they are written as laws. Other norms, such as routinely granting mothers the custody of children after a divorce, are slowly giving way. As more fathers desire custody and become successful single-parents, values about what is best for children change, and we look more closely at the special needs of different families.

Smith and Apicelli (1982) also indicted that individuals in a family hold several important positions. Position is the name of the slot or place or part an individual holds in the family. Within the family, there are positions,

such as father, mother, wife, husband, parent, child, son, daughter, brother and sister. The family system has many other possible positions, including cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents. Some of the positions are assigned by factors beyond the control of the individual, such as age and birth order (oldest son, middle child), sex (daughter, son, father and mother), race and nationality. Others are determined by the life choices that individuals make.

The way individuals function or behave in each of the positions is shaped by culture's expectations. Some positions have differing levels of power, such as the control of parent over child. Smith and Apicelli (1982) further indicate that every position has one or two more roles attached to it. The role is like a role in a play: it is the part society's script gives to any person, cast in that position. Individuals learn what roles the society expects from each new position they take. This is part of societal education called socialisation - learning the ways of culture, making individuals actors and actresses in their own right.

Smith and Apicelli (1982) contend that family position roles are roles played because of positions individuals hold in the family. The positions of wife and husband, for instance, usually involve such roles as helpmate, sexual partner; and companion. Traditionally; the position roles of the wife included housekeeping and cooking, and may also have included bookkeeping, secretary and interior decoration (expressive roles). Husband has traditionally implied the position roles of provider and protector; (instrumental roles) as well as roles shared with wife, such as sexual partner and social companion. Increasingly, the husband assumes such domestic roles as housekeeper, shopper and cook.

Unlike position roles, behaviour roles are not assigned because of what a person does or is. Rather, they are roles that people might take on in any number of positions. Behaviour roles are also taught. You learn how to nurture by observing others do it, by being nurtured, and by hearing what it means to nurture. Nurturing or giving care and encouragement to a growing child is a behaviour society has traditionally connected with mothers.

A gender role is a theoretical construct in the social sciences and humanities that refers to a set of social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. Proponents of gender role theory assert that observed gender differences in behaviour and personality characteristics are, at least in part, socially constructed, and therefore, the product of socialisation experiences.

Essentially, Kiger and Pamela (1996) have explained that gender refers to an individual's inner sex or psychological sense of being a male or a female, irrespective of one's (outer) sex identity as determined by one's sexual organs. They contend that there are two main genders: masculine (male) or feminine (female). Gender identity refers to the options available to a member of a society to choose from a set of social identities, based on the combinations of one's sex identity on the one hand, and one's natural gender, interests and social experience on the other. Gender roles, essentially, refer to the set of attitudes and behaviours socially expected from the members of a particular gender identity. Additionally, Kiger and Pamela say that gender roles are socially constructed. They may reflect natural gender aspirations of

the members of that gender identity, or they may be politicised and manipulated which then result in the oppression of people.

In many societies, the man's primary family role is that of economic provider. The traditional father's minimal participation in the day-to-day care of children has been well documented by Coverman and Sheley (1986), and Levant, Slattery and Loiselle (1987). Women assume responsibility for the day-to-day care and supervision of children and are more likely to provide children with emotional and physical comfort. Arkinson (1987) has, however, contended that children benefit if both parents share in meeting their needs. The needs of dependent children are not easily met by the mother or father alone, especially if there is more than one child. To expect the mother or father alone to fulfil the exhausting parenting role is unfair (Levant et al., 1987). Every parent brings strengths and weaknesses to the role.

Talcott Parsons' view of gender roles

Working in the United States, Talcott Parsons developed a model of the nuclear family. At that place and time, the nuclear family was the prevalent family structure. It compared a strictly traditional view of gender roles from an industrial age American perspective to a more liberal view. Parsons' model was used to contrast and illustrate extreme positions on gender roles as presented in Table 1. Model A describes the total separation of male and female roles, while Model B describes the complete dissolution of gender roles. The examples are based on the context of the culture and infrastructure of the United States. However, these extreme positions are rarely found. Actual behaviour of individuals is usually somewhere between these poles.

Table 1: Parsons' model of gender roles

	Model A	Model B
	Total role segregation	Total integration of roles
Education	Gender- specific education; high professional qualification is important only for the man	Co-education schools, same content of classes for girls and boys, same qualification for men and women
Profession	The workplace is not the primary area of women; career and professional advancement is deemed unimportant for women	For women, career is just as important as for men; therefore equal professional opportunities for men and women are necessary
Housework	Housekeeping and child care are the primary functions of the woman; participation of the man in these function is only partially wanted	All housework is done by both parties to the marriage in equal shares
Decision-making	In case of conflict, man has the last say, for example in choosing the place to live, choice of school for children, buying decisions	Neither partner dominates; solutions do not always follow the principle of finding a concerted decision; <u>status quo</u> is maintained if disagreement occurs
Childcare and education	Woman takes care of the largest part of these functions; she educates children and cares for them in every way	Man and woman share these functions equally

Source: Bem (1981)

Gender roles and socialisation

The process through which the individual learns and accepts roles is known as socialisation. Socialisation works by encouraging wanted and discouraging unwanted behaviour. These sanctions by agents of socialisation such as the family, schools and the media, make it clear to the child what is expected of the child by society. Mostly, accepted behaviour is not produced by outright reforming coercion from an accepted social system. In some other cases, various forms of coercion have been used to acquire desired response or function. In the majority of traditional and developmental social systems, an individual has a choice as to what he or she should or should not conform to as a representative of the socialisation process. Through this process, an individual willingly accepts the consequences whether they are beneficial or negative, minor or severe, depending on the way an individual copes, and the extent to which he or she must modify his or her natural behaviour to conform to the society's accepted behaviour standards (Bem, 1981).

Functions of the family

No two families are the same, yet most families perform certain functions that set them apart from other groups. A family is an everyday part of life for most people. Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of the importance of anything that is simply there all the time. Families provide many functions or purposes, yet their job is not always easy. So much can interfere as families work to fulfil their functions. Families differ, and the functions, purposes, responsibilities for sustaining health, cohesion, and expected activities, served by their lifestyles, are diverse. Living units are most often originated for the

purpose of love and companionship. Physiological needs and their accompanying functions provide motivation and framework for continued decision-making and managing the family (Paolucci et al., 1977).

Gross, Crandall and Knoll (1980) contend that, ideally, families are systems where love, respect, and responsibility are shared and taught. Families are nurturing and humanizing systems where resources are drawn from the environment and transformed into physical nourishment for the well-being of members of the group. Families provide opportunities and guidance in personal growth and development over time, helping members to achieve identity and self-definition. Families are systems for regulating behaviour in both a moral and a social sense, through discipline based on education, rather than on restraint. They also provide environments where companionship, commitment, emotional support, mutual interaction, and shared interests may be explored. Families establish lifestyles and provide meaning for life; they develop values and teach role patterns for human transactions. This they do, by providing a place where rest and rejuvenation can take place and where individualism, as well as sharing, is possible.

Gross et al. (1980), again, assert that families are economic units in which people with mutual rights and responsibilities, as well as economic relationships, share in the performance of returns from their labours and in the consumption of common goods and services. The economic significance of the family arises not only from the tasks that the members perform for and with one another, but also from the rights and obligations that the family relationships entail. The economic function begins with earning an income, self-support, and support for dependants, including children, until they are

able to support themselves. Parents have the responsibility of teaching children the attitudes and values necessary to make economic decisions and to build personalities capable of adequately meeting the complexities of modern life. Families are consuming units and, as such, define the family's role and function in the economy. The economic functions of the family focus on improving the welfare of the group without damaging the resources of others.

Families are political systems where group unity is fostered. It is the unity and commonality of interests in the family that holds the group together. Without some degree of cohesion, living units are unable to function effectively. The family as an institution is a major subsystem of its dynamic environment. As such, it fulfils special functions as it interacts with other subsystems of government, business, and community. Because families build and maintain lifestyles, families motivate change not only in members of the group but also through their interactions with other systems. These interactions cause changes in the value priorities of business, government and schools.

Subsequently, Gross et al. (1980) divide the functions of families into two classifications: the expressive functions of interpersonal relations used in meeting the developmental and emotional needs of its members, including morale, loyalty, and socialization of children; and the instrumental functions concerned with the decisions made in acquiring and managing resources to accomplish the work of the family and achieve a variety of goals.

On the other hand, Paolucci (1978) says that families are critical decision-making units. They help individuals see that they are worthwhile and have control over their lives. What the family attempts to do is to balance the

expressive with the instrumental functions, making the lives of its members as good as possible and, at the same time, dissuading them from seeking their own good at the expense of others. These family functions produce consequences for the well-being of societies.

Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995), has outlined the functions of the family. He states that the family, as a whole, serves a variety of functions for society. It regulates sexual conducts and ensures the replacement of the members of the society through reproduction. It is the basic economic unit of production and consumption. It socializes the young, while it serves as the centre of political power, as it enforces norms and laws, and it is the course of religious beliefs. It transmits cultural heritage and serves as the first line of social security. The family provides the physical closeness and enduring interaction needed to develop intimacy and the sense of being emotionally close to people. In the intimacy of family relationships, people support one another and share things they might conceal from strangers, casual acquaintances, or even friends. The family provides an emotional refuge from the outside world. It also satisfies psychological needs by providing opportunities for members to develop their emotions and build good mental health. This includes the need for love and belonging, privacy, fun, relaxation, and comfort.

The family in transition

Worldwide, the family is acknowledged as the bedrock of human society (Rice & Tucker, 1996). It is one of the principal instruments whereby the critical task of society hangs. Families vary in form over time and across

cultures. Variant family forms have been identified and studied by Paolucci et al (1977, p.14) who observe that, “mapping of this pluralism in family structure indicated the beginnings of vast and cataclysmic changes in societal institutions and values, with obvious consequences for the traditional family”.

Sussman (1976) charted pluralism in family structures and refers to their estimated distribution in the population of the United States in 1976, made up of nuclear families (55%), childless families (20%), single-parent families (15%), three-generation families (2%), and kin networks (2%). He also described four emerging family types, representing about six percent of the population: commune families; unmarried parent and child families, unmarried couple and child families, usually a common law marriage; and intentional couples (cohabiting and homosexual couples). Sussman concluded that the number of members and the form the unit takes is less important to the well-being of society than is the quality of family functions performed and the relationships that exist among the members who are present.

Variations in family structure implies that there are several optional ways of living that one can choose to pursue a lifestyle and family form that bring about the greatest self actualization. The fact that environments are becoming increasingly complex seems to indicate that the multiplicity of roles will continue and may, in fact, increase in the years to come (Paolucci et al., 1977). The movement towards equality or parity roles brings concurrent opportunities and freedom to decide what family form will produce the best nurturing environment for family members. Implicit in various structures is the opportunity and freedom to decide what roles will be played within the family structure. Each of these family forms responds differently to its

environment and, hence, makes different choices. Through continuous system-environmental interaction overtime, family members and the family will grow, change and develop.

Each family structure and role pattern creates a different setting for decision-making, generates different alternatives for person-to-person and person-environment adaptations. An examination of the structure, role pattern and essential functions inherent in each family vignette should be helpful in determining the “rules” the family organisation uses to manage family-environment interaction and outcomes. Knowledge of these factors is helpful in depicting the kind of decisions each family will make, where the decision will be made and implemented, who in the family will have the authority to decide, who will carry them out, and who will bear the responsibility and the consequences of the choice (Paolucci et al., 1977).

Foster, Hogan, Herring and Gieseing-William (1994) observed that, in spite of the positive traits and functions the family provides, society is being profoundly undermined by modern sociological changes that are taking place. In recent times, a common set of forces, including industrialisation, urbanisation, modernisation and increased communication, is changing radically the quality of living among people. Such transformations will continue, in so far as human society remains dynamic. From one perspective, the trend may be called progress or development. But, as is the case with all progress, it means the transformation of the old order and the introduction of new and complex problems which may defy easy and ad hoc solutions.

Trends and issues in family forms

From a variety of sources, statistical and analytical, authors have organized the changes in family forms occurring at this time into several major trends. Each trend has a history of movement in the same direction for at least 10 years and has accelerated in the past few years, culminating in statistics that represent major changes in magnitude. Each is nationwide in scope and is related to the form and lifestyle of large numbers of living units in the United States since 1980 (Gross et al., 1980). These are widespread trends that impinge on family life management and impose decision-making situations on the nation's families. Although the numbers change each year, the relative proportions change more slowly. Therefore, these trends are apt to continue well into the future. The trends include: variety of widespread lifestyles; smaller families; more childlessness; continued marital instability; and increasing single-parent families.

Variety of widespread lifestyles

This is a time of rapid changes in the pattern of family life. Pluralism in lifestyles is one of the significant trends in family form in recent times. There are some indications of the increasing diversity of lifestyles. Macklin (1981) has reiterated that there has been a slow but steady increase in the percentages of persons residing in single-parent or dual career nuclear families, as well as an increase in those living alone or in households comprised of non-related individuals. The Bureau of Census Report (2007) indicates that, at any given point in time, the majority of households in the United States do not represent traditional nuclear families.

In tracing the labour force activities of family members from 1950 to 1993, Waldman (1985) cited an increase in the variety of people's living arrangements as a major trend. She identified such factors contributing to the shift from nuclear family changes as unusually low fertility rate, exceptionally high divorce rates, later marriage, aging of the population, and greater labour force participation by married women. During that period, the number of families, maintained by women, tripled. Additionally, Waldman has observed that today's schoolage and preschool children are more likely to be living with one parent or a stepparent and are far more likely to have a working mother. More than half of all married couples became multi-earner families during the study period. Broken families became more numerous and their employment and unemployment problems more prominent.

Projections of the type of households in 1990 derived by Glick (1984) from census data for 1981 showed a continuation in the downward trend of married-couple households, an upward trend in single-parent households, and upward trends in both women and men living alone. Glick reported that about one-half of the first marriages of young adults today are likely to end in divorce. For second marriages, the projected level is closer to 60 percent. The number of one-parent households will probably have increased by one-third between 1981 and 1990.

Smaller families and more childlessness

Families have become substantially smaller than they were in the past and a large proportion of couples are remaining childless. When nations shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy, the status of children also shifts

from an economic asset to one of economic liability. The cost of child support is another contributing factor in the trend toward smaller families. The cost of raising an urban or rural non-farm child from birth to the age of 18 was calculated in 1984 by the United States Department of Agriculture to range from \$86,845 to \$100,821, depending on the region of the country in which the child lives (Lauer & Lauer, 1985). Add this to the cost of college education, and it is obvious that children are expensive. Families wishing to provide maximum opportunities for each child are deciding whether they can support children and, if so, how many?

Older age at first marriage has been associated with large proportion of childlessness and with fewer children in families that do have children. According to Saulter (1997), the median age at first marriage for both men and women has increased in the last decade by a year - and - half to almost 25 years of age for men and 22.5 for women. This gradual upward movement is due in part to continuing education and career advancement alternatives for both men and women and, in part, to the desire for independence during early adulthood.

Continued marital instability

As a normative institution, marriage has lost its taken-for-granted, life-long quality. Separation and divorce have become more prevalent. Glick (1984) indicated that between 1970 and 1982, the divorce ratio climbed from 47 to 114 divorced persons per 1000 married with spouse present. That represents a divorce rate in 1980 of one divorce for every two marriages. Among both men and women, there tends to be a negative correlation between

divorce and education. The likelihood of a first marriage ending in divorce is closer to 60 percent for young adults with some college education. Subsequently, Glick (1984) proposes that persons with the kind of personality and family background characteristics that result in their reaching the traditional goal of college graduation may also be most likely to achieve the goal of a permanent marriage. However, women who are continued in post-graduate school have a considerably greater likelihood of their first marriage ending in divorce. These women are more likely to be career-oriented.

Marital instability produces more single-parent families, at least temporarily. The median interval between marriage and divorce (for those who divorce) is seven years and between divorce and remarriage (for those who remarry) is three years (Glick, 1984). Men are more likely to remarry and do so more quickly after divorce than women. This may partly explain why there are more female single-parents than there are male single-parents. The fact that a large proportion of divorced people remarry, increases the number of blended families and causes adjustments of interpersonal relations and roles. Glick also indicated that only one woman out of five has a husband when she reaches the age of 75. Quality of life at this age depends on health, economic resources, and the supply of other resources and management practices developed during younger years.

Increasing single-parent families

Single-parent families have encountered phenomenal growth. Their numbers more than doubled in the 12 years between 1970 and 1982. The number of children living with only one parent in 1982 was 13.7 million, two-

thirds more than in 1970. This number is all the more striking in view of the 10 percent decline in the total number of all children under 18 that occurred during the period 1970 - 1982. Most of the increase in total number of families since 1980 has been attributed to families maintained by only one parent.

Glick (1984) had indicated that the proportion of children under the age of 18 living with two parents has declined from 85 percent in 1970 to 76 percent in 1981, and is expected to go down to 69 percent by 1990. More than half (57%) of all children under 18 will be living with one parent in 1990, if current predictions are accurate. Families headed by single- parents have increased more rapidly than other types of families, due to high rates of divorce and separation. In the same vein, Waldman (1985) has indicated that, as time goes on, the experience of being a lone parent, who maintains a household, is becoming steadily much less unusual. As more young adults postpone marriage and more parents become divorced, the number of one-parent households is expected to increase by one-third between 1990 and 2000. While married couple households are expected to increase by only six percent, households headed by a woman with no husband present will increase by 26 percent and those headed by a man with no wife present are expected to increase by fully 35 percent.

The Ghanaian family in transition

One dimension of the changing family in Ghana is the increase in the frequency of marital disruption. Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995), indicated that families are being disintegrated and re-marriages have become rampant. This breakdown of family ties has resulted in an increasing

number of children and youth being left to fend for themselves and, therefore, increasingly exposed to risks, such as child labour, sexual exploitation and teenage pregnancies. The breakdown of marriages has also partly contributed to the emergence of single-parenthood in Ghana. Generally, three-quarters of single-parents are females while one-quarter are males. According to Boateng, divorce, widowhood, desertion, unwedded parent, and job transfer are largely accountable for single-parenthood.

Various issues of great significance are emerging from the deliberations on the changing picture of the family. The family has been thrown into disequilibrium as parental responsibility is being abdicated, following the breakdown of marriages. Each parent has a statutory duty to afford his child's protection from physical harm or hazards. Parents are supposed to provide the necessities of health and life for the child. It is the duty of parents to see to the moral upbringing of the child to prevent the child from engaging in sexually perverse conduct (Boateng, 1995, cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1995).

Broken homes have resulted in "broken children". The girl-child often has to sacrifice her education for the boy-child. School drop-outs find themselves on the street and in the labour market. Child delinquency is on the increase and more and more children are becoming alcoholics, drug addicts and market porters. Naive girls are being raped, while others are lured by irresponsible men and are at risk of getting pregnant. When these girls get pregnant, these men deny responsibility for the pregnancy, or mothers abandon them, leading to the birth of disadvantaged children. Such children have nowhere to go. They tend to be "unwanted" and void of parental love and

care. Yet, these represent the potential human capital and future labour force of the population.

The family, the basic unit of production and reproduction, is in crisis: material bonds are being broken while men and women are shirking their responsibilities. Consequently, men and women are being over-burdened by absentee spouses and their coping strategies are not adequate enough to enable them maintain their children fully. Thus, the children are becoming victims of broken homes and the nation is losing potential human capital (Boateng, 1995, cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1995).

The above portrait of the changing family calls for the evolution of family-sensitive policies in order to create an environment supportive of the family, and a better understanding of the family in all its ramifications, structure and functions. If relevant policies are tailored to meet the needs of changing families, the family will be better equipped to perform its functions more appropriately and, thereby, contribute to the socio-economic development of the country as a whole.

Theories on the family

The family can be viewed from a number of perspectives which are reflected in conceptual and theoretical tools sociologists have developed to study the family. This section reviews the various theories on the family. They are: structural functionalism; family development; and the family systems theories.

Structural-functionalism theory

As a school of thought in anthropology, functionalism emerged early in the 20th Century. Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, two prominent anthropologists in Great Britain at the time, had the greatest influence in this development. Two versions of functionalism, developed between 1910 and 1930, were: biocultural and psychological functionalism, the approach advocated by Malinowski; and structural-functionalism, the approach, which was a paradigm shift, advocated by Radcliffe-Brown (Weil, 1971).

Talcott Parsons was the main exponent of the theory of structural-functionalism. Parsons attempted to develop a “grand theory” of society that explains all social behaviour, everywhere, throughout history, and in all contexts, with a single model called structural functionalism. This approach considers values to be the core of culture, because values give meaning to what people do, direct people’s lives, and bind people together. These “cultural traits”, thus, function for the operation of society (Parsons, 1966).

Parsons believed that all lasting social systems strive for stability or equilibrium with a strong sense of social order and institutional interdependence. Additionally, Parsons claimed that for any given system of action, there were four functional components that were necessary for a system to exist, function, and maintain equilibrium. A social system must adapt and be able to exist in a changing environment; must have clearly stated goals; must involve actors (integration) within a subsystem of a greater organizational system; and must define and maintain a set of norms and values, which, in turn, legitimizes action within the system itself. He points

out that, for successful functioning, all social agents must deal with these problems.

In his theory of structural-functionalism, Parsons presents five contrasting pairs of value orientation, which, in their various combinations, account for the nature of role relationships in any society, and hence, typify the structure of any society. These pairs, which he called Pattern Variables, are:

1. Affectivity - Affective neutrality;
2. Self-orientation - Collectivity-orientation;
3. Particularism - Universalism;
4. Ascription - Achievement; and
5. Functional diffuseness - Functional specificity.

Parsons regards the first half of each pair as the expressive types of characteristics and the second half of the pattern as the instrumental types of characteristics. Expressive aspects refer to "the integrative and tension aspects" (Morgan, 1975, p.29). These are people, roles, and actions concerned with taking care of the common task culture, how to integrate the group, and how to manage and resolve internal tensions and conflicts. This may take many different forms but often is associated with the family, and more specifically with the female role in the family.

The instrumental characteristics refer to the goal attainment and adaptation aspects. These are the characteristics, people, roles, and actions associated with ideas, problem solving and getting the task done. These tasks are often associated with male roles, public activities, the economy, or politics. These can also be used to refer to the type of society. Social action and

interaction in early forms of society were more likely to be characterized by expressive characteristics. In contrast, in modern societies, with a more complex division of labour and differentiation of statuses and roles, much of social action and interaction is characterized by instrumental characteristics.

Structural-functionalism, therefore, looks at behavioural patterns and interchanges between the family and other systems in the society and between the family and its subsystems. It also looks at the family's responsibility in socialization, transmitting values and norms of the society to the individual. It focuses on how the nuclear family provides and motivates, supports and encourages the individual to assume tasks. It also studies the structure, that is, who belongs to the family, and studies the contributions of the various subsystems in the family, roles in the family in relation to the society. Structural-functionalism further looks at family roles and role differentiation. There are fundamental roles for a nuclear family. The father, mother and children each occupies a specific position with a different role to perform. The father is supposed to work and provide for the family, the mother is supposed to care and perform household duties and the children are to contribute to the performance of chores.

Structural-functionalism further looks at role prescription and role performance for the nuclear family. Role prescription is the societal expectations of the individual, while role performance is what is actually done by family members. It has identified two major roles in the family set-up in terms of the role family members play. These are: instrumental and expressive roles. The husband or father plays instrumental roles to provide for basic needs. On the other hand, the wife or mother plays the expressive roles,

maintaining the family welfare, ensuring good interpersonal relationships and maintaining the house. However, it has been argued that, looking at the roles of fathers and mothers, it is found out that they do not play these roles in isolation. At times, the fathers play expressive roles in actual performance and the mothers also play instrumental roles in actual performance (Weil, 1971).

Structural-functionalism further focuses attention on the social structure. It looks at the family as a social institution in terms of the needs of society. The society expects the family to perform certain basic functions for its members. Family functions have been described in numerous ways. A generation ago, Murdock (1949) identified four basic functions of the nuclear family, namely: providing a common residence; economic cooperation; reproduction; and sexuality.

1. Common residence: In the last few decades, changes in society have created many variations of this function. Today, family members may share a common residence only some of the time.
2. Economic cooperation: Economic cooperation is a broad term that can include a wide range of activities from cooking to household maintenance and income production, allocation, distribution, and management of available resources. Historically, the family was almost a self-sufficient economic unit. The traditional rural family produced much of its own food, housing, and clothing. Family members cooperated in this production and depended on one another for goods and services.
3. Reproduction: Although the reproductive function of the family has always been important, non-marital reproduction is now common as

well. Births to unmarried persons now constitute one out of four of all live births in the United States (United States Bureau of the Census, 1997). Advances in reproduction have also made it possible for fertilization to take place without any sexual contact between a man and a woman, as in the case of artificial insemination.

4. Sexual function: Murdock's (1949) concept of sexuality was synonymous with heterosexual relationship within or outside the family. Sexual expression, both heterosexual and homosexual, may take place between two people outside a family unit. For example, some gay males and lesbian couples have been able to legally adopt children and some lesbians have given birth to children.

Some sociologists have suggested other functions. Reiss (1980) insists that the only universal function of the family (nuclear, extended, or otherwise) is the nurturance and socialization of children so that they will be able to fulfil the roles required by society. This includes supplying the child with a value orientation, assuring, to a degree, his compliance or conformity with societal norms. According to this view, parents do not have to be biologically related to their children (the children may be adopted), but society insists that socialization is the responsibility of the family group (Moss & Abramowitz, 1982). Whether parents are single, separated, divorced, married, or remarried, they are expected to be responsible for meeting their children's physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and moral needs.

Identity formation is another function of the family. The family not only affects personality, but the personality of the members also affects family activities. Personality, to a considerable extent, develops within the family,

and the family can actually be described as the mediator between the personality and the broader societal system (Reiss 1980).

The scope of structural functionalism provides a framework for dealing with the relationships within the family, as well as with the influences of the other agencies within the wider society (Weil, 1971). Those using the framework are concerned with the family's unique structure-the relatively stable and patterned relationships- as well as the interplay between the family and such outside systems; and the transactions between the family as a unit and its smaller subgroups of the husband-wife dyad and the sibling cliques (Parsons & Bales, 1955, cited in Weil, 1971).

The framework calls attention to reciprocal action between systems. The reciprocal relationship between systems has been described by Bell and Vogel (1987) as a series of goods, behaviour, and behaviour responses, made by the family as well as received by it. Underlying functionalist theory is the fundamental metaphor of the living organism, its several parts and organs, grouped and organized into a system, the function of the various parts and organs being to sustain the organism, to keep its essential processes going and enable it to reproduce.

Similarly, members of a society can be thought of as cells, its institutions its organs, whose function is to sustain the life of the collective entity, despite the frequent death of cells and the production of new ones. Functionalist analyses examine the social significance of phenomena, that is, the purpose they serve a particular society in maintaining the whole (Kuper, 1977).

Critics of structural-functionalism say that the theory fails to achieve clear and adequate communication. Barber (1956), cited in Weil (1971), stated that, too often, a single term has been used to symbolize different concepts, just as the same concept has been symbolized in different terms. For example, the term function itself seems ambiguous, appearing in almost any study or discipline. In addition to this criticism, descriptive accounts of family structure have used terms loosely, thereby producing considerable verbal confusion.

Although there are weaknesses, particularly terminological confusion, there are also advantages for studying family-life this way. Within this framework, the family can be described as the basic social unit that is held responsible for meeting individual human needs, such as the sexual, reproductive, educational, and economic needs, which are also essential for societal survival.

The family development theory

The family development theory, a relatively new one, as compared to other theories, has added the useful dimension of studying the family throughout its entire life cycle rather than focusing statistically on the family at one point in its history. The family development theory focuses on the systematic and patterned changes experienced by families as they move through their life course.

The general notion of a family life-cycle has a long history that dates back to 1777 (Mattessich & Hill, 1987). A more conscious formulation known as family development theory began after World War II with work on family stress by Hill (1949) and later by Duvall (1957). The first systematic statement

of the approach characterized family development as proceeding through life-cycle stages (family stages), namely: early marriage; families with young children; the launching of children out of the home; and the empty nest (Hill & Rodgers, 1964). This approach to family life can also be viewed as a beginning tool for predicting the presence of stress and strain in particular stages of the family life cycle. This framework provides the basis for looking at the changes that occur in the family life of the individual as the person is born, grows up, marries, raises family and dies. The time span in this theory is the life cycle of a nuclear family and the units of analysis are the stages of the family life cycle.

Hill and Hansen (1996) point out that this theory borrowed the concept of stages of the family life cycle from rural sociologists. It borrowed the concept of developmental needs and tasks from child psychologists and human development. Interactional frameworks as well as concepts of age and sex roles were borrowed from the structural-functionalism theory. How reciprocal relations are to be maintained and how role behaviour may change with changing ages of the occupants of these positions is specified by norms prescribing the appropriate role behaviour for these paired positions. The family has been described as a system with a predictable history: starting with the husband-wife pair; becoming more complex with the adding of members; and contracting to the husband-wife pair, when children have been launched. Hill and Hansen conclude that the quality and type of interaction change with age and member composition.

Each stage is accompanied by its own conflicts and unity and can be viewed in terms of increasing complexity: the changing developmental tasks

and role expectations of the children; the changing developmental tasks and role expectations of the parents; and the developmental tasks of the family as a unit which stem from both cultural pressures and the developmental requirements of children and parents (Truxall & Merrill, 2000).

The family development theory reveals that all families in a society have enough in common so that it is possible to describe their development at the various stages of the family life span. One of the difficulties encountered for using this framework is how to divide the family life cycle. While the criteria family sociologists use determine the number of stages, conceptual problems have been encountered. For example, Duvall and Miller (1985) suggest using nine stages, which should be changed each time the oldest child progresses from one significant age category to another. However, in families with more than one child, there are several years of overlap at various stages. To improve on this method, Rodgers and White (1993) recommended shifting stages not only when the oldest child moves from one significant age category to the next, but also when the youngest child makes these changes.

Critics of the family development theory argue that these suggestions were made using the oldest child; they do not account adequately for the differences in role patterns stimulated by the addition of children; they do not adequately cope with the considerable heterogeneity of role patterns in terms of the numbers and spacing of children; and they cannot handle families characterised by divorce, premature death, and disability (Goode, 2000).

Despite these criticisms, the family development theory, with its associated concept of family life-cycle stages, remains one of the most internationally popular academic approaches to the study of the family.

Researchers have applied this theory to such diverse topics as: work-family interface (White, 1999); family computer uses (Watt & White, 1999); blended families (Baxter, Braithewaite, & Nicholson, 1999); and sexual orientation (Friedman, 1998).

The family development theory has exciting promise and potential for family life study because of its unique contribution of studying the family life cycle. New families are formed as marriages are contracted. A nuclear family is formed when a couple gets married. This nuclear family goes through stages of development called the family life cycle. The cycle begins with two persons (husband and wife). Children are born, they are nurtured, and they grow up, become independent, leave home and establish their own families. These are the stages that a family goes through from the time newly couple get married till both of them die. Each stage comes with certain tasks that the couple perform.

The striking parallel between the life pattern of an individual and that of the history of the family gave rise to the concept of the family life cycle. The cycle chronicles the fact that families have beginning, they grow in numbers, their membership next declines and finally the original family exists no longer. The consideration in the case of the family is not the age at which the family begins. The family may begin with a couple of any age and the family will still go through the cycle like a new baby that is born.

Stages of the family life cycle

Different writers on the family life cycle have given different stages that the family goes through. All of them, however, seem to portray the same

idea of the fact that families have beginning, grow in numbers, their membership declines and finally they die off. The stages given by the experts ranged from four to eight. In most cases, the classification is based on the age of the oldest child. Accordingly, Sasse (1994) has asserted that a family passes four distinct stages: beginning stage; expanding stage; contracting stage; and the empty nest stage, as presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Stages of the family life cycle

Source: Sasse (1994)

All couples soon discover that their marriage never lives up to all of their expectations. As a result, couples go through a series of adjustment in which they try to modify their behaviour and relationship to achieve the greatest degree of satisfaction with minimum degree of frustration. When you join families through a marriage or committed union, you form a new family system. A family system includes personal ideas, expectations, and values. These are shaped by the relationships and experiences with the original family.

When people marry or form a union, they combine their own family system with the spouse's or partner's. This requires reshaping own goals and the partner's goals. In the most functional relationships, partners have the ability to take two different points of view and create an option that neither person had considered. It differs from a compromise in that it is not giving up something. Rather, it is creating a third, better option.

The beginning stage is the period of establishment when newly married couple makes a home and prepare for parenthood. During this period, many personal adjustments are made to maintain the marriage. This is necessary because the man and woman have been brought up in different environment and would have acquired different values and habits. It is important at the early stage of marriage to change some habits and the compromise in order to be able to live together. Continuing to express one's individuality, while both of you work together as a couple, can result in a strong marriage tie (Sasse, 1994). One's ability to communicate well, maintain relationships and solve problems is often tested during this stage. Introducing children into the family appears to result in major changes in roles of the couple. Each parent has three distinct and demanding roles: as an individual, a partner, and a parent. As new parents, the individual identities shift along with how to relate to each other and to others. If one had not learned compromise and commitment in the early stage, one may not have the skills needed to transition well into this stage (Sasse, 1994).

The expanding stage is the period when couples bear children, bring them up and see them through school. Most of the major changes occur at the expanding stage because it is the longest stage of the family life cycle. Women

are the principal providers of care for household members, particularly children and elders. They are also responsible for caring for sick members of the household (World Bank, 1994). The phase is called expanding because the birth of each child increases the size of the family. When children are still schooling, they stay with the parents, and so normally, during this period, the family is large.

Changes in the expanding stage of the family life cycle include parenting young children. During this period, parents spend much of their time, money, energy and all other resources on bringing up the children. This period, therefore, presents a lot of challenges and problems for the parents but they will also derive a lot of satisfaction from bringing up their children. Along with the joy that comes with having a child, may also come with a feeling of a great deal of stress and fear about these changes. A woman might have concern about being pregnant and going through childbirth. Fathers tend to keep their fears and stress to themselves, which can cause health problems.

Adapting children into other relationships is a key emotional process at this stage. To take on the parenting role is a transition from being a couple to being a parent. While still evolving as individuals, the couple is also becoming decision-makers for the family. A child's healthy development depends on the ability to provide a safe, loving and organized environment. Children benefit when parents have a strong relationship. Caring for young children cuts into the amount of time otherwise spent alone, or with a partner. If there were skills that were not learnt in previous phases, such a compromise for the good of the family, the relationship may suffer. But for those who have the proper tools,

this can be a very rewarding, happy time, even with all its challenges. Optimally, one develops as an individual, a spouse and a member of a family.

The contracting stage is the period when children begin to leave home to get established in jobs. It also marks the period when children gradually become self-supporting. The couple may recover financially as they no longer spend so much money on their children. The couple eventually retires from their jobs. When older children leave home, there are both positive and negative consequences. If the family has developed significant skills through the life cycle, the children would be ready to leave home, and ready to handle life's challenges. Free from everyday demands of parenting, the family may choose to rekindle its own relationship and possibly the career goals.

Developing adult relationships with the children is a key skill at this stage. The couple may be challenged to accept new members into the family through the children's relationships. This is also a time when health and energy may decline. Specific goals to reach at this stage include: refocusing on relationship with children; developing adult relationships with grown children; and re-aligning relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren. Welcoming new family members or seeing others leave your family is often a large part of this stage, as your children marry or divorce or you become a grandparent.

The empty nest stage can be a great adventure where the family is free from the responsibilities of raising children and can enjoy the fruits of life's work. Challenges that families face may include, being a support to other family members even as the couple is still exploring its own interest and activities or focusing on maintaining the relationship. Many may be caring for elderly parents at this time. The family may feel challenged by emotional,

financial and physical needs while trying to help keep independence. The family may experience decline, physical and mental ability or change in financial status. Sometimes, the family must deal with the death of other family members, including a partner.

The family life cycle is just a hypothesized ideal family. The identification of the stages is based on the fact that the families are marked by similar behaviour expectations or roles different from other stages. Even though some families may fit perfectly into the cycle described above, there are several deviations from this ideal hypothesis. This might result from several factors: delayed marriages due to formal education; some couple may never have children; desire to have many children; the presence of other family members with the couple; death, divorce and separation; and having children when not married; and later getting married.

The normal family life cycle can be disrupted by events which include severe illness, financial problems, disruption of marriage and death of a loved one. The stress of daily living or coping with a chronic medical condition or other crises also disrupts the normal family life cycle. Death can occur at any stage and disrupt the cycle. A crisis or on-going stress can delay the transition to the next phase of life, or the family may move on without the skills that it needs to succeed. Changing tasks are associated with phases in the life cycle of the unit itself. Where the extended family system is considered very important, families may have additional members throughout the family life cycle and may, therefore, not go through all the stages described.

The family systems theory

The concept of a system has its roots in social philosophy, and its development has been contributed to by scholars, such as Emile Durkhem (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920). The systems perspective places emphasis on the relationships among interacting units. Systems are composed of an integrated hierarchy of organisations. The people in a family constitute a family system, the environment in which the people live, work, attend school, shop and operate daily constitutes additional systems. The community, state and nation are still other systems. Each system interacts and influences other systems. Systems are directed toward a common purpose. The purpose of life management is to develop a pattern of living that is satisfying to the participants and that assists personal development, while improving the group's quality of life without encroaching on the rights of others.

According to Broderick and Smith (1979), the systems theory emphasizes the interdependence of family members. The relationships between individuals in a family are derived from the roles, rules, routines and responsibilities of each person to others and the form and function of the organisational structure of the family unit. A change in any one of the components of the organisation causes changes in other components. Everything that happens to any family member has an impact on everyone else in the family because family members are interconnected and operate as a group, or family system. Family members do not live in isolation. What one does affects all the others. A person with deep-seated fear, anxieties and emotional instability, for example, may upset everyone else in the family. People may be interdependent not only for money, shelter, and food but also

for love, affection, companionship, socialization, and other non-tangible needs.

There are various subsystems within the total family unit. The children may constitute one subsystem and their two parents another. A husband and his wife may constitute one subsystem, a mother and her daughter may also be one, a father and son another. Knowing how subsystem relates to others can be an important way of understanding the relationship within a particular family. For example, chronic conflict in the husband-wife subsystem may have a negative effect in the family. Thus, a change in anyone of the components of the organisation causes changes in the unit as a system (Paolucci et al., 1997).

A system is a set of objects with relationships between the objects and between their attributes. Objects refer to the parts, components, or elements of the system whilst attributes refer to the properties or characteristics of the elements of the system. It is a set of coordinated parts with goals to be accomplished. Every part of the system is so related to every other part that a change in one causes changes in all other parts and the total system. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have contended that there are certain characteristics of the family that make it function as a system. Systems have characteristics, such as wholeness and structure; boundaries with interface with other systems in an environment; and functions to perform.

According to Oslon and DeFrain (2000), systems theory includes wholeness, the concept that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. From a family system's perspective, the whole family is more than the total of all its individual members. A major characteristic of a system's wholeness is based on the concept that the components of a system behave as a unit rather than as

separate entities. Day and Burr (1995) have contended that you cannot know the family simply by knowing each person as an individual because you cannot predict how they will interact as a group. The family as a system also has wholeness and structure, composed of persons who interact and function together. Most often, families are composed of individuals who are related by blood, marriage or adoption. The family also has a structure of recognizable parts that function independently and also as a whole, such as father, mother and children, and each has individual and essential roles to play.

Systems are both connected to and separated from other systems by boundaries which indicate what is inside and outside the system. The intensity of interaction is greater within the boundary than the intensity of interchanges across the boundary. Similarly, a family has got a boundary which is identified by knowing who belongs “inside” it and who is “outside”. Generally, the degree of interaction is greater and the responsibilities toward each member are greater inside the boundary than outside it.

Systems have functions that they are expected to perform. The contribution a component makes is vital to the life of the system as a whole. In the same way, a family has functions to perform. Family functions are many and varied and may include: provision of food, clothing and shelter as basic needs for physical maintenance and health of each member. Another function is procreation that is, increasing the family size through reproduction or adoption of additional members to replace old ones who die, thus contributing to the family’s continuity. Others are: socialisation of children so that they are able to play their roles in the family as well as in other societal systems; maintenance of order within the family and between family members;

maintenance of family morale and motivation to carry out tasks in the family and in other groups; and production of goods and services necessary to maintain the family. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have indicated that most of these functions are performed traditionally by the wife or mother as expressive roles. In the male single-parent family the sole parent has to perform all these functions alone without the assistance or contribution of the mother.

A systems approach to family management provides an understanding of interrelationships and conditions which influence action in the family. This approach has three components as input, throughput and output (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988). Input refers to all the information and energy matter plugged into the family system in various forms as demands to affect processes in the throughput. The demands are the goals, values, standards, events, attitudes, needs and wants which push people into action in order to attain goals required.

The throughput is the transformation of matter or energy from input to output in the managerial system. It involves decisions and communication for planning and implementation of actions (instrumental and expressive roles) to convert resources into attained goals. In planning, there are strategies that could be followed for goal achievement. They include: setting goals, setting standard(s), identifying and assessing resources, developing strategies for implementing and evaluating the plan(s) made, processes and activities for goal achievement. Implementation is the actuating of plans made or putting of plans into action.

Output is the end result of managerial activity. Thus, the expanded resources, the met demands and satisfaction gained leave the family system

and enter the environment as quality of life. Feedback is the system’s capacity to monitor its own progress toward a change or set goal, to correct and elaborate its response, and even to change its goals. Information about output may re-enter the system as inputs in feedback. The family interrelates continually with its environment, which is the external setting within which a system functions. Figure 2 illustrates the framework for family system life management propounded by Deacon and Firebaugh (1988).

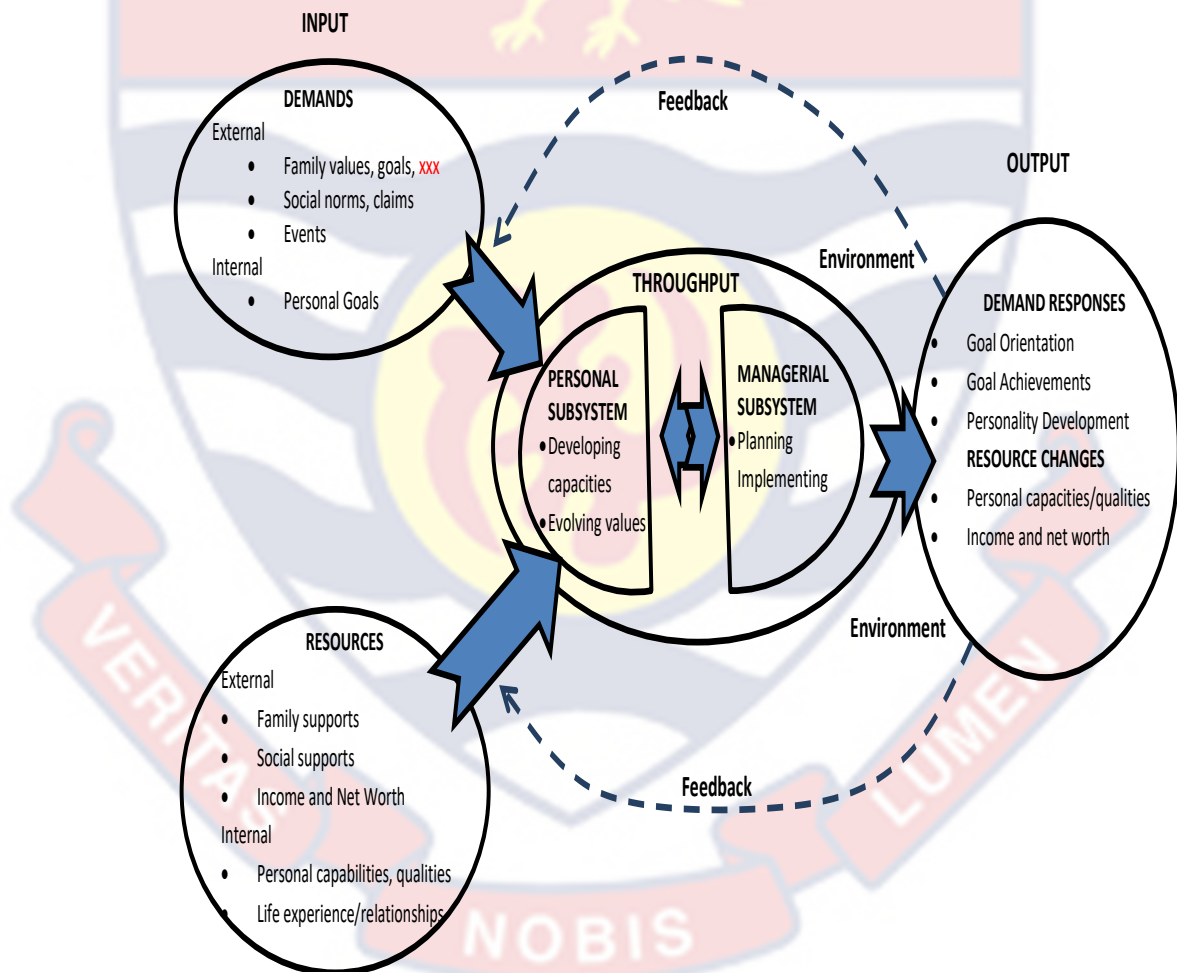


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for family system life management

Source: Deacon and Firebaugh (1988: 22)

CHAPTER THREE

PARENTHOOD, PARENTING AND MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES

FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

Introduction

Having reviewed the conceptions of the family and family theories, it is essential to examine parenthood, parenting, single-parenting, male single-parenting and the strategies single-parents use to manage their families to improve the quality of life. The chapter then presents the conceptual framework for studying role performance of single-parent families.

Parenthood

Every child has the right to be born to a parent or parents who desire parenthood and at a time when they want to become parents. According to Rice (1999), parenthood is the state of having or adopting children and caring for them. The caring involves responsibilities, activities and skills associated with raising children. Becoming a parent is not something to leave to chance. Having a baby ought to be a planned event.

In the past, married couples were expected to have children unless they were physically unable to do so. However, modern methods of birth planning allow choices about if and when to have children. The fact that parenthood can be a choice places a heavy burden on people to think carefully. As in all decision-making, the best choices are made when all the options and consequences are weighed. For many people, parenthood just happens. They give little or no thought to whether having a child is the right thing to do.

What some people forget to consider is that having a child has a high impact on one's life. It should be noted that parenthood cannot be undone. Marriages may be broken through divorce, people change jobs every day and moving to a new place is common. Parenthood is, however, permanent. Once you have a child, your life is different forever.

The impact of parenthood on the child is equally important. When people are not prepared to love and care for a child they make mistakes. Whatever goes wrong has lasting effects on the child's life. Making parenthood a conscious decision benefits both the parents and the child. Everything may not be always perfect, but the parent and the child have a better chance in life. Thus, the choice to become a parent requires an informed decision because it is a step that affects every aspect of life.

Different parents at different places provide different things for children. However, all children everywhere need some basic things without which they cannot grow and develop fully. These include food, clothing, education, health care, security, shelter, clean and safety environment, love and affection. Society expects all parents to provide these basic needs for their children. It is important to note that it is one thing acquiring the status of a parent and quite another thing shouldering the various responsibilities that go with it. Some parents make the effort and provide them, while others, for various reasons, are not able to provide them.

For one reason or the other, some parents fail to meet their children's basic needs. These include:

1. Ignorance - owing to immaturity, some parents, such as teenage mothers, lack knowledge about their children's needs and also lack parental skills to care of them;
2. Poverty - some younger single-parents cannot afford to provide needs because they may not be in gainful employment. For instance, some teenage parents might have dropped out of school and lack job skills;
3. Child abuse and neglect - some parents maltreat and neglect their children probably the children may be unwanted; and
4. Lack of time, due to other responsibilities (Rice, 1999).

Byer, Shainberg and Galliano (1999) have contended that the prime consideration on parenthood is a person's emotional makeup. Successful parenthood requires stability, adaptability, and a well-developed ability to cope with difficult situations. A caring, sharing, other-oriented personality is essential. On the contrary, Kendler (1996) indicates that parenting style is affected by genetically influenced parental temperament traits as well as by attitudes derived from a parent's family of origin.

A study done by Byer et al. (1999) revealed that the adolescent sons of fathers prone to poor self-restraint had an increased incidence of difficulties of many types, including low grades, truancy, poor peer relations, drug and alcohol use, multiple sex partners, poor conflict resolution skills, and depression. In two parent families, the association between the mother's and son's adjustment were not significant, the father was the important determining factor in the son's outcomes.

Byer et al. (1999) have indicated that parenthood should be compatible with career goals. Someone whose career requires extensive time away from

home might not be able to give a child the time and attention needed. They also contend that careful consideration must be given to the financial aspects of parenting. It costs more to raise a child than most childless people would expect. They emphasised that income must be adequate and, above all, steady so as to provide a secure home for a child. They also stressed the fact that the decision to have a child should reflect the feelings of the potential parents of the child, not their friends, not the potential grandparents. That is, the decision to be a parent should be by choice. People and/or tradition should not dictate and influence the choice to be a parent or not.

Adjusting to parenthood

Becoming a parent is a unique mixture of joy and life changes. Being a parent can bring deep pleasure, intimacy, and personal growth. In caring and playing with children parents discover new dimensions to living and loving. At the same time, parenthood can also require many adjustments in lifestyle and daily routine (Rice, 1999). Additionally, O'Brien (1996) has said that the first baby usually demands the greatest adjustment, but each additional child requires further adjustments.

During the first few months of parenthood, you learn what it means to be a parent. Many people find this to be a period of fragmentation and disorganisation, many new skills and ways of coping must be learned (O'Brien, 1996). Fatigue is a near-universal problem for the first few months, with night after night of interrupted sleep. Some new parents are reluctant or resentful about giving up activities they used to enjoy. Feelings of isolation are common in the first few months. This may be especially true if a parent who is

accustomed to going to work is now staying home with the baby. Particularly during this adjustment period, maintaining social contacts is important for a parent's emotional health.

After the few months of parenthood, life smooths out and long-term adjustments are successfully made. Still several long-term issues complicate daily life in some families. For most parents, balancing parenthood with all other concerns of adult life is difficult. There is seldom enough time to do everything you would like to do. McHale (1995) has said that with so many demands upon your time and attention, it is easy for jealousy to develop among family members competing for each other's affection.

McHale (1995) contends that ways can be found to break through the barriers set up by busy lives and jealousy. This often involves the departure from culture's expectations about men's and women's roles in the family. The belief that mothers do their part by caring for children, while fathers do theirs by making money, contributes to jealousy. Each parent might see the other as having an easier, more interesting, or otherwise better life. Many couples have found that the most effective solution to this problem is to share the responsibilities of parenthood. Even if one parent spends more hours working outside the home than the other, that parent can relieve the parent who does most of the parenting by making definite commitments of time and interest to the job of parenting.

Finally, McHale emphasises that long-term conflict between parents often arises from differences in opinion on how strict family discipline ought to be. It takes hard work and self-awareness to be a successful parent. For

those who choose to be parents, the challenge is great but so are the potential rewards.

Responsibilities of parenthood

Foster et al. (1994) have reiterated that having a child affects a parent life in many ways. When a new baby arrives, both parents must consider their child in everything they do, and they must also adapt to their new financial and personal responsibilities.

Parenthood involves financial responsibilities for the present and the future. There are doctor's bills to pay and baby food to buy. Babies require a lot of special baby furniture and equipment, such as cribs and car seats. They also outgrow their clothing very quickly. Basic supplies for a baby include: clothing and diapers, toys and play items, as well as equipment for eating, sleeping, bathing and travelling. While two may live in a small apartment conveniently, three people need more space. This may mean moving to a larger and, therefore, more expensive apartment. For these reasons, it is important for parents to have financial stability. They need to be able to meet all their expected, everyday living costs, which increase significantly when a couple has children.

With regard to personal responsibilities, because caring for an infant is a fulltime job, there may be little time left over for outside activities. Caring for a baby also takes a lot of energy. Parents of young infants often find that they are too tired for other activities or interests. One of the biggest adjustments that new parents face is the change in their personal lifestyle. Because parents are responsible for providing for all of a baby's needs, they have to deal with limit on their personal freedom. For many people, having a

baby may mean having to postpone or change a rewarding and fulfilling career. Fortunately, babies grow to be toddlers, then preschoolers. Once children are older, parents spend more time on their own interests, and parents and children can always enjoy doing things together.

Parenthood may require many emotional adjustments, too which require emotional maturity. They must be secure enough in their own self image to be able to meet the emotional demands and responsibilities they face. This maturity includes being able to give love without expecting it back right away. It also means being grown up enough so that they do not think of their own needs all the time.

Parenting

Allan (1994) and Gross et al. (1995) have asserted that being a parent to any children you might have is probably the most difficult task of a lifetime. Almost all parents have a strong love for their children and the desire to be a good parent. However, many do not receive enough information or training in parenting to know how to handle the challenging situations that arise in every home. Subsequently, Kennedy (1995) also reiterated that, lacking any formal training in parenting, most parents have only the model of their own parents for guidance in how to take care of children. Not only were their own parents similarly untrained in parenting, but a generation later, many formerly effective parenting strategies no longer work.

McHale (1995) has also said that, in many families, parents and children are engaged in ongoing strategies for power and control, making family life joyless for everyone. In addition, McHale asserts that conflicts

drain every one's time and energy. In two-parent families, parenting conflicts often drive wedges between the parents, as each attempts to operate in the way he or she believes to be best.

Before an individual can make choices about parenting, they need to have a full understanding of what it means to be a parent. It involves taking care of children in all the ways that children require. It means meeting emotional, mental, and social needs of children. Parenting is the process for caring for children and helping them to grow and learn from birth to adulthood. Good parents use skills, lots of time, energy, patience and understanding to raise children who are healthy and well-adjusted. Parenting also involves being a role model for the child, teaching acceptable values and assisting the child to develop self-esteem. Parents also need to establish healthy parent-child relationship. Another important aspect of parenting is the parent's readiness in all spheres, socially, financially, health wise and emotionally. It is very important for individuals to be ready before becoming parents.

Asare and Kwafua (2007) have asserted that the decision to become a parent should be based on factors, such as financial readiness, age, goals and expectations.

1. Financial readiness: raising children can cost a lot of money. Would-be parents need to look ahead for future expenses and income. Careful financial planning before children enter the family can help ease the financial burden and related stresses often felt by families. Providing for children's need is a big responsibility, financially as well as personally. Raising a child is expensive. Babies and children grow

rapidly, which means food and clothing expenses increase. Cost for medical care, child care, education and recreational facilities cannot be overlooked either. Having a child frequently means that a family needs more room which can also increase expenditure. The personal cost of having a child includes time and energy it takes to provide the care those babies and children need.

2. Age: the age of the parents can affect all the factors above and, more so, emotional maturity. Having a child is a heavy responsibility and it takes a major commitment of time and other resources. Parents must make sure that they are emotionally mature enough to handle the responsibilities and stresses of having a child. This is especially important for adolescents to consider, since they are still developing emotionally. They may not be ready to take on the care of another person when they are still learning to be responsible for themselves. Emotional maturity brings the patience, self-control, flexibility, self-confidence and sense of responsibility that are so important to good parenting.

With age usually comes emotional maturity; some people are never emotionally mature enough for the responsibilities of parenthood. With age also comes the experience and wisdom that can help parents better when dealing with any problem parenthood might bring them. The age factor also affects income level and career goals. Very young parents tend to have less education and training, which limits their job choices to low-paying unskilled jobs. Therefore, they may encounter constant financial problems and might not achieve their

lifestyle career goal. Age also influences physical maturity. The physical maturity of the mother can affect both the mother and the baby.

3. Goals and expectations: the timing of having children also affects goals parents have set for themselves and their lives. Children can cause plans to change; deciding when to have them is the best insurance for having to alter important goals. Having a baby without planning ahead and considering all the factors that indicate readiness for parenthood can have serious lifelong effect on every one - mother, father and the baby.

On the other hand, Sasse (1994) has indicated that parenting involves three basic skills. These are: providing physical care, nurturing, and giving guidance. Physical care includes the responsibility for providing nutritious meals and snacks to help children grow and develop. They should be offered a wide variety of foods to ensure giving children a balanced diet, with all the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that growing bodies need.

Physical care also means providing proper clothing for children so that they are kept warm and dry. Whatever their age, children need clothing that is appropriate for the weather. In addition, parents are responsible for making sure that the children's clothing is kept clean and in good repair. Rest is part of physical care. Children need more sleep than adults. They need naps during the day and many hours of sleep at night for proper development. Children also need to be in a safe environment. Children need a safe, stimulating and healthy environment where they can play and explore their surroundings. Most often, children are not aware of the dangers of stairs, electric outlets, or

poisons. Adults must protect them from accidents that their exploring can cause.

Parents are also responsible for nurturing children. To nurture means to help children learn and it involves providing love, encouragement and attention. Children are constantly learning because the whole world is new to them. To help them learn, they need stimulation: chances to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. Parents also provide children with love, affection, and a sense of security. Children need someone to comfort them when they are hurt or upset. Nurturing involves comforting children when they are unhappy, hurt or scared. They need to know that the people who are responsible for them really care about them. Showing affection can be as simple as saying a few kind words when a child scrapes a knee or praising a drawing when a child proudly displays it.

Parents need to provide guidance to children. In other words, they need to help children understand what type of behaviour is acceptable and what type is not. Young children do not yet know right from wrong. If given complete freedom, they may be confused about what to do and may be frightened. Setting limits is the responsibility of parents. Moore, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1994) have argued that any type of parenting can be constructive if it has a positive effect on children's development. Constructive parenting is characterised by warmth, inductive reasoning, clear communication and appropriate care. It tends to promote cognitive functioning, social skills, moral development and psychological adjustment.

Resources for parenting

When you nurture a child, you are, in effect, a manager and you are responsible for the child's needs, activities, and behaviour. Parenting is demanding work and, therefore, requires expertise. Sasse (1994) has identified certain resources for parenting: knowledge, skills, and personal qualities, such as understanding, patience, love, and respect.

1. **Knowledge:** Effective parenting requires knowing about children. You would not expect a one-year old child to speak in complete sentences. Similarly, you would not expect a five-year old to write a book report. A parent must understand the stages of development that children reach at various ages. Then, he or she will know what to expect from the child and how to respond.
2. **Skills:** Parents and caregivers must learn more than just how to take care of children physically. Parents need to know how to stop an argument between two children, how to deal with a child's fears, and how to help with a child's homework. Parents also need to be able to plan appropriate activities, communicate positively, and act wisely and quickly in an emergency.
3. **Personal qualities:** Parents need certain personal qualities in order to deal effectively with children. Basically, parents need to have an understanding of the needs and abilities of children so that they know what to expect from them. They need patience so that they can remain calm even in the most difficult circumstances and they also need to love and respect children. Nevertheless, Asare and Kwafua (2007) assert that having a baby without planning ahead and considering all

the factors that indicate readiness for parenting can have serious lifelong effect on every one, mother, father and the baby.

Single-parenting

The United States Bureau of the Census (1997) indicates that the number of children in the United States living in single-parent homes is steadily climbing. From 1975 to today, the figure has more than doubled. Currently, of the over 60 million children under age 18, about 25 percent live in single-parent homes. More than 50 percent of America's African-American children, 25 percent of its Hispanic children and 15 percent of its white children live with only one parent. In about nearly 90 percent of all single-parent homes, the parent is the mother. Men account for about 10 percent of single parents (United States Bureau of the Census, 1997).

According to Rice and Tucker (1984), single-parent families have encountered phenomenal growth in New York City. Their numbers more than doubled during the period 1970 and 1982. Rice (1999) has reiterated that in the ideal situation, there are two people at home who are able and willing to meet children's needs. In many families this is not the case. He indicated that in 1995, four percent of children were living with neither parent, and 27 percent of all children were living at home with only one parent. The United States Bureau of the Census (1997) also indicated that the number of one-parent family continues to grow. High divorce rates mean that one-parent families will increase even more in the years ahead and the single-parent family will represent a major segment of the population.

According to Sasse (1994), any mother or father who is unmarried, separated, divorced or widowed is a single parent. Any foster parent, stepparent, or legal guardian is a single-parent if he/she has custody of a child and does not have a live-in spouse. A single-parent family consists of one parent and his or her children. Rice (1999) indicated that many single-parent families result from divorce. Others form when a parent dies or leaves home. Others still form when an adult male or female has a child or adopts one without going through formal marriage rites. Some people who head single-parent families have never married. Thus, premarital pregnancy, separation or divorce, the death of a spouse, and adoption are all directly related to the single-parent status. Each of these factors has special conditions surrounding the parenting roles that make them unique with respect to the responsibilities, problems and benefits that pertain.

Single-parenting can be rewarding as well as challenging. The greatest challenge, perhaps, is in juggling all the responsibilities. Many single-parents must provide and manage all the income for the family. Unless the children are old enough to help, the parent must take the time and energy to do all. This may not be easy. Like other busy parents, single-parents must regularly set aside some special time for children. The relationship between parent and child is strengthened in this way. Single-parents also need contact with other adults. Children also need contact with other adults, too, so they can learn the roles of both men and women.

The head of the household in a single-parent family may include a separated or divorced parent, stepparent, unwed father or mother, adoptive-parent, guardian, or widowed parent. In the majority of cases, the single-parent

has experienced separation or divorce. The single-parent who is separated or divorced may have to cope with issues, such as learning how to be an effective single-parent; resolving leftover feelings from previous relationships; establishing a social life; financial hardship; and maintaining self-esteem.

The single-parent, may have special problems, especially if he or she is young and from a low-income family. Doherty (1991) has indicated that many unwed parents are still “children” themselves and lack the emotional maturity needed to raise a child. These young parents are often in need of emotional and financial assistance from their own parents, other family members, friends or social service agencies. In the case of an unwed teenage mother or father, he or she may find it difficult to pursue her education or maintain an age-appropriate social life and may not be emotionally ready for the responsibilities of parenting. He or she also may have to rely on his or her parents, other family members or social service agencies for financial or emotional support.

Adoptive single-parents and guardians face many of the same difficulties experienced by other single-parents. Sometimes, depending on the circumstances, they also must address the issue of not being a blood relative to the child. Widowed parents often have a difficult adjustment. They have to face issues surrounding the loss of a loved one, such as grief, anger, resentment, helplessness, loneliness and fear. Many times, family and friends do not know how to react to death, and may be confused about how to help the surviving parent and children.

In their study of 137 male single-parents, Dizard and Gadlin (1990), found out that society’s attitude towards death is different from that towards

divorce. Perhaps, because society tends to fear and reject death, widowed parents and their children also are sometimes rejected. Society seems to be less supportive of widowed parents. Widowed parents report greater feelings of loneliness and isolation than do divorced parents.

Generally, single-parents have special needs, especially for support and education, which will help them succeed as parents and heads of households. Research has indicated that single-parent families may be healthy or unhealthy, depending on the total situation (Hanson, 1986). A study done by Dizard and Gadlin (1990) revealed that single-parents often face the challenges of childrearing, maintaining a home, establishing a supportive social life and working full-time with little assistance from other adults. Because of these many responsibilities, single-parents often feel overwhelmed. Time management is usually a major problem. Single-parents sometimes feel socially isolated in our couples-oriented society. Because some people still consider single-parenting a non-traditional form of childrearing, single-parents sometimes experience discrimination.

Characteristic features of single-parenting

In a study of 150 single-parents, Stacey (1990) outlined some characteristic features of single-parenting:

1. Maintaining a social support system: It is important for single-parents to build and maintain a social support system: Experts who have studied the survivors of death and divorce emphasize the importance of building and maintaining a social support system. They sometimes refer to this support system as a social “lifeline” and consider it an

important key to the emotional well-being of single-parent and their children. Single-parents who accept the support of family and friends make their lives easier and contribute to their children's emotional well-being. A supportive social network can improve a single-parent's self-image. When single-parents feel good about themselves, they do better at home and at work; which, in turn, ultimately benefits the children.

2. Children's roles change in a single-parent home: Children who live in single-parent homes usually accept more responsibilities for taking care of themselves. Older children may act as junior parents to younger siblings. They may help make adult decisions or try to fill the absent parent's shoes. They also may become very much attached to the custodian parent, who may be feeling socially isolated. Parents should remember that children have age-specific needs and responsibilities. Parents should see to it that each child's behaviour is appropriate to his or her age and current stage of development. Open lines of communication are very important.
3. Single-parents' attitude affects children: Children observe and imitate behaviours and attitudes of their parents. Parents who constantly complain and make negative statements should seek counselling rather than risk possible emotional harm to their children. Parents must provide positive role models for their children by demonstrating effective parenting skills, such as providing and enforcing fair household rules, being an effective listener, showing an interest in each child and the things each child likes, maintaining healthy privacy

boundaries, demonstrating good mental and physical health habits, maintaining social contacts outside the home, and generally conveying a confident attitude.

4. Children from single-parent homes are more likely to develop social and emotional problems. They tend to have higher rates of school absenteeism, truancy, discipline problems, suspension, expulsion and dropping out of school. They also are more likely to participate in delinquent behaviour. Parents should take into account each child's personality, as well as his or her family circumstances. For example, they should assess the emotional damage possibly caused by the divorce or marital discord prior to the divorce. However, most children from single-parent families do not develop abnormal social or emotional problems and do as well in school as children from two-parent families.
5. Single-parents can help children adjust after divorce: For most children who have experienced divorce, it takes time to adjust to a single-parent household. The amount of time needed to adjust varies from child to child. Single-parents can promote rapid and realistic adjustment by: encouraging the children to help structure the new living arrangement; providing them with some space of their own, even if it is only a corner; being careful not to give the children messages of false hope of reunion, but rather clear messages that help them understand the realities of the change; accepting their mood swings and emotional outbursts without taking them personally; never speaking negatively about the absent parent; allowing time for the children to grieve, since they,

too, have experienced a loss; and speaking encouragingly about the future and establishing a healthy attitude (Stacey, 1990).

6. Widowed single-parents can help children to adjust to parental death:

The surviving parent and children usually share the trauma of death.

The widowed parent can help the children by: getting them involved in planning how to arrange their new family situation; giving them realistic, age-appropriate messages about the permanence of death; encouraging and accepting their need to talk about their feelings associated with traumatic loss; and looking ahead with confidence, trying new things, building and maintaining a positive attitude toward life and the future.

All surviving family members may profit from grief counselling. Professionals can help the remaining family accept the finality of death. They also can resolve leftover feelings the children or spouse may have toward the deceased parent, such as anger, resentment or guilt.

Factors for successful single-parenting

Single-parents must usually perform the same tasks and duties as two parents. This can be a difficult load, especially during the first two years. How single-parents handle their roles and responsibilities has a strong effect on their children and on themselves. Single-parents and childcare experts report a number of factors that are important for successful single-parenting. Stacey (1990) has observed the following factors believed to contribute to successful single-parenting:

1. Consistent parental skills: Consistency is essential to effective parenting. Children need to know what parents expect from them. They also need to know what to expect from their parents. Children tend to feel more secure and respond more favourably in homes practising consistent parenting skills. Consistent parenting skills may be especially important to children who have experienced the trauma of changing from a two-parent to a single-parent family;
2. Adequate living arrangement: Family experts agree that most people need space to call their own. This is true for both adults and children. All family members should have some space that is his or hers, even if it is only a corner of a room. Family members tend to get along better when they are not crowded together and respect each other's privacy boundaries. Single-parents sometimes have difficulty finding and maintaining adequate living arrangements;
3. Financial stability: Paying the bills is a major concern for most single-parents. Raising children is expensive. Most single-parents may have the most difficulty "making ends meet", especially those who lack a formal education, or have no work history or few job skills. Financial instability can lead to family instability. Single-parents who need financial help may wish to contact the local Department of Welfare for public assistance;
4. Job satisfaction: Many single-parents must work to support their families. Job dissatisfaction can cause hardship for the single-parent and the family. Low pay, poor working conditions, stress or other job-related difficulties can reduce the ability to be a successful single-

parent. Single-parents, experiencing job dissatisfaction, may wish to consider vocational counselling, vocational or technical training or further education, if available;

5. Time management: Single-parents must usually perform the same tasks and duties as two parents. This can be very difficult for single-parents and their children. Undue stress may harm the family. Time management is an effective way to reduce stress and be more efficient in the use of time and effort. In order of importance, list the jobs and activities that must be accomplished each day, week or month. Being organized is an important strategy used by successful single-parents. Children need structure, and usually feel and perform better when their parents are not overwhelmed;
6. Reliable childcare services: Single-parents do often turn to sitters and professional childcare services to supervise children in their absence. This is especially true of working single-parents who have children below school age. Single-parents must always properly supervise children to insure their safety, and always personally investigate sitters and professional childcare services to determine if they are reliable and responsible caregivers;
7. Self-confidence: How single-parents feel about themselves can have a strong effect on their children. Single-parents who have high self-confidence are usually better able to perform their duties and responsibilities successfully. Those with low self-confidence tend to function less effectively. Developing and maintaining a high level of

self-confidence can improve the lives of single-parents and their children;

8. Recreation and solitude: Many mental health professionals advise single-parents to set aside some personal time for recreation and solitude- without children. Most single-parents are constantly tending to the needs of others, putting their personal needs on hold. Such selflessness is admirable, but can be unhealthy for single-parents and their children. Nearly everyone needs a break from routine stresses of everyday life. Single-parents, who take “time out” for themselves, even just a few minutes a day, report that they are able to approach their roles and responsibilities with renewed energy; and

9. Social contacts: Single-parents often become socially isolated. Some are not able to develop meaningful relationships because of their many roles and responsibilities. Dating, friendship and other forms of social contact can help parents meet their personal needs. Single-parents who wish to make social contacts and be part of a social network may wish to contact Parent Without Partners, if it is available.

Emotional problems faced by single-parents

Studies suggest that the first two years of single-parenting are the most difficult for custodian parents and their children. It is natural for single-parents to experience a wide variety of emotions as they adjust to their new roles and responsibilities. The following list identifies some of the more common changes in emotion and self-concept experienced by single-parents, as observed by Stacey (1990):

1. emotional outbursts or feelings of anger; fear of failure or feelings of self-doubt, fear of social interaction and loss of social status or feelings of confusion, depression, dependency or loneliness;
2. feelings of guilt, loss of intimacy, feelings of being overwhelmed and increased alcohol use/abuse or feelings of rejection or social isolation, helplessness and incompetence;
3. feelings of being rootless or sexual frustrations or feelings of self-hatred and loss of identity;
4. feelings of self pity, worthlessness or lack of confidence mood swings and feelings of nervousness; and
5. feelings of weight change or being unattractive.

Practical problems faced by single-parents

Davidson (2004) asserted that parenting is challenging under the best of conditions. With one parent, the challenges are multiplied. Economic, emotional, mental, social and physical challenges are enormous. Grief (1995) has reiterated that when there is only one parent household, all of the family responsibilities lie on the person's shoulders. The cleaning of the house; cooking of meals; keeping up the yard; paying the bills; keeping eye on children, especially when they are kids, and all of the other parental responsibilities, are the sole responsibility of that parent, which makes it very stressful.

Single-parent families are at a higher risk of poverty than couple families. In today's society, they have their share of daily struggles and long-term disadvantages (Navarro, 2008). The issues of expensive daycares,

shortage of quality time with children, balance of work and home duties, and economic struggle are among the seemingly endless problems these families must solve.

Studies suggest that single-parent families generally are less organized than are two-parent families. Many single-parents complain about a chaotic lifestyle. They must attempt to accomplish many of the same tasks alone that two-parent families face together. In a study of 150 single-parents, Stacey (1990) identified some of the more common practical problems faced by single-parents as follows:

1. adjusting to job requirements, balancing time between home and work and attending classes for personal or job growth;
2. balancing the cheque book, establishing and maintaining credit, coordinating transport needs and scheduling doctor's appointment;
3. coordinating visitations with the non-custodial parent and coordinating visits with other family members and friends;
4. finding personal time and accepting childcare, helping children with homework and monitoring each child's activity;
5. maintaining consistency of parenting skills and scheduling household chores, planning and preparing meals and scheduling meal times; and
6. scheduling bedtime routines and personal time with each child

Suggestions for successful single-parenting

Single-parents face many emotional and practical problems as they must attempt to coordinate seemingly endless tasks and responsibilities, ensure the security of their children and maintain their own physical and mental

health. There is no simple way for one person to accomplish so much. However, the following list by Stacey (1990) suggests ways to make the process of single-parenting easier, less stressful, more efficient, and more effective:

1. allow children to help make family decisions, and approach single-parenting with a positive attitude;
2. assign children age-appropriate tasks and establish a household routine and be sensitive to each child's needs;
3. avoid being socially isolated, plan activities outside the home and maintain a social network;
4. identify reliable childcare services;
5. communicate openly and honestly with the children;
6. determine whether you can afford further education or training;
7. avoid alcohol or drug abuse, develop self confidence and control your temper and set a good example for the children through your own behaviour;
8. do not expect a child to fill the absent parent's shoes and do not say bad things about the absent parent;
9. establish financial security, make and follow a budget;
10. exercise regularly, eat properly and get plenty of rest;
11. practise consistent parenting skills and have confidence in your parenting skills;
12. help the children feel secure by expressing your love and commitment;
13. use check lists to organize activities;

14. manage time wisely, prioritize tasks and set aside personal time to relax and socialize;
15. spend quality time and provide personal space for each member; and
16. seek a satisfying job and seek financial and professional help when needed.

Sources of help and information about single-parenting

Stacey (1990) has provided a list of agencies that single-parents can contact for advice or assistance. The first list contains local agencies and professionals that provide direct help and the second list contains national agencies that provide information.

The local agencies and professionals include: the Bar Association, Mental Health Centre, Children and Youth Services, and Parent Without Partners. Single parents may need the help of an attorney from the Bar Association to resolve issues such as child custody, visitation rights, distribution of finances and property, child support, alimony, income tax matters and other legal issues. The Mental Health Centre provides mental health services to single parents who may be stressed. The services of a psychiatrist, psychologist, counsellor or other mental health professionals may help family members deal with their emotions.

Children and Youth Services specialise in matters related to children and offer a variety of services to children and their families and provide help to children to deal with social, emotional or behavioural problems. Parents Without Partners is an association that can help single parents to form new relationships and develop a social support system.

Male single-parenting

Male single-parenting is not an entirely new phenomenon. Historically, death was the major cause of mother absence in the home. With the high maternal mortality rates of earlier times, the widower with young children was not an uncommon type of single-parent. He, however, often obtained considerable aid from his extended kin, so that, in effect, it was rare that a male single-parent had to perform his parental role alone.

In recent years, the phenomenon of male single-parenting has changed. In spite of the decline in the rate of maternal mortality, the number of male single-parents has increased. The increase has been brought about by the accelerated rate of marital instability. Today, other factors are contributing to a greater incidence of mother absent families. These include divorce, desertion and adoption.

In conjunction with the increasing incidence of divorce in the society, the incidence of fathers obtaining custody of children is increasing. In the past, custody of children was invariably awarded to the mother. Winter (1996) has asserted that, if the father desired to obtain custody of the children, he had to prove that the mother was unsuitable for the task of caring for the children. Such bias in the courts is slowly giving way and the emphasis is now beginning to shift to the best interest of the child and is not based solely on the assumption that a child must have a mother present for proper development. As a result, the number of male single-parents is increasing.

Unlike the past when mothers were automatically granted custody of the children, there is now a genuine decision to be made about which parent should have custody of the children. Now, an increasing number of fathers

seek, or otherwise, obtain custody of the children. They do so, however, at a time in history where extended families do not readily assume the kinds of responsibilities they assumed without question in the past.

In today's world, the widower, divorced or separated father with young children, by and large, has to manage on his own. Therefore, in an important way, single parenting in today's world is different from that of the past. The changing roles of men and women in today's society are also providing men with a greater opportunity to interact with their children. With such a social change, there may be confusion in regard to role expectations, and so the male single-parent is often left without clear guidelines or prescription for performing that role. Any father who is unmarried, separated, divorced, or widowed and has custody of child/children is a male single-parent. He solely has responsibility for the upkeep, welfare, nurturance and socialization of the children without the assistance of a female parent at home.

Problems of male single-parents

Norton and Glick (1986) have indicated that male single-parents usually do not suffer poverty to the same extent as do female single-parents. However, financial pressure is still one of the most common complaints. Most have a larger income than do their female counterparts but still not as large an income as that of both couple.

Grief (1985) has contended that most male single-parents do not hire housekeepers, but many receive considerable help with housework from older children. Those who are most successful had become adept at house-keeping and child-care before becoming single fathers. Typically, most male single-

parents are concerned about not spending enough time with their children (Risman, 1986). If the children are of preschool age, male single-parents are faced with the same dilemma as are female single-parents who must work at finding adequate child care support or services. Even if the man can afford household help and child care, he experiences a profound change in the daily maintenance and care and that of his children.

Male single-parents undergo considerable interpersonal stress as they take on the responsibilities of raising their children. Marital separation often gives rise to feelings of anger, loss, loneliness, failure and lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Male single-parents are under additional interpersonal pressure to prove their competency as parents. Part of their stress arises because they are often forced to change their circle of friends and to build their social life (Grief, 1986).

However, Risman (1986) has observed that, overall the evidence suggests that most are satisfied with their new life-styles. They tend to be stable, rather traditional, and established men with a strong motivation to be with their children. Most feel comfortable and competent as single-parents. Most can be successful parents, but many would benefit from family life education and child development programmes. It is not easy for single-parents to cope when raising children single handedly though they can achieve success in bringing the children in a good way. Being a single-parent does not only mean that you have accepted to raise your child single-handedly but also to miss out on many opportunities to live with a loving partner for life.

Normally, in traditional two-parent families, mothers and fathers split up chores and responsibilities and stick to their areas of child's life. They just

cross the boundaries when the other person is not there or busy in something else. Thus, both of them miss out on some significant aspects of their children. Single-parents, on the other hand, know everything about their children and become an all-rounder. They tend to become totally dedicated and committed to their children. It may be harder for them to cope up but then they are also the 'special' parents who can do anything they want for their children and take all the decisions about how to raise them and what is good or bad for them, without having to fight it out with their partner. However, there are many challenges they go through while bringing up children to achieve a good quality of life; some even fail to achieve the type of quality of life they expected (Paolucci et al., 1997).

The concept of quality of life

Questions regarding the essential qualities of a good society and the good life have captured the minds of the greatest thinkers across time and cultures. For example, in Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, individuals were called on to realize their full potentialities in order to achieve a "good life." In contrast, Eastern philosophers stressed the virtue of restraining individual desires, and prescribed an ideology that encouraged the equal distribution of resources among people. In the categorical imperative, Emanuel Kant called for individuals to achieve a good society by acting in a moral way such that their actions could be the basis of universal laws. A challenging agenda laid down by recent trends in the social and behavioral sciences is to design scientific ways of measuring human well-being.

There are three major philosophical approaches to determining the quality of life, as illustrated by Brock (1993). The first approach describes characteristics of the good life that are dictated by normative ideals based on a religious, philosophical, or other system. For example, we might believe that the good life must include helping others because this is dictated by our religious principles. Another example of this approach is that Kant believed that judgments about the correctness of behavior, and, therefore, the good life, come from rational thought. This approach to quality of life depends neither on the subjective experience of people nor on the fulfillment of their wishes.

The second approach to defining the good life is based on the satisfaction of preferences. Within the constraints of the resources they possess, the assumption is that people will select those things that will most enhance their quality of life. Thus, in this tradition the definition of the quality of life of a society is based on whether the citizens can obtain the things they desire. People select the best quality of life for themselves that is commensurate with their resources and their individual desires. This approach to utility or the good life based on people's choices undergirds much of modern economic thinking.

The third definition of quality of life is in terms of the experience of individuals. If a person experiences her life as good and desirable, it is assumed to be so. In this approach, factors, such as feelings of joy, pleasure, contentment, and life satisfaction, are paramount. Obviously, this approach to defining the quality of life is most associated with the subjective well-being tradition in the behavioral sciences.

These three approaches to defining the quality of life have often competed in political and philosophical thoughts. Policy makers currently weigh choice utility most heavily, however, because of the preeminence they grant to economic considerations. Nevertheless, there are limitations to a definition of quality of life that rests solely on economics and people's ability to obtain the marketplace goods and services that they choose. In the first place, economic progress may not guarantee other important factors, such as an absence of crime. In some cases, economic progress might even be thought to be inversely correlated with certain facets of quality of life such as leisure time or a healthy environment.

In the second place, people's choices may not make them happy, or may be inconsistent with normative ideals. In other words, people might want things that are not good or that will not make them happy. Berridge (1996), for example, found that wanting and liking arise from two different neural systems, and, therefore, wanting things may not be an accurate predictor of whether those things will increase subjective well-being. In addition, Kahneman and Varey (1991) have said that measuring utility based on people's choices rests on a set of questionable assumptions about rationality and the transitivity of choices

Finally, the analysis of a good society only in terms of market factors clearly deemphasizes important elements that influence the quality of life, such as love, self-development, and possessing meaning in life. Thus, researchers have increasingly turned to additional approaches to defining and measuring the quality of life.

During the last few decades, two new scientific approaches to measuring quality of life have been initiated, namely: objective or social indicators; and the measurement of subjective well-being (SWB). Land (1996) provides a history of the social indicators and subjective well-being movements in the social sciences. The social indicators movement focuses its attention on measuring. The growth of the social indicators movement coincided with the questioning of economic growth in terms of whether more was always better.

Subjective well-being research, in contrast, is concerned with individuals' subjective experience of their lives. The underlying assumption is that well-being can be defined by people's conscious experiences – in terms of hedonic feelings or cognitive satisfactions. The field is built on the presumption that to understand the individuals' experiential quality of well-being, it is appropriate to directly examine how a person feels about life in the context of his or her own standards. The significance of this effort becomes obvious when we understand that findings in social indicator and subjective well-being research have direct relevance to the fundamental concerns of societies and individuals. For instance, to determine whether the quality of a society is improving or deteriorating, it is imperative to gain empirical evidence that is based on more than intuitions.

Defining quality of life is often difficult because determining it is based on broad concepts, which are not easy to measure. Quality of life however, is as a result of decision-making which, according to Rice and Tucker (1986), is rooted in the past, carried on in the present and shaping the future. Against this background, quality of life could be said to be the

achievement of what is desired for life over time based on thoughtful processes and judicious use of resources. It is thought that quality of life depends on how people are able to manipulate available resources in their environment to their advantage. This indicates that there is a relationship between the application of managerial skills and output. The output is based on decisions made presently and which has future implications. The satisfaction people derive from the use of resources and the lifestyles they lead determine the quality of life. However, benefiting from the manipulation of resources requires the application of managerial knowledge and skills.

The discussion above has both quantitative and qualitative connotations. It indicates that quality of life has a lot to do with what people have, the places they live, their physical, social, economic, environmental and psychological conditions and characteristics and how they are manipulated for benefits at a particular time. It also has to do with feelings of happiness and satisfaction derived from material and non-material accomplishments and the surroundings of their community. According to this definition, quality of life involves both objective aspects of reality and subjective perceptions and evaluations of life.

It could be inferred that quality of life is due to the excellence of management skills and behaviours exhibited or practised which, in turn, is based on the brilliance of decisions made in relation to the use of resources in everyday living (Rice & Tucker, 1996). Thus, quality of life can be said to be a function of the management skills of which decision-making is the core and resources manipulations, and the resultant effect is the derivation of maximum or less satisfaction. This confirms Stephens' (1985) statement that

management procedures contribute significantly to the satisfaction derived from the use of resources and that management procedures are second to income in predicting satisfaction which is a component of quality of life. Since income is also a resource, it is asserted that management is the basis and provides the parameters within which quality of life can be defined and derived.

Quality of life is both the output of the life management system and a standard for measuring the satisfaction people gain from their lifestyles. It involves the use of resources and decision-making about how much of resources to be used. Families must therefore, combine the use of resources and decision-making to achieve family goals of improving living standards. The United States Federal Environmental Protection Agency (1973) defines quality of life as the state of well-being of people as individuals or groups as well as the characteristics of the environment in which people live.

Measuring the quality of life

Wallace (1974) reported that concern over high population growth and depletion of food and natural resources in the 1970s caused a concerted attempt in the years following to describe and measure quality of life. Her concept demonstrates the interconnectedness of four macro and micro-indicators, namely: economic, environmental, social and psychological issues.

Macro-measures

According to Wallace (1974), economists tend to measure quality of life by indicators quantity, such as the Consumer Price Index and Gross

National Product figures. Environmentalists use indices for conditions of air, water, soil, wildlife, and recreation. Sociologists prefer as indicators of quality, the educational attainment of age populations and the proportion of populations who are literate. Others measure quality of life through the nation's health, evidenced by life expectancy or infant mortality. Quality of life is often measured by relating a family's income to a baseline income defined as poverty or inadequacy for the number of people involved. In some societies, quality of life is sometimes measured by the number and kinds of people receiving government aid. However, Wallace pointed out that these macro-indicators are more suitable for measuring quality of societies than for describing families and individuals. That is, macro-measures are, by definition, measures of large segments of populations.

Micro-measures

The quality of life of individuals and families is easier to talk about than it is to measure because it includes non-material, intangible characteristics. Non-material accomplishments are more difficult to measure because characteristics, such as changes in feelings of human dignity, are specific to a given time, person, and place. Paolucci et al. (1977) acknowledged this and contended that the quality of life may be measured by people's consumption patterns, which are buying of goods and services in quality, quantity and kinds. The quality of life can also be measured by people's income over time and the possessions that individuals and families have. Also, people's aspirations, level of consumption and present attainment could be used as a measure of the quality of life. All these involve the

recognition, allocation, and use of both human and non-human resources effectively to achieve the quality of life.

United States Census Department (2007) reported that quality of life surveys are conducted and these biennial surveys are conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development. They measure residents' perceptions of health and well-being, their community crime and safety, economic well-being, education, work, environment, culture and identity. State of well-being also includes people's feelings of happiness and satisfaction with their material and non-material accomplishments and the surroundings of their community. In this wise, indicators of quality of life include: health, safety, housing, social connectedness, civil and political rights, economic standard of living, economic development, and natural and built environment.

Family resource management and quality of life

Family members require certain things, such as good food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and transport, among others. In order to satisfy these needs, the family uses what it has, including money, energy, time, abilities and skills of members. These are called resources. Rice and Tucker (1986) define resources as assets used to accomplish goals. Family resources are what the family has or can create to get what it wants or needs. They provide the means to satisfy the family system's purposes or demands. Demands are the values, goals, events, needs and wants that enter the managerial system, and they require action. They are necessary in solving every management problem. Resources vary in kind and in their potential for

meeting the complex and unique needs and interests of individuals and families.

Individuals and families have many needs and goals to be met but the resources are always limited. There is, therefore, the need to use the limited resources effectively so as to satisfy as many of the family needs as possible. This is family management. Family management is, therefore, the process of using the family's resources to meet the family's needs or goals. Gross et al. (1980) defined management as a purposeful behaviour directed towards creating and/or using resources to meet demands to achieve family goals. Good management of family resources leads to the improvement of the quality of life within the family.

Gross et al. (1980) opine that resource management in everyday living has been part of life since time immemorial. There is evidence that even the cavemen and their families managed the resources in their environments to satisfy needs. They turned caves into houses, used stone as knives and as means of lighting fire, clubs as weapons for defence and hunting. They also used animal skin and leaves as clothing and the vegetation as source of food and medicine. This is an indication that they manipulated the resources in their environment to satisfy their needs.

The interaction between man and his environment for the satisfaction of needs has evolved over the years to the extent that families and their members are improving on their quality of life by applying knowledge and skills to the use of resources. Management of resources provides the framework within which all life activities are carried out. Daily, individuals and families make choices and decisions in relation to the use of resources to

achieve goals. It involves the use of skills, knowledge, ability and capacity to face and solve problems.

Managerial strategies for improving the quality of life

Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have defined management as a basic tool for creative living for achieving desired goals and purposes to advantage. Family management involves the effective and efficient use of available family resources to achieve the life desired. It is concerned with the proper planning, implementation and manipulation of resources in the home to achieve family goals for improving the quality of life.

Rice and Tucker (1986) have, further, asserted that family life management can be defined as a system whereby a person's values, goals and standards direct the person's resources, through everyday decisions and purposeful actions, to improve the person's quality of life in relation to others. It is a goal-oriented behaviour, using decision-making, valuing, planning and organising processes to guide resource use to improve the quality of life. Families, persons living alone, or individuals choosing other group affiliations can, through the use of management, not only adapt or accommodate change, but control or direct that change to support and strengthen their well-being.

Managing in a changing world requires a high degree of adaptability to environmental shifts and personal alterations in attitudes and demands. Some management responses are acquired in the process of maturation. Others are transferred from situations that are repeated in daily living until management of similar conditions become habitual. Some managerial skills or strategies are learned through observing others who are admired for their ability to

accomplish goals. Management strategies may also be consciously learned through the study of the management system and practice of exemplary management skills.

Rice and Tucker (1984) have identified certain managerial strategies for improving the quality of life. One way to start managing life is to develop skill in clarifying values, which is coming to grip with personal values, meshing them with those of the family, and resolving any conflicts that may exist between personal and group values. Additional strategies that are needed in life management are, a refined goal-setting technique, and a framework for creating and allocating resources. Effective time and energy management are also important strategies.

Learning to make realistic decisions in line with a value system and learning to take control and manage daily events in line with a personal standard of living, is also very crucial in life management. Individuals and their support groups may need to develop a managerial philosophy that encourages the use of community facilities and development of new or unperceived human resources. Effective communication, an ability to work with others, and an ability to locate and process information are also essential to accomplish life management.

Accepting responsibility for personal and family well-being without harming the environment for others is a part of the output phase of life management. The quality, quantity, and the mix of resources available to the group and to the individuals who form the group determine the quality and quantity of output derived. Personal resources, such as values, desires, time, energy, and skills of the members, also determine outputs as well as the

satisfaction that will be derived from the management process. The result is worth the effort, which is the quality of life that will be affected (Rice & Tucker, 1984).

Individuals and families need to recognize, assess, access and manage resources wisely to meet needs, accomplish goals and achieve quality of life desired. To get the most from the use of resources, competencies would have to be acquired that will help channel efforts through performance towards achievement. There is the need to recognize that there is a limit to the extent to which every resource is useful, and that there are trade-offs among resources. Resources may be needed for more than one goal and therefore, conflicts may occur which may be resolved by making choices through decision-making. Also, individuals and families do not have complete control over all their resources and that external influences can interfere in the management of resources for improving quality living (Rice & Tucker, 1984).

Furthermore, pressures and events within and outside the family may compete with family goals and such situations make demands on individuals and family managerial competences. Gross et al. (1980) have asserted that it is when these concepts have been understood and management competences and strategies acquired and applied in everyday living that quality of life desired can be achieved.

The single-parent family and management

The dynamism of everyday living presents challenges to single-parent families and their members. The challenges require adequate supply of resources that are accessible and the application of managerial skills to be able

to meet them. Families and their members have varying needs which require the use of resources. However, the availability of resources may be influenced by factors which make it easy or impossible for the family and its members, either as a group or individuals, to satisfy a particular need or needs (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988).

Resources are never in adequate supply; they may be scarce one time or another, or may not be available at all. As such, there is the need to create what is needed, look for alternatives or make use of what is available wisely and efficiently. This implies the application of managerial strategies, knowledge and skills, to the use of resources to be able to derive maximum satisfaction and the quality of life desired. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have indicated that resource identification, creation, availability, accessibility, assessment and judicious use are management situations that individuals and families have to contend with.

The setting of goals may be the single most important activity that may be carried out towards the attainment of the quality of life desired. This is because it is difficult to achieve anything meaningful without a target or goal. Goals set direct affairs and guide the courses of action. Single-parents live from day to day with a hazy idea of what they want to do, the direction of their actions and what they really want out of life. Living that way is never fulfilling and the variety of experiences hoped for may never materialise. Goals direct and give purpose and meaning to activities carried out. Goals should be set in specific terms; they should be prioritised because resources may be limited and/or scarce. Also, they should be within one's capacity. They should be timed, and the time frame should be flexible, allowing enough

time for working towards the achievement of the goal(s) set. Standards should be set for the achievement of goals. The standards set should be clear and achievable (Rice & Tucker, 1986).

Setting standards for the achievement of goals is very important because they determine the level or degree at which goals could be achieved. Values, needs, knowledge, skills and availability of resources are some of the factors that influence the setting and achievement of standards. It is, therefore, important for single-parents to know and understand how these and other factors can affect standards set in order to be able to set standards that are attainable within the parameters of one's capacity to forestall failure, stress and disappointment (Rice & Tucker, 1986).

In working towards the achievement of goals, it is important to identify current resources, both human and non-human, that may be needed. It is imperative that resources that may be needed are identified early during planning to determine whether what is available as resources are adequate and can be used for what they are intended to be used for. It is also necessary to be certain about the kind of resources needed and assess them to find out whether they satisfy the specification. Resources should be assembled at the right time when needed to avoid disappointments and failures. Where resources are not available, single-parents families must improvise and look for alternatives or make the necessary changes. They should avoid the waste of resources, especially financial resources, but should not be mean (Rice & Tucker, 1986).

Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have indicated that, at the stage of development of strategies for implementation of plan(s) made, activities through which goals could be achieved are identified, intergrated and

organised in a sequential order. A work plan could be made at this stage. A work plan spells out what is to be done at what time and in what manner. It helps in identifying activities that are necessary for the achievement of goals. It also helps in identifying activities that could be sequenced or done serially and those that could be carried out concurrently. The work plan can be in writing in the form of a checklist, a schedule, a calendar or reminder notes. Whatever is used should be handy for regular reference. In group activities, it is important to determine who performs which task (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988).

Putting a plan into action refers to implementing a plan, and that could be interesting and easy. It could also be difficult, stressful and frustrating. So, it must be planned. However, the situation depends on whatever consideration was given to knowledge and skills of those engaged in putting the plan into action, whether activities have been properly evaluated to ensure that there are no conflicts, whether provision has been made for alternative actions and resources in case of any eventuality and whether timing is right for every and all the activities. If other people (children) are to be involved (group plan or group activities), then they should know what is expected of them and how to carry out their part of the game. They should also understand the relationship between what they are doing and that of others and the implications (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988).

Controlling activities involves checking the flow or progress of the plan and making decisions about needed changes, if necessary. It also implies understanding what is at stake, and directing activities towards achieving it or them. If other people are to be involved, then there should be a co-ordinator

who is in charge, controls affairs and takes responsibility of the outcome (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988).

Evaluating results seeks to find out whether goals have been achieved. It involves measuring the outcome with the goals and standards set. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have cautioned that, if goals have been achieved, it is important to remember what worked well and identify processes, person(s), and activities that brought about the success. If not, it is also very important to identify what went wrong, what or who caused it, whether there is the need to revise plan(s) and this may require setting new or different goal(s).

Accomplishing goals requires the improvement of knowledge or acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitudes towards whatever is to be accomplished, and this goes with practice. Developing and improving decision-making and problem-solving skills is part of learning to manage effectively, and that management skills are needed in all situation throughout life (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988).

Conceptual framework for studying role performance of single-parent families

The conceptual framework for the study sheds light on the interrelationships and conditions which influence action in the family. It is based on the structural functionalism and family systems theories. In his structural-functionalism theory, Parsons (1969) has claimed that, for any given system of action, there are four functional components necessary for a system to exist, function, and maintain equilibrium. His four basic functional imperatives are (1) adaptation, (2) goal attainment, (3) intergration and (4)

pattern maintenance. He points out that for successful functioning, all social systems must deal with these problems. Parsons regards the first half of each pair of his pattern variables as the expressive types of characteristics and the second half of the pattern as the instrumental types of characteristics.

The family as a social system adapts itself to various environments which may be restrictive or enhancing in its goal attainment as it intergrates and organises resources to meet the needs and wants of the family. Family members perform instrumental and expressive roles in the home to achieve desired goals to maintain family equilibrium and the survival of the unit. According to Broderick and Smith (1979), the systems theory emphasizes the interdependence of family members. The relationships between individuals in a family are derived from the roles, rules, routines and responsibilities of each person to others and the form and function of the organisational structure of the family unit.

A systems approach to family management provides an understanding of interrelationships and conditions which influence action in the family. This approach has four components as input, throughput, output and outcome, presented as a conceptual framework for studying the role performance of single-parent families as shown in Figure 3.

The day - to - day concerns of the single-parent family, such as feeding the family adequately, carrying out daily activities, providing members with suitable clothing and housing, the ability of the members to get along with each other and adjusting to new situations (like living in a single-parent home) are all management situations.

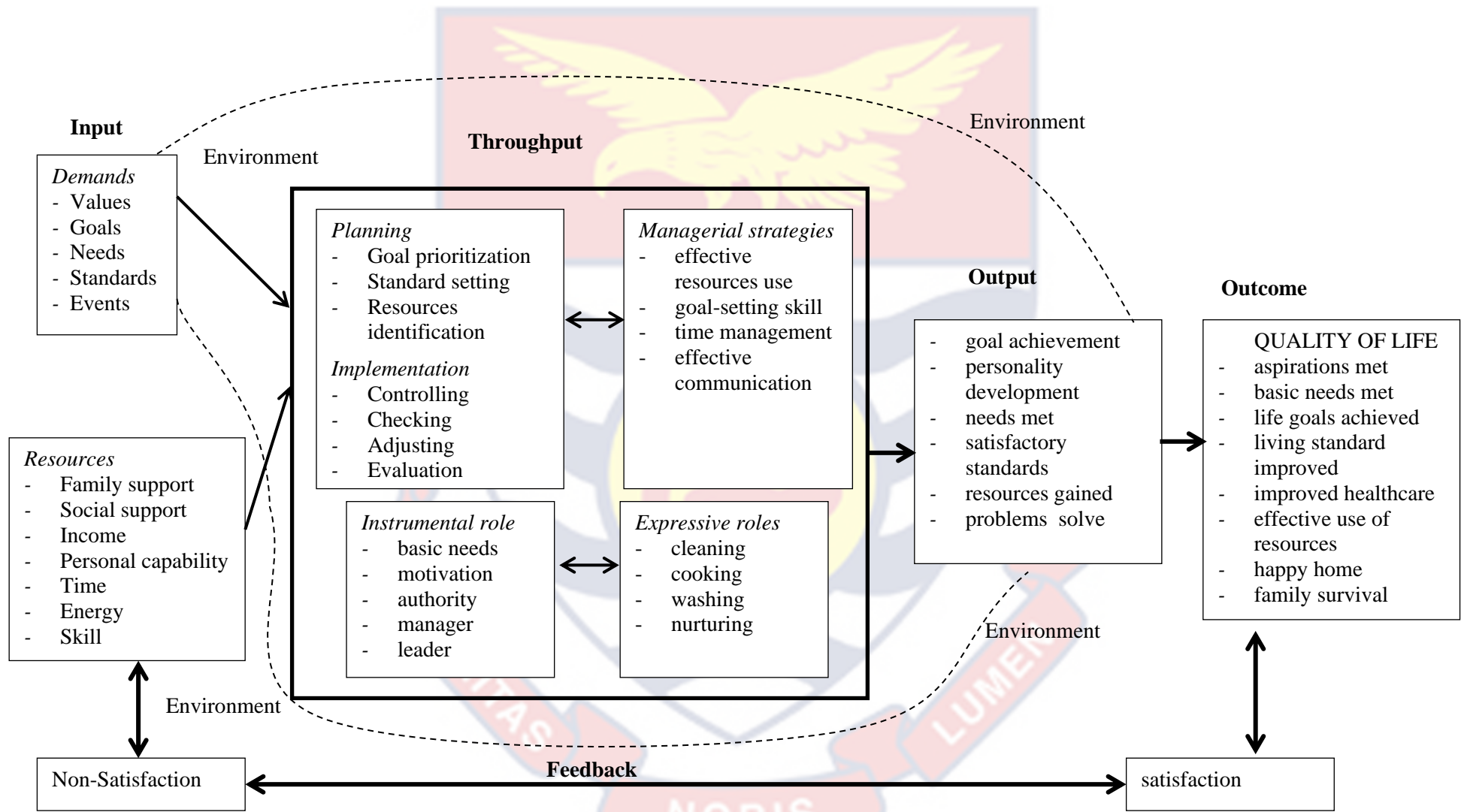


Figure 3: Conceptual framework for studying role performance of single-parent families

Source: Adapted from Deacon and Firebaugh (1988)

The single-parent family always has certain demands to meet. These demands are stimuli received from the system's environment as input factors. Input refers to all the information and energy or matter plugged into the family system in various forms as demands to affect processes in the throughput. The demands are the goals, values, standards, events, attitudes, needs and wants which push people into action in order to attain the required goals. Based on its demands, the family plans, implements, monitors, and evaluates various programmes and activities aimed at meeting the demands. The programmes and activities require the use of certain resources, such as family support, social support, income, personal capabilities, time and energy.

The throughput is the transformation of matter or energy from input to output in the managerial system. It involves decisions and communication for planning and implementation of actions (instrumental and expressive roles) to convert resources into attained goals. In planning, there are strategies that could be followed for goal achievement. They include: goal prioritization, standard setting, and resources identification. Implementation is the actual performance of activities. It involves the playing of certain instrumental and expressive roles by relevant family members in order to achieve management outputs. However, there is no role differentiation in the single-parent household. Single-parents combine and perform both the instrumental and expressive roles at home. This may bring challenges to single-parents. However, managerial strategies, such as effective use of resources, goal-setting skills, time management and effective communication, are used to control, check and evaluate the results achieved (output).

Output is the result of throughput when inputs as demands are satisfied. It is the end result of managerial activity that satisfies the demands or creates new demands. It is the finished product, expressed as goal achievement, personality development, needs met, satisfactory standards, resources gained or created and problems solved. The output flows to the internal environment of the system as the outcome of managerial activities.

Outcome creates satisfaction of family members. It tells how far the family is reaching its goals and standards and also the level of satisfaction with the goal attainment. The level of satisfaction accumulates to form the quality of life of the family. The quality of life is expressed by indicators such as: aspirations met; basic needs met; life goals achieved; living standards improved; improved healthcare; effective use of resources; happy home; and family survival. There is always some form of feedback from family members as to whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the resources they use, the roles they play and the extent to which family demands have been met. Feedback is an important aspect of the outcome. It is the evaluative information about the managerial activity that is returned to the system as input which influences future action.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in conducting the research. It covers the study area, research design, the study population, sampling procedures, data types and sources. It also includes data collection instruments, pre-test, fieldwork and data processing and analysis.

Study area

The study was conducted in the Central Region of Ghana. The region contains 17 districts, made up of one metropolis, six municipalities and 10 districts, as shown in Figure 4. For this study, the region was stratified based on their geographical locations in relation to their distance from the sea. Thus, districts which have some communities sharing boundary with the sea were called coastal districts and those which are farther away from the sea were referred to as inland districts. The region had six coastal and six inland districts at the inception of the study. Currently, there are 17 districts since some of the districts are splited.

The Central Region shares boundaries with four regions - Western Region to the west, Ashanti to the north, Greater Accra to the south-east and Eastern Region to the east. To the south is the Gulf of Guinea. The predominant ethnic group is the Akans.

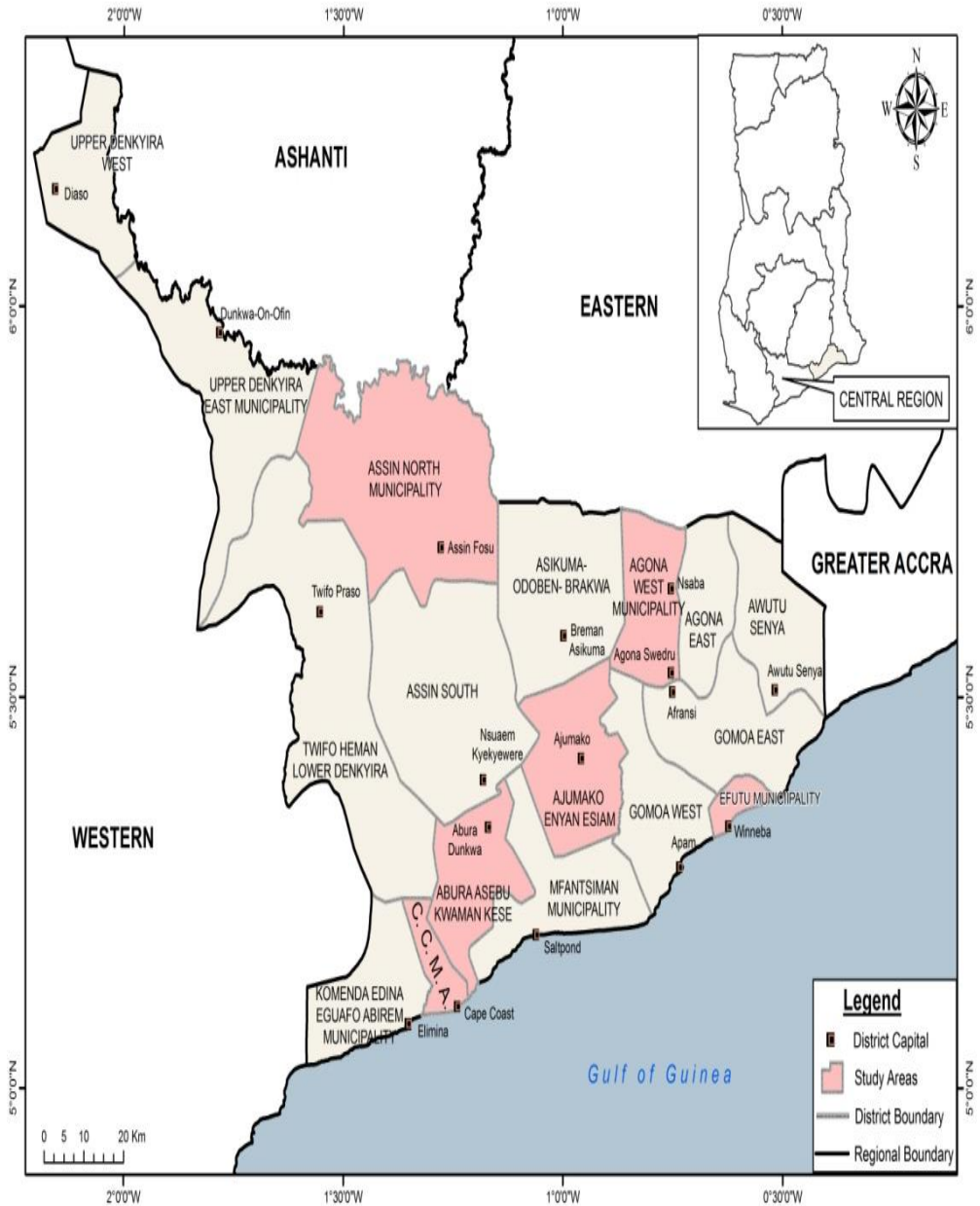


Figure 4: Map of Central Region

Source: Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC (2012).

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development [MLGRD] (2006) has reported that, the economy of the region is dominated by agro - businesses, services and small-scale industries. It is estimated that 66 percent of the people are engaged in agriculture, (farming and fishing) and trading in

the informal sector. The formal sector consists of mostly teachers, bankers and other government workers.

Research design

Research design is the specific strategy the researcher employs in collecting, analysing and reporting the research. According to Amedahe (2002), research design refers to the overall plan for obtaining answers to research questions or testing research hypotheses. This study was a non-experimental research which employed the descriptive and evaluative survey designs, using male single-parents in the Central Region.

According to Best and Khan (1995), a descriptive survey involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning the current status of the object of study. It determines and reports the way things are. The major advantage of the survey design is that it has the potential to provide the researcher with information that was obtained from a large sample of individuals. This information can then be generalised provided the sample of individuals selected is representative enough, and the selection was random to eliminate bias. The descriptive survey design was used in this study to describe the managerial strategies used in the performance of both instrumental and expressive roles by male single-parents.

The descriptive survey design, however, has some weaknesses. There is the likelihood that respondents would give careless responses in an offhand manner. Another weakness is that there is the difficulty of ensuring that question to be answered or statements to be responded to in a descriptive design are clear and not misleading. Being aware of these weaknesses, I made

sure that the problem did not crop up. The items for questionnaire were constructed in such a way that those weaknesses were controlled.

Weiss (1998) posits that an evaluative research is the systematic assessment of an operation and/or the outcomes of a programme or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy. Sarantakos (2005) also reiterates that an evaluative research is a type of applied research which is employed to assess the implementation, operation and ultimate effectiveness of policies and programme outcomes. Childers (1989) has identified the nature of evaluative research to distinguish it from other kinds of research. Evaluative research is usually used for decision-making and provides a basis for making a judgement about a programme or phenomenon. The evaluative design was used in this study to evaluate how male single-parents perceived quality of life. For this study the male single-parents had already experienced the situation and, therefore, their situation could be evaluated.

Study population

Cochran (1997) explains that a study population is the collection of individuals, items and measurements about which it is required to make inferences. The target population for the study consisted of all male single-parents in the Central Region of Ghana. The Ghana Statistical Service (2003) has provided a distribution of male single-parent households by status for the Central Region as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of male single-parent households in the Central Region (2003)

District	Sample	Percentage divorced	Percentage separated	Percentage widowed
KEEA	251	7.7	1.1	2.2
Cape Coast	269	7.3	1.3	3.0
AAK	226	2.5	2.1	1.9
Mfantsiman	198	4.8	1.3	5.0
Gomoa	277	4.1	0.3	2.5
Awutu Efutu Senya	304	2.7	3.5	1.5
Agona	239	0.8	0.6	3.0
AOB	246	3.2	2.5	3.1
AEED	229	4.7	0.6	4.5
Assin	182	4.7	2.5	0.8
THLD	293	4.3	1.6	2.5
Upper Denkyira	277	4.2	1.6	1.0
Total	2991	51.0	19.0	30.0

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2003)

Sampling procedures

It was the wish of the author to use all male single-parents in the entire region for the study. However, for time and other resource constraints, male single-parents in some of the districts were chosen to represent the population as sample for the study. Bryman and Cramer (2006) explain sampling as the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population.

In a bid to obtain an unbiased and representative sample for the study, a combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed to select the subjects for the study. A multistage sampling procedure

was employed to get a sample which was representative of the population. The districts were put into two strata, namely: coastal and inland districts. The reason for disaggregating the sample into coastal and inland districts was that the social and cultural dynamics could differ among inland and coastal dwellers.

Proportionate stratified sampling was employed to select six districts. This was to help minimise bias and give credibility to the final findings. A sampling frame of names of the districts in the region was prepared. Names of the coastal and inland districts were written and folded separately for each stratum. Placed in separate bowls, three papers were picked from the coastal and the inland bowls respectively. In all, a total of six districts were used for the study. These were: Cape Coast; Awutu-Efutu-Senya; and Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese as coastal districts. Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam; Agona; and Assin were selected as inland districts. Two communities in each district were used for the study.

Within the districts, the political administrative capitals were purposively selected. One other urban community was randomly selected from each district, using a sampling frame of names of urban communities obtained from the District and Municipal Assemblies. Names of public schools were obtained from the assemblies to serve as a sampling frame. Two public basic schools were randomly selected in each community, using the lottery method. The selected districts, communities and schools are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of sample by district, community and basic school

District	Communities	Basic school
Cape Coast	Aboom	St. Monica's Basic
	UCC community	University Basic
AES	Winneba	M/A Basic School
	Senya Bereku	Catholic Basic
AEED	Ajumako	Gesdi Basic School
	Besease	D/A Basic School
Agona	Swedru	M/A Basic School
	Abodom	Methodist Basic
Assin	Fosu	Fosco Dem. Basic
	Nsuta	D/A Basic School
AAK	Abura Dunkwa	Methodist Basic
	Kwamankese	D/A Basic School

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

One major decision in the conduct of any research is to decide on the size of the sample that will be representative of the population. In the view of Nwana (1992), certain definite practices among social researchers can be adopted. One such practice had to do with the relationship between population of a study and the sample that will be representative of that population. In the same vein, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) have provided a table for determining the sample size (with 95 percent certainty) for a given population (Appendix B).

By Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, for a total accessible population between 1400 and 1499, a sample size of 302 is appropriate. The selected

districts in the region have a total population of 1450 male single heads of households. The actual sample size used for the study was 300. The sample size for each district was, therefore, calculated as a proportion of the total sample size (300), based on its population as provided by the Ghana Statistical Service (2003). The number of individuals selected was based on its population.

The difficulty in identifying male single-parents was overcome by identifying pupils living with male single-parents in the basic schools in the selected communities. Teachers in the schools assisted to interview the pupils, and identified those who lived with their fathers alone. In the classrooms, pupils were asked to show by hand if they lived with their fathers only. This was done in all classrooms until the required sample was obtained. Samples selected for the study are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of population and sample size of male single-parents

Study district	Population	Selected sample	Actual sample
Cape Coast	269	56	55
Awutu-Efutu-Senya	304	63	61
Assin	182	38	38
Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam	229	48	48
Abura-Asebu- Kwamankese	226	47	47
Agona	239	50	49
Total	1450	302	300

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

In cases where the required sample was not obtained in the classroom, other respondents were referred by an informal net-work, established to identify respondents. The male single-parents were then contacted for their acceptance to participate in the study.

Sources of data

The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained from the interviews with respondents as well as questionnaires that were administered to male single-parents. Secondary data on the selected districts and communities was obtained from the Central Regional Coordinating Council. In addition to the British Council and UNDP Libraries in Accra, the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, Legon, the Main Library and the libraries of the Department of Sociology and the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Cape Coast provided valuable data for the study. Books, journals, articles and the internet were used extensively for information retrieval and literature review.

Data collection instruments

The study made use of two major instruments for data collection. These were the questionnaire for literate respondents and structured interview schedule for illiterate respondents. Both the questionnaire and interview schedule comprised of the same items (Appendix A). The first section contained close-ended socio-demographic items that elicited personal data on the respondents. Kerlinger (1973) indicates that close-ended questions are beneficial. They promote uniformity of measurements, thus ensuring a high

reliability of answers to suit the pattern of response needed and also the close-ended items ensured easy inputting and analysis of data.

The second part sought information on respondents' role performance and the associated factors and challenges; kinds of support received; as well as managerial strategies employed for improving the quality of their lives. These comprised both closed and open-ended items. The open-ended items helped to obtain unanticipated but vital information from the respondents. Items covered all the variables and objectives of the study.

Pre-testing of instruments

A pre-test gives the researcher the opportunity to ensure that items yield the desired responses and determine the method of administration. Using the same design, instrument and data collection procedures, a pre-test was conducted on 20 male single-parents in THLD (inland) and Mfantseman (coastal) districts. The districts had similar environmental and cultural characteristics between them and the study districts.

The Cronbach Alpha, which is inter-item test reliability, was used to test the reliability of the Likert-scale items in the questionnaire, and an alpha coefficient value of 0.86 was obtained after removing and changing some items. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1996), Cronbach Alpha is a much more general form of internal consistency, and is used for items that are not scored right or wrong. The authors contend that "it is generally the most appropriate type of reliability for survey research and other questionnaires in which there is a range of possible answers for each item" (p. 242). That explains why it was used to calculate the reliability coefficient.

The aim of the pre-test was to establish whether respondents were accessible, whether the site was convenient, whether the techniques of data collection generate enough information, whether the plan was well-constructed and whether any changes or adjustments were needed. This helped to evaluate and determine the validity and the reliability of the instruments. Best and Khan (1995) have emphasised the need to subject a new test instrument to field test with a population similar to that from which the study sample was chosen. Sarantakos (2005) has also identified the following goals of pre-test to:

1. estimate the costs and duration of the main study;
2. test the effectiveness of the study's organisation;
3. test the suitability of the research methods and instruments;
4. ensure that the sampling frame is adequate;
5. estimate the level of response and type of drop- outs;
6. ascertain the degree of diversity of the survey population;
7. familiarise researchers with the research environment;
8. offer an opportunity to practise using the research instruments before the main study begins;
9. test the response of the subjects to the overall research design; and
10. discover possible weaknesses, inadequacies, ambiguities and problems in all aspects of the research, so that they can be corrected before actual data collection takes place.

The essence of the pre-testing of the research instruments was to ensure that they would be able to elicit the needed information for the study. The pre-testing exercise helped the researcher to eliminate ambiguous and

irrelevant questions. It also made it possible to effect changes on the first set of questionnaire before using them for the actual research work. From the pre-test exercise, it was noticed that the time allotted to household interview was too long. Hence there was the need to reduce the time in order to secure the respondents' attention in the course of the interview. However, some degree of care was taken in order not to distort the content of the questionnaires so as to facilitate the collection of adequate data to enhance the quality of the study.

Owing to the limited time available and the cost involved in carrying out this research, the researcher alone was not able to administer all the questionnaires. Six field assistants were, therefore, recruited and trained to assist in the administration of the instruments and the collection of data. The selection was based on such criteria as good command over the English and Akan Languages and good interpersonal relationship. The research assistants were taken through a two-day intensive in-service training for them to go through all the items on the questionnaire and know how to explain them to the understanding of the respondents. This ensured uniformity. The research assistants were also involved in the pre-test as part of their training.

Fieldwork

The research assistants were put into three groups, with two members in each group. Each group was assigned two districts. They then took turns to visit the selected communities in the districts assigned to them. When respondents were identified, the research team then explained the purpose of the study and assured them of anonymity. This, in turn, ensured maximum confidentiality. After that, the questionnaires were administered to the literate

respondents. A period of one week was allowed for the filling of the questionnaire. The team afterwards visited the various communities to collect the completed questionnaires. Another period of two weeks was allocated for follow-ups. Illiterate respondents were interviewed at an agreed date and convenient time. The interview schedule, which was in the English Language, was translated into the vernacular to the illiterate respondents. Their responses were then recorded in the English Language by the research team.

The field-work was conducted in three phases: the first phase started from 4th to 27th May, 2012. During this phase, the researcher and her team of six assistants were engaged in the identification of respondents' houses in the 12 selected communities. The second phase began from 3rd to 24th June, 2012 for data collection. It involved the distribution of questionnaires to literate respondents and interviews of illiterate respondents. The third and final phase lasted four weeks from 4th to 27th July, 2012. It involved visits to the selected communities to retrieve questionnaires and follow-up. In all, 12 weeks (May - July) were used for data collection, and all the questionnaires were retrieved.

Data processing and analysis

The completed questionnaires were edited to check for consistency. To ensure the quality of the data, cross-validation was done by comparing responses with each other to ensure accuracy and completeness. The close ended questions were coded and analysed. Responses to open-ended items were analysed through the categorization of emergent concepts and comparison of these concepts in order to identify common themes.

Those preliminary themes and topics were analysed to arrive at a set of topics commonly recurring. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) (Version 16) software was used to process and analyse the data. This is because the SPSS software offers a variety of contemporary statistical methods. It has a good editing and labelling facilities, has the ability to produce output in both report and table formats and handles missing data with ease.

Frequency distribution tables, graphs and charts were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Percentages and frequencies were used to determine the distribution of the various categories of male single-parents, roles they performed and the different managerial strategies used in ensuring the well-being of their families.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between the background characteristics of the male single-parents and their willingness to remain single-parents. It was considered appropriate for the study because this procedure tells how well a set of predictor variables predicts or explains categorical dependent variables.

For the purpose of this study, the collected data was collapsed into two categories, that is, whether a male single-parent was willing to remain single or not. After assessing the factorability of the data on indicators of quality of life, a decision had to be made concerning the number of factors to extract. However, Kaiser's criterion or Eigen value rule was used to decide on the number of factors to extract. Pearsons' correlation was also conducted to assess the correlation among the indicators of quality of life.

In the analysis of the questionnaire, codes for responses on background characteristics ranged from 1 to 8 since the number of options for certain items varied as much. “Yes” and “No” responses were coded 1” and “2” respectively. For the Likert scale, the following was the arrangement of weights: 1 - strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - agree; and 4 - strongly agree. For the ratings of the indicators of the quality of life, the arrangement of weights was as follows: 1- very low; 2 - low; 3 - high; and 4 - very high.



CHAPTER FIVE

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS AND WILLINGNESS TO REMAIN A SINGLE-PARENT

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data and the discussion of the findings on respondents' background characteristics. It also discusses the factors that have necessitated respondents' present status as single-parents, and their willingness to remain single-parents.

Background characteristics of respondents

The background characteristics of the respondents are necessary as they put the study into context and portray some trends that have become apparent regarding family patterns and the changing picture of the family which has given rise to many family configurations. The prevalence of single-parent families represents one of the most significant social changes families are encountering.

Addison-Sackey (1992) has said that the Ghanaian family is going through traumatic changes, especially during the last two decades (1990 - 2010). The rate of cohabitation, unrecognized sexual unions, teenage births, divorce rates and single-parent households are on the increase. The implications for the personal and managerial subsystem relations are extensive. The survey identified the following background characteristics of the respondents: age, educational level, occupation, monthly income, number of dependents and years respondents had been single-parents.

Age of respondents

Figure 5 shows the age distribution of respondents, which ranges from 31 and 70 years. Fourteen percent of the respondents were 31 years or below. The majority (69.7%) were between 31 and 50 years, 14.3 percent were between 51 and 60, whereas only two percent were between 61 and 70 years.

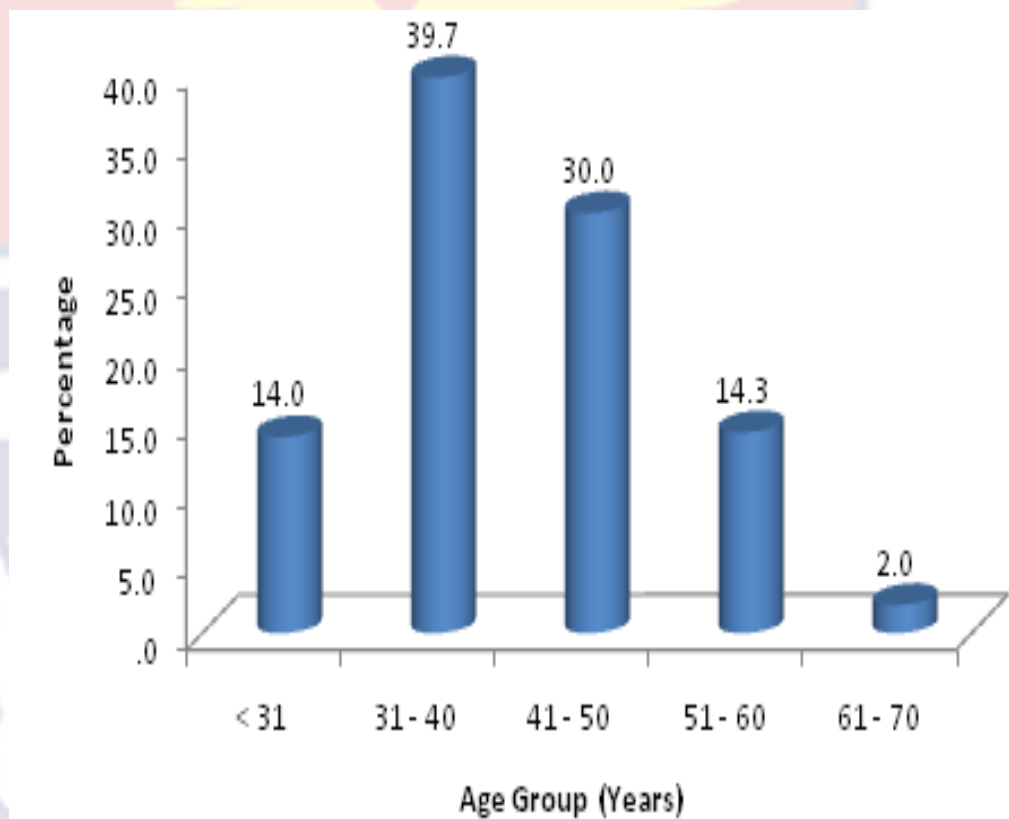


Figure 5: Age distribution of respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results indicate that most (83.7%) of the respondents were relatively young in the age < 31- 50. Waldman (1985) has indicated that as time goes on, the experience of being a lone parent who maintains a household is becoming steadily much less unusual. As more young adults postpone marriage and more parents become divorced, the number of one-parent

households was expected to increase by one-third between 1990 and 2000. This trend agrees with data from the United States Census Department (2007) which shows that, with regard to the household structure, it is now evident that a new type of single-headed household has emerged and formed both from necessity and by choice, irrespective of age.

Educational level of respondents

Education has the potential of giving male single-parents the chance of acquiring job skills in order to get money to cater for themselves and their children. Arthur and Glick (1990) have asserted that the acquisition of knowledge is one of the prerequisites for human development, and education is a necessity because it helps in enhancing the individual's political and socio-economic development and that of their families.

The educational levels of the respondents were categorized into: no formal education, basic, senior high school, post secondary and tertiary education, as shown in Table 5. The results show that 17.3 percent of the respondents had no formal education, 24.7 percent had basic education, 18 percent had secondary education, 12.7 had post secondary education, and 27.3 percent had some form of tertiary education. It implies that the majority (82.7%) of the respondents have had some form of education ranging from basic to tertiary.

Table 5: Educational level of respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
No Formal Education	52	17.3
Basic	74	24.7
Senior High School	54	18.0
Post-Secondary	38	12.7
Tertiary	82	27.3
Total	300	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Occupation of respondents

Occupations that people are engaged in determine financial resources available to families to manage with. The regional profile depicted that the economy of the region is dominated by agro-businesses, services and small-scale industries. The occupations captured in this study included: teaching, trading, artisanship, farming, driving, administrative work, office work, banking and nursing.

The results in Table 6 indicate that 25 percent of the respondents were teachers, which included university lecturers. The other occupations were traders (14%), artisans (13.3%) and farmers (10.7%). Twenty-eight percent of the respondents were into occupations, such as driving, administration, office work, banking and nursing. Nine percent of the respondents reported that they were engaged in other occupations such as medical doctors, medical assistants and police personnel. This is in line with the study by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2006) which indicated a diversity of

occupations for people in the region. The Ministry has reported that the economy of the region is dominated by agro - businesses, services and small-scale industries in the informal sector. The formal sector consists of mostly service institutions, banking and commerce.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of occupations of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Teaching	75	25.0
Trading	42	14.0
Artisanship	40	13.3
Farming	32	10.7
Driving	27	9.0
Administrative work	20	6.7
Office work	18	6.0
Banking	10	3.3
Nursing	8	2.7
Others	28	9.3
Total	300	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Monthly income of respondents

Income basically affects the quality of life of individuals and families. The monthly incomes of the respondents were up to GH¢2, 000.00, as shown in Figure 6. The majority (61%) of the respondents received monthly income between GH¢100 and GH¢500, while 31.7 percent of the respondents received

at least GH¢500 per month. The results are consistent with Norton and Glick's (1986) assertion that financial pressure is still one of the most common complaints of male single-parents. They indicated that, though some male single-parents may have a higher income, it may not be as large an income as that of married couples who may have to pool two pay cheques.

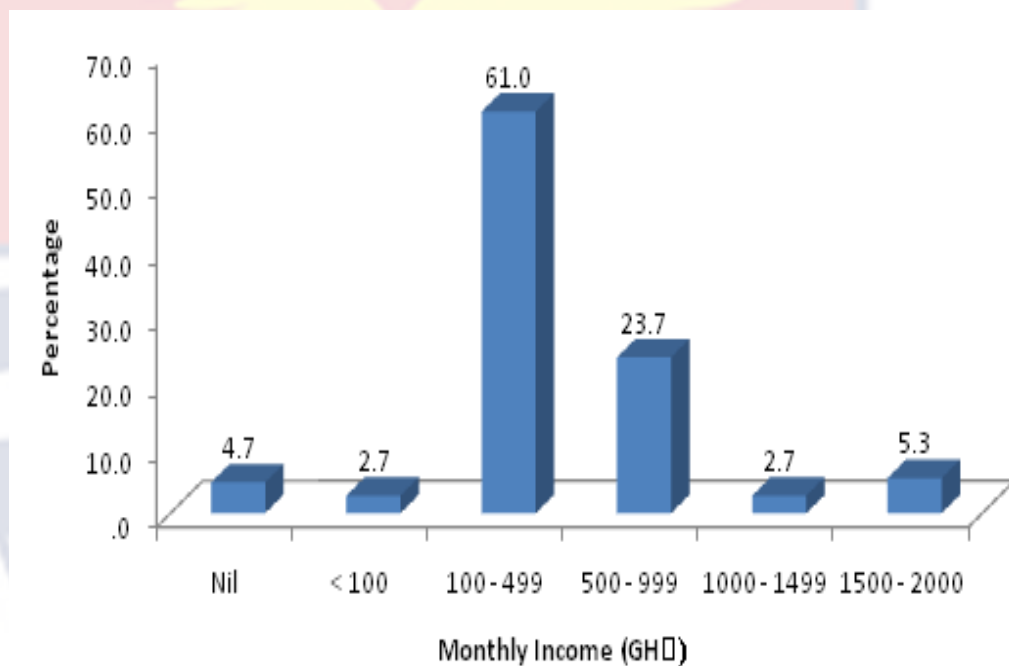


Figure 6: Percentage distribution of monthly incomes of respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Dependents of respondents

The number of children depended on the respondents is represented in Figure 7. There is an inverse relationship between the percentage of respondents and the number of dependents. In other words, the higher the number of dependents, the lower the percentage of the respondents. The majority (80.7%) of the respondents had between one and three dependents.

The result confirms those of United States Census Bureau (2007) which indicated that about half of all children born between 1980 and 2000 are likely to spend some time in mother/father only family. The census report indicated that there are approximately 13.6 million single-parents in the United States today, and those parents are responsible for raising 21.2 million children. Of these, approximately 84 percent of custodian parents are mothers and 16 percent are fathers.

The trend in Africa is not very different. Some studies in gender issues and other social and economic trends in Africa and developing countries indicated a rise in the proportion of households maintained by single-parents (Lloyd & Brandon, 1991; Addison-Sackey, 1992).

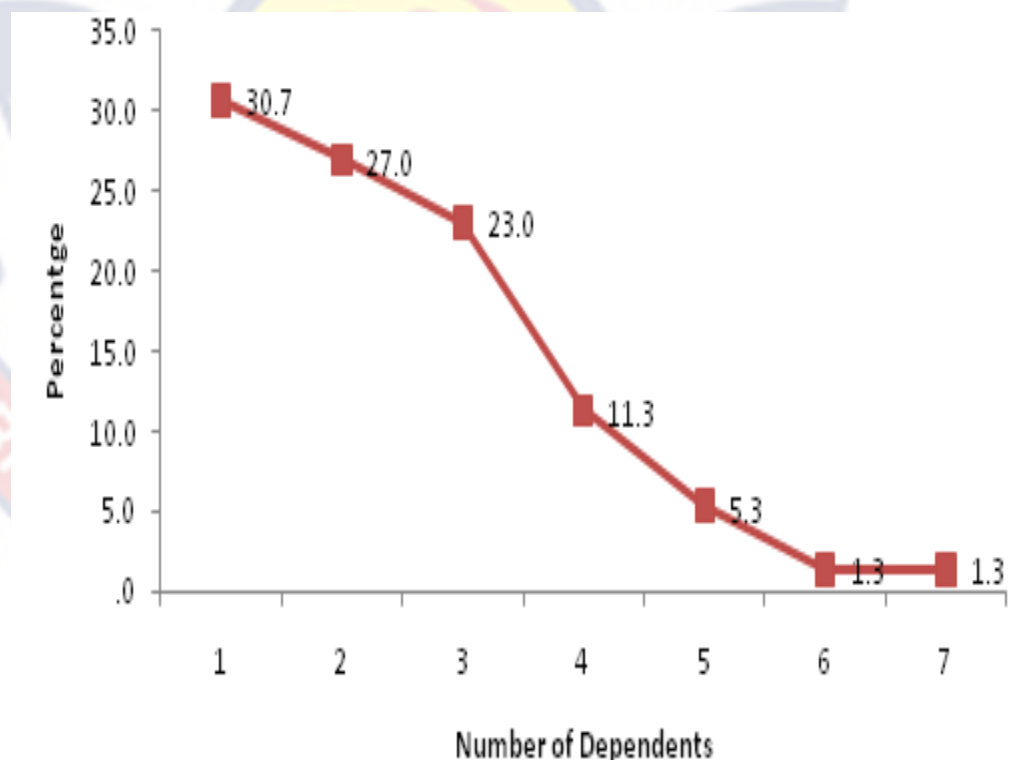


Figure 7: Number of dependents of respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Experience of respondents as single-parents

The respondents had varied number of years as single-parents. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents had been single parents from one to three years, 35 percent had been single parents from four to six years, and 14 percent had been single parents for seven years or more, as illustrated in Figure 8.

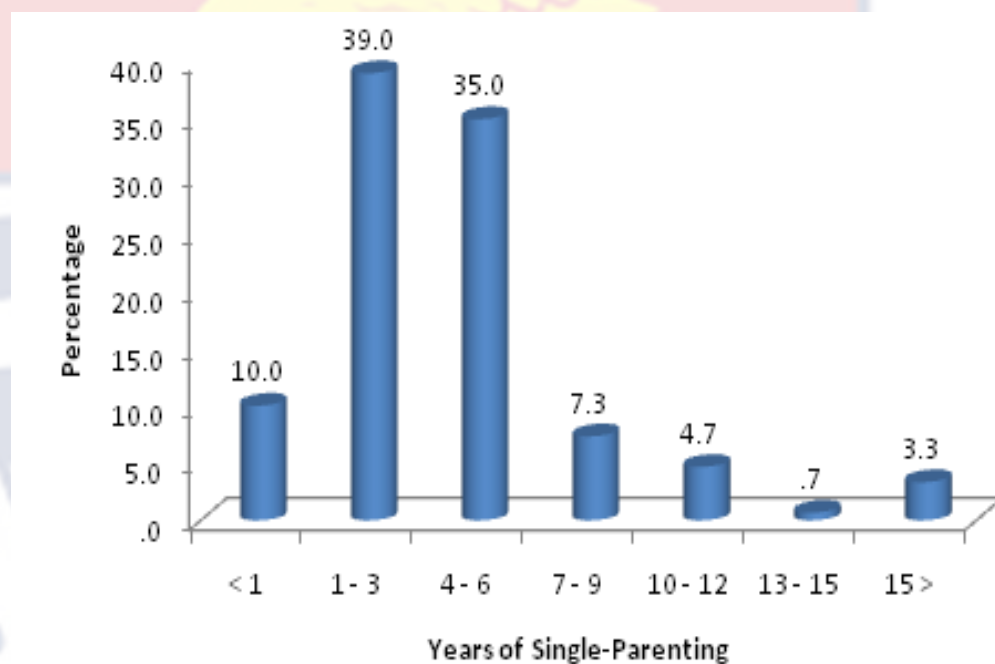


Figure 8: Experience as single-parents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The result indicates that the number of male single-parents has increased as the majority (84%) of the respondents had been single-parents within the past six years. The proportion of households headed by single-parents in Africa has risen from nearly seven percent to 29.4 percent over a period of 30 years (Lloyd & Brandon, 1991; Addison-Sackey, 1992).

According to Addison-Sackey (1992), divorce rates and single-parent households are on the increase in the Ghanaian family. The Ghana Statistical Service (2003) indicates a rise in the proportion of male single parent households in the Central Region. All these support the study findings that the prevalence of single-parent families represents one of the most significant social changes in the region.

Factors leading to respondents' status as single-parents

Single-parent families may occur as a result of divorce or separation, marriage out of wedlock or death of one of the spouses (Paolucci et al., 1977). Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have also indicated that varied circumstances accompany single-parenthood, such as premarital pregnancy, separation or divorce, death of a spouse, and adoption.

Table 7 presents the key factors leading to respondents' status as single-parents. The results of the present study indicate that the key factors associated with being a single-parent included marriage out of wedlock (29.7%), widowhood (20%), divorce (17.7%), separation (16.7%) and abandonment/ desertion (9.3%). The result of the study is consistent with that of Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) and Rice's (1999) assertion that single-parent family occurs as a result of death of a spouse, divorce, separation or abandonment, premarital pregnancy and adoption. Each of these factors has special conditions surrounding the single-parent and parenting roles that make them unique with respect to the responsibilities, problems, and benefits that pertain.

Table 7: Factors leading to respondents' status as single-parents

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Marriage out of wedlock	89	29.7
Widowhood	60	20.0
Divorce	53	17.7
Separation	50	16.7
Abandonment/desertion	28	9.3
Adoption	4	1.3
Wife's terminal illness	4	1.3
Others	12	4.0
Total	300	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

With regard to the household structure, it is evidenced that a new type of single-headed household has emerged and formed both from necessity and by choice. It is also in agreement with the assertion made by Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandof (1995), that the breakdown of marriages, as a result of divorce, widowhood, desertion and job transfer, is largely accountable or/and has contributed to the emergence of single-parent families in Ghana.

Willingness to remain single-parents

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they intended to remain single. The responses in Figure 9 show that 39.7 percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative. This implies that some men accept responsibilities to cater for themselves and their children as male single-

parents. The majority (60.3%) of the respondents, however, indicated that they would like to remarry.

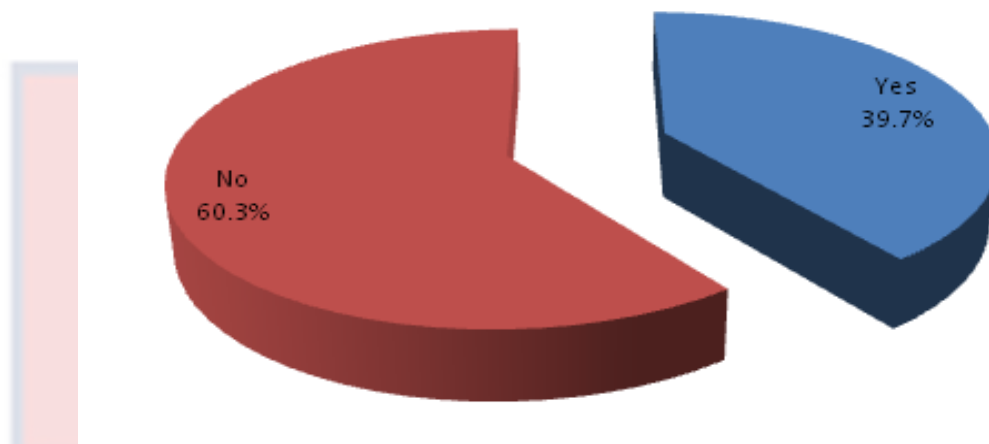


Figure 9: Willingness to remain single-parents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Sasse (1994) has indicated that some people remain single or choose single living over marriage, and the fastest growing household category is that of single-parent families. Divorce or separation, death of a spouse, and unwed parents, all account for many of the single-parent families. A common set of forces, including urbanization, industrialization, modernization and increased communication, is changing radically the quality of living among people. Owing to some trends and changing attitudes, a wider variety of family forms have become common in society. People are increasingly likely to encounter and become part of other types of families as well. Overall, about half of all children born between 1980 and 2000 are likely to spend some time in a mother/father only family (United States Bureau of the Census, 2007).

To ascertain the willingness of the respondents to remain single, the responses were used to run cross-tabulation against the background

characteristics at a 0.5 level of significance. The t-test and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 8.

The age of the respondents ranged from 31 years to 70 years. Skewness, which measures the symmetry of the distribution, proved to be asymmetrical in all cases. For example, the skewness of 0.84 and 0.65 implies that the age distribution of those who desired to be single-parent and those who did not respectively is positively skewed. Overall, the age distribution of the respondents was positively skewed. However, since the skewness (0.44) was less than 0.50, it can be concluded that the skewness of the age distribution of the respondents is not significant.

Those who desired to be single-parents were older than those who did not. Those who desired to be single-parents had a mean age of 44.08 years, with a standard deviation of 7.21, while those who did not had a mean age of 38.41 years, with a standard deviation of 9.04. The difference in age by willingness to remain single-parents was supported by t-test. With a t-statistic of 6.015 at the 0.00 level of significance less than the 0.05 level of significance, it could be concluded that there were significant differences in age of male single-parents who desired to be single parents and those who did not.

The average monthly incomes of those who desired to be single-parents were higher than those who did not. Those who desired had a mean monthly income of GH¢425.48, while those who did not had a mean monthly income of GH¢403.20. However, the differences in income were not statistically significant as shown by t-statistic of 0.494 at a 0.622 level of

significance. Generally, the average monthly income of the sampled respondents was GH¢412.04, with a standard deviation of 391.39.

Table 8: Background characteristics of respondents and willingness to remain single-parents

Remain Single-parent	Age (Years)						t (Sig.)
	Median	Mean	Std.	Min	Max	Skew	
Yes	42.00	44.08	7.21	26	66	.84	6.015
No	36.00	38.41	9.04	25	62	.65	(.000)
Overall	40.00	40.66	8.80	25	66	.44	
Average Monthly Income (GH¢)							
Yes	300.00	425.48	362.82	0	1700	1.56	.494
No	200.00	403.20	409.84	0	1900	1.95	(.622)
Overall	250.00	412.04	391.39	0	1900	1.81	
Number of Dependants							
Yes	3.00	2.73	1.39	1	7	1.00	3.123
No	2.00	2.23	1.30	1	6	0.94	(.002)
Overall	2.00	2.43	1.36	1	7	0.95	
Experience as a single-parent (Months)							
Yes	60.00	71.92	47.450	1	216	1.500	6.354
No	24.00	38.44	39.976	1	300	3.481	(.000)
Overall	46.00	51.72	46.040	1	300	2.186	

n = 300 respondents; Std = Standard deviation; Min = Minimum

Max = Maximum; Skew = Skewness; t = t-statistic

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The mean number of dependents of male single-parents who desired to be single was 2.43 persons with a positive skewness of 0.998. Comparatively, those who desired to be single-parents had larger household size (2.73) than those who did not want to remain single-parents (2.23). The highest number of dependants recorded for those who desired to be single-parents was seven persons, while that of those who did not was six. The test on differences between the number of dependants of those who desired to be single-parents and that of those who did not showed a great significant difference in number of dependents for both groups. This is because the t-test value was 3.123 with a significant value of 0.002 which is smaller than 0.05 level of significance.

Generally, the average experience of the respondents in terms of being single-parents was 51.72 months, which is more than four years. Half of the respondents who desired to remain single-parents had had experience as single-parents for more than 60 months (equivalent to five years), whereas half of those who did not desire to remain single-parents had had experience as single-parents for more than 24 months (equivalent to 2 years). The maximum and the minimum experience as single-parents ranged from 300 months (equivalent to 25 years) and one month respectively. The skewness of 1.5 and 3.48 implies that the distribution of experience as single-parents of those who desired to remain single-parents and those who did not is positively skewed.

However, since the skewness (2.186) is greater than 0.50, it could be concluded that the skewness in the distribution of months of experience of the respondents as single-parents is significant. Also, those who desired to be single-parents had more experience than those who did not, using experience of single-parents to be the yardstick. This is because those who desired to be

single-parents had a mean month of experience as single-parents of 71.92 months (equivalent to 6 years), while those who did not, had mean months of experience as single-parents of 38.44 months (equivalent to three years). This difference in months of experience as single-parents was significant as supported by the t-statistic of 6,354 at a 0.000 significance level.

The results show that age, years of being single-parent, number of dependents are important determinants of respondents' willingness to remain single parents. The predictive powers for age has a chi-square value of 29.92 with a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that the removal of age from the equation significantly affected the ability of the model to determine group membership (that is, desired to be single-parent or not).

The same result goes for the number of dependents and years of being single-parent, since they had chi-square values of 38.08 and 9.76 respectively with p-value smaller than a 0.05 level of significance. The removal of average monthly income from the model did not significantly affect the predictive power of the model because its significance as predictor was well over the level of significance of 0.05 (chi-square = 0.233, p-value = 0.629).

In addition, a test of full model with the five predictors, which were age, level of education, number of dependents, average monthly income and the number of years of being single-parents, showed that the model was statistically significant (chi-square value = 58.32, p-value = 0.00). This result indicates the predictors as a set reliably distinguished between those who were willing to remain single-parents and those who were not, making the model to be a very good predictor of willingness to be a single-parent.

The variance in willingness to remain single-parents accounted for was low since Nagelkerke R square recorded was 0.261, indicating 26 percent of shared variance between willingness and the set of predictors. The Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test which compared observed number of cases for the two categories of willingness to remain single-parent, using all the predictors in the model, reported a chi-square value of 27.23 with a p-value of 0.001 which is far greater than 26 percent at significance level of 0.05. The results are indicated in Table 9.

Table 9: Full model summary of background characteristics of respondents and willingness to remain single-parents

Variables	Chi-square	df	P-value
Age	29.92	1	.000
Average monthly income	0.23	1	.629
Years of being a single- parent	38.08	1	.000
Number of dependents	9.76	1	.002
Level of education	0.01	1	.905
Overall statistics	58.32	5	.000
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	27.23	8	.001
Model Summary			
-2 Log likelihood	338.82		
Nagelkerke R Square	0.261q		

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

In order to investigate the relationship between the background characteristics of respondents and willingness to remain single-parents, the binary logistic regression analysis was conducted using the forward stepwise (likelihood ratio) method, as illustrated in Table 10. The aim was to assess prediction of single-parents who were willing to remain single and those who were not on the basis of their age, level of education, number of dependents, average monthly income and the number of years they had been single-parents.

Table 10: Logistic regression analysis of characteristics of single-parents and willingness to remain single-parents

Variables	B	Wald	P-Value	Odd	95% C.I.for	
				Ratio	EXP(B)	
				Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Constant	-3.844	28.667	.000	.021		
Age	.070	10.622	.001	1.073	1.028	1.119
Years of being single-parent	.018	22.330	.000	1.018	1.011	1.026
Average monthly income	-.001	2.484	.115	.999	.998	1.000
Number of dependents	.044	.135	.713	1.045	.826	1.323
Level of education	-.126	1.215	.270	.882	.704	1.103

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results show that the constant, age and years of being single-parents in predicting willingness to remain single-parents is very high. According to the Wald test, age and years of being a single-parent are significant as shown by their p-values which are less than 0.05. This is because the Wald test recorded a chi-square value of 10.62 with a p-value of $0.001 < 0.05$ for age and a chi-square value of 22.33 with a p-value of 0.000 for years of being a single-parent.

On the other hand, average monthly income (chi-square value = 2.484, p-value = 0.115), number of dependents (chi-square value = 0.135, p-value = 0.713) and level of education (chi-square value = 1.215, p-value = 0.270) were not reliable in predicting willingness to remain single-parents, since their respective p-values were all greater than the significance level of 0.05. In addition, the odd ratio values indicated that the odds in favour of a single-parent's willingness to remain a single-parent increase by a multiplicative factor of 1.073 for a unit change in the age of the single-parent, while the increase in odds is slightly lower (1.018) for years of being single-parents.

CHAPTER SIX

ROLE PERFORMANCE AND CHALLENGES OF MALE SINGLE-PARENTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data and the discussion of the findings in relation to the specific objectives which have been grouped into the following thematic areas:

1. perceived instrumental and expressive roles of male single-parents at home;
2. effects of the performance of both instrumental and expressive roles at home on aspects of life;
3. challenges male single-parents face in combining both instrumental and expressive roles at home ; and
4. the kind of support and interventions male single-parents received to improve the quality of life.

Perceived instrumental roles at home

The respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of roles they perceived as instrumental roles at home. Their responses are presented in Table 11. The results show that there were varying perceived male instrumental roles in the home. These ranged from breadwinner, household head to administrator and social networking.

Table 11: Perceived instrumental roles at home

Instrumental roles	Percent
Breadwinner	99.3
Household head	93.0
Supervisor	91.7
Decision maker	91.7
Leader	91.3
Disciplinarian	89.7
Financial controller	89.7
Advisor	89.3
Helping children to learn	84.3
Planner	83.7
Setting standards for achieving goals	83.0
Controller	82.3
Manager	82.0
Identifying / assessing resources	82.0
Administrator	80.0
Social networking	75.3

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fielwork (2012)

There were marked similarities in the roles perceived as male instrumental roles at home. The topmost roles that the respondents perceived as male instrumental roles at home were breadwinner (99.3%), household head (93.0%), supervisor (91.7%), decision-maker (91.7%) and leader (91.3%). Other high ranking roles were disciplinarian (89.7%), financial controller (89.7%), advisor (89.3%), helping children to learn (84.3%), planner (83.7%),

establishing standards for achieving goals (83.0%), controller (82.3%), manager (82.0), identifying and assessing resources (82.0%), administrator (80.0%) and social networking (75.3%). This implies that almost all the respondents affirmed that all the roles were instrumental roles.

The findings support the structural-functionalism theory which identified two major roles in the family set-up in terms of the role parents play (Weil, 1971). Within the traditional household structure, there is a clear division of economic and social roles and responsibilities as to who is supposed to do what. The division of labour was clearly defined in a system based on age and sex roles. The results of the study agree with those of Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995) that, usually, the man is responsible for the instrumental roles such as provision of money for food, clothing, shelter, security, discipline, control and major physical infrastructure that provides comfort and pleasure for the home. In many societies, the man's primary family role is that of economic provider. The traditional father's minimal participation in the day-to-day care of children has been well documented.

Perceived expressive roles at home

In order to ascertain the roles perceived as expressive roles at home, the respondents were asked to indicate the roles perceived as the roles of women. According to Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995), expressive roles are the wife/mother's role, including housekeeping, cleaning of the house, caring for the emotional well-being of the family, providing

nurturing and comfort. There were varying perceived expressive roles in the home, as presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Perceived expressive roles at home

Expressive roles	Percent
Child care	98.3
Cooking	97.3
Washing	95.3
Cleaning the house	93.3
Sweeping compound	92.7
Socialization of children	90.7
Nurturing	90.3
Comforter	89.7
Washing dishes	89.3
House keeping	88.7
Marketing	86.3
Time manager	85.0
Entertaining	79.3
Establishing a social network in the family	79.3
Ironing	68.7

n = 300 respondents
Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The roles that the respondents perceived as women's roles were caring for children (98.3%), cooking (97.3%), washing (95.3%), cleaning of the house (93.3%), sweeping the compound (92.7%), socialization of children

(90.7%), nurturing (90.3%), comforter (89.7%), washing dishes (89.3%), housekeeping (88.7%), marketing (86.3%), time manager (85.0%), entertaining (79.3%), establishing a social network in the family (79.3%). The lowest ranked women's role in the home was ironing (68.7%).

The majority of the respondents affirmed to all the roles outlined as women's roles. The finding agrees with the assertions of Coverman and Sheley (1986) and Levant, Slattery and Loiselle (1987) that women assume responsibility for the day-to-day care and supervision of children, by playing expressive roles, such as cooking, performing household chores, caring for the daily needs of the household and are more likely to provide children with emotional and physical comfort.

Roles respondents performed at home

The respondents were asked to indicate the type of roles they actually performed at home as male single-parents. The respondents performed the outlined roles in varying degrees, as shown in Table 13. The main roles performed by the respondents were: cooking (91.7%), gardening (91.7%), caring for small children (87.3%), supervising children's school work (87.0%), washing (82.7%), sending children to and from school (79.0%), cleaning the house (75.0%) and getting the children ready for school (75%). There is no role differentiation in the male single-parent household, and the performance of both roles brings challenges to most male single-parents. Male single-parents combine and perform both the instrumental and expressive roles at home.

Table 13: Actual roles respondents performed at home

Actual roles	Percent
Cooking	91.7
Gardening	91.7
Caring for small children	87.3
Supervising children's school work	87.0
Washing	82.0
Sending children to and from school	79.0
Cleaning the house	75.0
Getting children ready for school	75.0
Ironing	72.3
Washing dishes	71.3
Sweeping compound	71.0
Marketing	34.0
n = 300 respondents	

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results of the study indicate that the respondents performed the roles, irrespective of their status as instrumental or expressive roles. This is in line with Smith and Apicelli's (1982) assertion that, in male single-parent households, only the male parent has custody of the children and bears the burden of performing multiple roles. He accomplishes many of the same tasks alone that two-parent families face together.

In their study of 137 male single-parents, Dizard and Gadlin (1990) reported that single-parents often face the challenges of child rearing, maintaining a home, establishing a supportive social life and working full-time

with little assistance from other adults. Because of these many responsibilities, single parents often feel overwhelmed. Time management is usually a major problem. Single-parents sometimes feel socially isolated in the couples-oriented society. Because some people still consider single-parenting a non-traditional form of childrearing, single-parents sometimes experience discrimination.

Single-parents usually perform the same tasks and duties as two parents. This can be a difficult load, especially during the first two years. Davidson (2004) asserted that parenthood is challenging under the best of conditions. With one parent, the challenges are multiplied: economic, emotional, mental, social and physical challenges are enormous. Grief (1995) has reiterated that when there is only one parent household, all of the family responsibility lies on the person's shoulders. Cleaning the house, cooking meals, keeping up the yard, paying the bills, keeping an eye on the children, and several others, are responsibilities of the single parent. These combined responsibilities make single parenting very stressful.

Effects of performance of instrumental and expressive roles on aspects of life

The major aspects of life which were considered to be affecting the survival of male single-parent families were next examined. The results in Table 14 indicate that the most affected aspects of life were: relationship with children (79.7%); career (60.7%); finances (59.3%); social life (58.0%); leisure (57.3%); and meeting basic needs (50.7%). These aspects of life are fundamental to family survival, as observed by Rice (1999). Similarly, other

aspects of life such as housework and self-improvement have been affected respectively in 46.0 and 38.7 percent of respondents.

Table 14: Effects of performance of instrumental and expressive roles on aspects of life of respondents

Aspect of life	Percent
Relationship with children	79.7
Career	60.7
Finances	59.3
Social life	58.0
Leisure	57.3
Meeting basic needs	50.7
Housework	46.0
Self-improvement	38.7
n = 300 respondents	

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results of the study indicate that the performance of the roles had adversely affected the relationship with children of 79.7 percent of the respondents. As observed by Wilson (1988), single-parents' attitudes affect their children. Children observe and imitate behaviours and attitudes of their parents. Single-parents who constantly complain and make negative statements should seek counselling rather than risk possible emotional harm to their children. Wilson indicated that single-parents should provide positive

role models for their children by demonstrating effective parenting skills such as:

1. enforcing fair household rules and being an effective listener;
2. showing an interest in each child and the things each child likes;
3. maintaining healthy privacy boundaries;
4. demonstrating good mental and physical health habits;
5. maintaining social contacts outside the home; and
6. conveying a confident attitude.

The relationship between the father and his children may be influenced by the emotional needs of the father. Grief and Demaris (1990) have reiterated that the father may have the need to be liked, or feel the need to be rigid and controlling in order to prove family members, friends and peers that he can manage.

Career, as an aspect of life, has been adversely affected in 60.7 percent of the respondents. Some respondents reported that their work performance (output) is often criticised. This means that employment can have an impact on male single-parents and their concept of self-worth. Byer et al. (1999) have contended that parenthood should be compatible with career goals. Some careers require extensive time away from home, and a male single-parent might not be able to give a child the time and attention needed.

A study done by Dizard and Gadlin (1990) revealed that single-parents often face the challenges of child rearing, maintaining a home, establishing a supportive social life and working full-time with little assistance from other adults. Because of these many responsibilities, single parents often feel overwhelmed. If male single-parents place significance upon being a

breadwinner, then they may experience a dilemma of managing work or a career and caring for their children. This is more of a problem for men who place high values upon being a breadwinner, and when their perceptions of self-worth are based on this. A study done by Wilson (1988) revealed that many single-parents viewed their work as an important source of self-affirmation and self-fulfilment. Thus, for those who are unable to find supportive work and environments that are sensitive to their needs as male single-parents, the likelihood of a negative impact on their perceptions of self-worth is increased.

Conversely, the financial aspect of life had been affected adversely in 59.3 percent of the respondents. The respondents indicated they spent all their money so they could not save much. There were doctor's bills to pay and baby food to buy. Babies require a lot of special baby furniture and equipment, such as cribs and car seats. They also outgrow their clothing very quickly. Doherty (1991) has contended that paying the bills is a major concern for most single-parents. Byer et al. (1999) have indicated that single-parent families are at higher risk of poverty than couple families because raising children alone is expensive. They posit that income must be adequately steady so as to provide a secure home for a child. They, therefore, contend that careful consideration must be given to the financial aspects of parenting.

Norton and Glick (1986) have stated that most single-parents may have the most difficulty "making ends meet", especially those who lack a formal education, or have few job skills or no work history. They reiterate that financial instability can lead to family instability. They, however, contend that, though male single-parents may usually not suffer poverty to the same extent

as do female single-parents, financial pressure is still one of the most common complaints by the respondents. Most may have a larger income than their female counterparts but it may not be as large an income as that of both married couples pooling their income together.

The social aspect of life had adversely been affected in 58 percent of the respondents. The respondents reported that they did not get time to spend with their peers to enjoy some form of leisure. This is consistent with Wilson's (1988) assertion that men who have been single-parents often talk of feeling socially isolated and cut off from peers. Wilson has observed that friendship patterns and leisure activities change for many male single-parents and have isolating consequences. In this study, the respondents' status as single-parents had affected the quality of their relationships with friends.

However, Wilson (1988) indicated that a supportive social network can improve single-parents' self-image. When single-parents feel good about themselves, they do better at home and at work, which, in turn, ultimately benefits the children. Some are not able to develop meaningful relationships because of their many roles and responsibilities. However, Rice (1999) observed that dating, friendship and other forms of social contact can help male single-parents meet their personal needs. He, then, advises that single-parents who wish to make social contacts and be part of a social network may wish to contact Parent Without Partners (PWP), if it is available.

Leisure is an important aspect of life. The result of the study shows that leisure had been adversely affected in 57.3 percent of the respondents. Many mental health professionals advise single-parents to set aside some personal time for recreation and solitude, without children. Most single-

parents are constantly tending to the needs of others, putting their personal needs on hold. Such selflessness is admirable but can be unhealthy for single-parents and their children. Nearly everyone needs a break from routine stresses of everyday life. Single-parents, who take “time out” for themselves, even just a few minutes a day, report that they are able to approach their roles and responsibilities with renewed energy (Wilson, 1988).

Basic needs are fundamental for the survival of family members. These include food, clothing, education, health care, security, shelter, clean and safety environment, love and affection. Families differ, and the functions-purposes, responsibilities for sustaining health and cohesion, and expected activities, served by their lifestyles, are diverse. Different parents at different places provide different things for children. However, all children everywhere need some basic things without which they cannot grow and develop fully. Society expects all parents to provide these basic needs for their children. Some parents make the effort and provide them, while others, for various reasons, are not able to provide them.

Families provide the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing, care and protect the young from harm by outsiders. The family also provides the physical closeness and enduring interaction needed to develop intimacy and the sense of being emotionally close to people. Living units are most often originated for the purpose of love and companionship. Physiological needs and their accompanying functions provide motivation and framework for continued decision-making and managing the family (Paolucci et al., 1977).

In this study, the ability to provide basic needs had been affected in 50.7 percent of the respondents. The respondents, who claimed they could not

meet their children's basic needs, stated that they could not afford to provide such needs because they were not in gainful employment. Some also indicated that they were expecting too much for themselves because of the higher standards they had set for themselves.

Gross et al. (1980) contends that families are systems where love, respect, and responsibility are shared and taught. Families are nurturing and humanizing systems where resources are drawn from the environment and transformed into physical nourishment for the well being of members. Families provide opportunities and guidance in personal growth and development over time, helping members to achieve identity and self-definition. Families also provide environments where companionship, commitment, emotional support, mutual interaction, and shared interests may be explored. This they do, by providing a place where rest and rejuvenation can take place and where individualism, as well as sharing, is possible. According to Rice (1999), for one reason or the other, some parents fail to meet their children's basic needs. These include: ignorance, poverty, and child abuse and or not having time due to other responsibilities.

Housework is an aspect of life that demands time and attention. However, the results of the study show that the performance of the roles had adversely affected the housework of 46 percent of the respondents. The respondents reported that were generally less organized when performing household activities than two-parent families; and complained about a chaotic lifestyle. They indicated they had to attempt to accomplish many of the same tasks alone that two-parent families face together. The results of the study confirm Stacey's (1990) observation that male single parents face practical

problems. Stacey has provided the following list as the commonest practical problems faced by single parents: adjusting to job requirements; balancing time between home and work; balancing the cheque book; coordinating transport needs; coordinating visits with other family members and friends; finding personal time; helping the children with homework; monitoring each child's activity; planning; preparing meals; and scheduling bedtime routines.

Self-improvement, as an aspect of life, includes measures single-parents take to improve themselves in terms of education and training. The results of the study show that self-improvement had affected 38.7 percent of the respondents' opportunities for education and training. Some of the respondents intimated that they had to postpone further studies because their children were young. Others said they had divided attention and could not focus on their studies.

The results of the study agree with Hanson's (1986) assertion that, sometimes, unplanned babies or single-parenthood may cause their fathers to drop out of school in order to earn a living to support the child. These men may be able to return to their education later, but this usually means a double burden of work and study. Money problems may then become a life-long concern. Their responsibilities make them different from their carefree peers. They often feel alone and confused in their role in life. Single-parents have special needs, especially for support and education that will help them succeed as parents and heads of households. Research has indicated that single-parent families may be healthy or unhealthy, depending on the total situation (Grief, 1986).

Challenges male single-parents face in combining roles in the home

In today's society, male single-parents have their share of daily struggles and long-term disadvantages, as asserted by Navarro (2008). Grief (1986) has also reiterated that when there is only one-parent household, all of the family responsibility lies on the person's shoulders. Male single-parents tend to become totally dedicated and committed to the children. However, there are many challenges they go through while bringing up children to achieve a good quality of life. Some even fail to achieve the type of quality of life they expected.

The challenges faced by male single-parents in combining the instrumental and expressive roles in the home are illustrated in Table 15. The result of the study depict that male single-parents face many challenges with varying degrees. The results show that the respondents were challenged with many such issues as: time constraints (73.7%); fatigue/tiredness (72.7%); loneliness (68.7%); constant stress and strain (60.7%); late meals for the family (59.3%); financial constraints (54.0%); no leisure (52.0%); lateness to work (51.0%), and neglect of some aspects of housework (49.0%).

The respondents reported further that they had to juggle all activities at home. Activities, such as cleaning the house, cooking meals, keeping up the yard, paying the bills, keeping eye on the children especially when they are kids and all of the other parental responsibilities, are the sole responsibility of one parent which made it very stressful. The findings of the study agree with Davidson's (2004) assertion that parenthood is challenging under the best of conditions. With one parent, the challenges are multiplied; the economic, emotional, mental, social and physical challenges are enormous.

Table 15: Challenges respondents face as male-single-parents

Challenges	Percent
Time constraints	73.7
Fatigue/ tiredness	72.7
Loneliness	68.7
Constant strain and stress	60.7
Late meals for the family	59.3
Financial constraints	54.0
No leisure	52.0
Lateness to work	51.0
Aspects of housework are neglected	49.0
Inability to supervise school work	40.0
Inability to cater for school needs	31.3
Children are often late to school	29.3
Poor childcare and support	29.0
Poor performance at workplace	23.0

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Smith and Apicelli (1982) had said that the double work load makes male single-parents tired most of the time, with some experiencing constant strain and stress. They scarcely find time to discuss family issues and matters of mutual concern. It also affects the relationships with their children since

they may not be able to give them enough attention and fatherly love. This could lead to conflict between male single-parents and their children.

Typically, most male single-parents are concerned about not spending enough time with their children. If the children are of preschool age, male single-parents are faced with the same dilemma as are female single-parents who must work out of finding adequate child care support or services. Even if the man can afford houshelp and child care, he experiences a profound change in the daily maintenance and care and that of his children. Housework also suffers when there is no househelp. Some family meals may always be late or they even have to depend on food prepared at sometimes unhygienic places which put the family's health at risk. Cleaning of the house and its environment may not be properly done.

Sasse (1994) has noted that, with the two responsibilities or roles, that are being a home maker and a worker at the same time, can be very stressful because there is great demand on the male single-parent's energy and time. Male single-parents undergo considerable interpersonal stress as they take on the responsibilities of raising their children. Marital separation often gives rise to feelings of anger, loss, loneliness, failure and lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Male single-parents are under additional interpersonal pressure to prove their competency as parents. Part of their stress arises because they are often forced to change their circle of friends and to build their social life.

Effects of the challenges on respondents as male single-parents

In order to buttress the point on challenges the male single-parents faced and to ascertain the effects of the challenges on themselves and their

dependents, the researcher went further to solicit information on the effects of the challenges on themselves and their dependents. The results in Table 16 show that the effects of the challenges faced by the male single-parents were: indebtedness (32.3%); poor work output (27.0%); poor nutrition (24.3%); anxiety (24.0%); indiscipline and truancy among children (24.0%); fear (22.3%); social isolation (21.7%), poor health (20.0%); and child delinquency (17.3%).

Table 16: Effects of challenges respondents face as male single-parents

Effect of challenges	Percent
Indebtedness	32.3
Poor work output	27.0
Poor nutrition	24.3
Anxiety	24.0
Indiscipline and truancy among children	24.0
Fear	22.3
Social isolation	21.7
Poor health	20.0
Child delinquency	17.3

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results of the study show that the challenges generally had minimal effect on the respondents. Most of the respondents reported that they did not notice much negative effect(s) of the challenges on themselves and their dependents. They reported that they employed different coping strategies

in the performance of their multiple roles in order to cope with these challenges. They also reported that they followed suggested ways to make the process of single-parenting easier, less stressful, more efficient, and more effective. This is consistent with the results of the study done by Stacey (1990), which highlighted the coping strategies for male single-parents. These include:

1. allow children to help make family decisions, and approach single-parenting with a positive attitude;
2. assign children age-appropriate tasks and establish a household routine and be sensitive to each child's needs;
3. avoid being socially isolated, plan activities outside the home and maintain a social network;
4. identify reliable childcare services;
5. communicate openly and honestly with the children;
6. determine whether you can afford further education or training;
7. avoid alcohol or drug abuse, develop self-confidence and control your temper and set a good example for the children through your own behaviour;
8. do not expect a child to fill the absent parent's shoes and do not say bad things about the absent parent;
9. establish financial security, make and follow a budget;
10. exercise regularly, eat properly and get plenty of rest;
12. practise consistent parenting skills and have confidence in your parenting skills;
13. help the children feel secure by expressing your love and commitment;

14. use check lists to organize activities;
15. manage time wisely, prioritize tasks and set aside personal time to relax and socialize;
16. spend quality time and provide personal space for each member; and
17. seek a satisfying job and seek financial and professional help when needed.

Sources of support and interventions for male single-parents

In an attempt to ascertain the sources of support received by male single-parents, the respondents were provided with items for selection to indicate the sources of support and interventions they received as male single-parents. The main sources of support for respondents in the study were: relatives (52.3), friends (51.0), and neighbours (45.7). The respondents indicated that the support received from the other sources were insignificant, as illustrated in Table 17.

The results of the study indicated that the respondents received the main form of support from relatives, friends and neighbours. The respondents reported that the support received was in the form of occasional visits from friends and neighbours, which gave them emotional and social support. For example, they indicated that their children often played with others in the neighbourhood.

The respondents, however, reported that the support received from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the church, social groups, government agencies, the District Assembly and the Department of Social Welfare was minimal. The findings support the suggestions made by a GNA

report (2009) that single-parenthood can be successful in cases where there is support from family, friends and neighbours, especially in times of need. A study done by Rice (1999) revealed that single-parents who received the support of family and friends made their lives easier and contributed to their children's emotional well-being.

Table 17: Sources of support received by respondents

Sources	Percent
Relatives	52.3
Friends	51.0
Neighbours	45.7
Church	25.0
Non-governmental Organisations	10.0
Department of Social Welfare	7.3
Social groups	7.0
Government agencies	4.0
District Assembly	3.3

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

With regard to the kinds of intervention that male single-parents received from governmental and non-governmental agencies and other identified social welfare services, the respondents reported an overwhelming lack of support. The sources of intervention received by respondents were: Children and youth services (9.3); Single-parent network (6.0); Parents without Partners (4.0); District Assembly (4.0); National Bar Association

(3.3); Local agencies and professionals (3.3); National agencies (2.7); and mental healthcare centre (2.0). The interventions respondents received from these sources were very negligible, as presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Sources of intervention for male single-parents

Sources	Percent
Children and youth services	9.3
Single-parent network	6.0
Parents without partners	4.0
District Assembly	4.0
Local agencies and professionals	3.3
National Bar Association	3.3
National agencies	2.7
Mental healthcare centre	2.0
n = 300 respondents	

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The findings compare with other study revelations concerned with support and intervention for male single-parents. For example, Hanson (1986) has reiterated that the categories of people who have benefited from interventions and human resource developmental programmes do not include male single-parents. The United States Census Bureau (2007) reported that 31 percent of all single mothers' received public assistance and only six percent of fathers received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Also in Ghana, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs provided some form of intervention for female single-parents through the Women's Development

Fund between the years 2002-2008. No mention was made of male single-parents as to whether they received or did not receive funding.

Greg (1994) also noted that groups for women provide them with opportunity for support, role models and solace. However, unlike female single-parents groups which are more widely supported by agencies, there appears to be a lack of similar support for male single-parents. Regrettably, there is hardly any literature to support whether male single-parents received some form of public assistance.

However, Hanson (1988) has observed that, generally, single-parents have special needs, especially for support and education that will help them succeed as parents and heads of households. To make male single-parents more productive and effective, Stacey (1990) has provided a list of agencies single-parents can contact for advice or assistance. These include: the Bar Association, Mental Health Centre, Children and Youth Services, and Parent Without Partners.

The challenges that male single-parents encounter are enoumous. However, with appropriate managerial strategies male single-parent families could make the best of their situation and improve the quality of their lives. Male single-parent families may also benefit from support and intervention programmes to make the process of single-parenting easier, less stressful, more efficient, and more effective to attain the well-being of families and, ultimately, improve the quality of life.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERCEPTION OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data and the discussion of the findings in relation to male single-parents' perception of indicators of quality of life and achievement of indications of quality of life. It also deliberates on managerial strategies used by respondents in performing instrumental and expressive roles to cope successfully as male single-parents.

Perceived indicators of quality of life

Individuals and families perceive the concept of quality of life in a wide variety of ways. Quality of life is both the output of the life management system and a standard for measuring the satisfaction people gain from their lifestyles. It involves the use of resources and decision-making about how much of resources to be used.

The United States Federal Environmental Protection Agency (1973) defines quality of life as the state of well-being of people as individuals or groups as well as the characteristics of the environment in which people live. The state of well-being also includes people's feelings of happiness and satisfaction with their material and non-material accomplishments and the surroundings of their community.

The United States Census Department (2007) reported that the quality of life surveys are conducted, and these biennial surveys are conducted in

partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and measure residents' perceptions of health and well-being, their community crime and safety, economic well-being, education, work, environment, culture and identity. In this wise, indicators of quality of life include: health, safety, housing, social connectedness, civil and political rights, economic standard of living, economic development, natural and built environment (The United States Census Department, 2007).

Against this background, the quality of life could be said to be the achievement of what is desired for life over time based on thoughtful processes and judicious use of resources in terms of level of education attained, housing arrangements and environments, quality and quantity of household items possession (Rice & Tucker, 1986). The quality of life depends on how people are able to manipulate available resources in their environment to their advantage. The satisfaction people derive from the use of resources and the lifestyles they lead determine the quality of life.

Table 19 illustrates the average ratings of the level of agreement of important factors male single-parents perceived as indicators of the quality of life. The major factors were: family survival (96.0%), lifestyle improved (96.0%), satisfactory living standards (95.4%), situations changed (91.3%), living standards improved (91.3%), problem solved (82.7%), happy home (79.7%). Others were: adequate financial resources (78.6%); aspirations met (74.7%); household environment conditions (74.7%); lifegoals achieved (73.4%); improved healthcare (73.0%); the present attainment in life (66.0%); basic needs met (61.4%); and effective management of resources (61.4%).

Table 19: Percentage ratings of perceived indicators of the quality of life

Perceived indicators	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Family survival	0.0	4.0	48.0	48.0
Lifestyle improved	0.0	4.0	36.7	59.3
Satisfactory living standards	1.3	3.3	46.7	48.7
Situations changed	6.0	2.7	46.0	45.3
Living standards improved	8.0	14.7	46.0	45.3
Problems solved	5.3	12.0	30.0	52.7
Happy home	5.3	15.0	45.0	34.7
Basic needs met	9.3	29.3	28.7	32.7
Aspirations met	11.3	14.0	22.7	52.0
Household environment conditions	8.0	17.3	44.7	30.0
Improved healthcare	9.0	18.0	41.7	31.3
Lifegoals achieved	8.7	18.0	38.7	34.7
Adequacy of financial resources	9.3	12.0	16.3	62.3
Present attainment in life (level)	6.7	27.3	32.0	34.0
Effective management of resources	9.3	29.3	28.7	32.7

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results of the study indicate that the majority (70%) of the respondents perceived all the factors as important indicators of the quality of life. The results confirm Axinn et al's. (1977) assertion that, generally, the quality of life may be measured by: people's consumption patterns; standard of living; goal attainment, possessions that individuals and families have;

peoples' income over time; people's aspirations; level of consumption; lifestyle; and present attainment.

The result is also in line with those of Rice and Tucker's (1986) assertion that the quality of life has a lot to do with what people have, the places they live, their physical, social, economic, environmental, emotional and psychological conditions and characteristics. It is associated with how these are manipulated for benefits at a particular time. It also has to do with feelings of happiness and satisfaction derived from material and non-material accomplishments.

Thus, the quality of life can be said to be a function of the management skills of which decision-making is core for resources manipulation. The resultant effect is the derivation of maximum or less satisfaction (quality of life). This confirms Stephens' (1985) statement that management procedures contribute significantly to the satisfaction derived from the use of resources and that management procedures are second to income in predicting satisfaction which is a component of quality of life.

However, some of the respondents (30%) of the present study disagreed that the factors were important indicators of the quality of life. These variances agree with the assertion made by Rice and Tucker (1986) that defining the quality of life is often difficult because determining it is based on broad concepts, which are not easy to measure.

Latent factors for perceived indicators of quality of life

To further ascertain the appropriate latent factors for perceived quality of life, the 15 items on indicators of quality of life were subjected to principal

component (PC) with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. The factors were confirmed based on the content of the items with factor loadings exceeding .50, since the greater the loading, the higher the variable's status as a pure measure of the factor.

On the part of correlation among the items, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used. From Table 20, the KMO of 0.768 and a Bartlett's Test of Sphericity being statistically significant at 0.05 support the factorability of the data set. Therefore, factor analysis is appropriate for extracting the latent factors for indicators of quality of life.

Table 20: KMO and Bartlett's test for perceived quality of life

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.768
Bartlett's Test of	Approx. Chi-Square	3971.565
Sphericity	Df	105
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

In assessing the suitability of the data for factor analysis, two main issues of concern were the sample size and the strength of the relationship among the variables or items for indicators of quality of life. Generally, it is recommended that the larger the sample, the more reliable is the correlation coefficient among the variables. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) reviewed this issue and recommended that a sample size of at least 300 would be adequate. Since the sample size for this study is 300, the issue of sample size was not a problem.

After assessing the factorability of the data on indicators of the quality of life, a decision had to be made concerning the number of factors to extract. However, Kaiser's criterion or Eigenvalue rule was then used to decide on the number of factors to extract. Two factors, which explain 60.68 percent of the variation of the perceived quality of life with greater Eigen values, were to be extracted to represent the indicators of the quality of life. Two latent factors were then extracted to represent the perceived quality of life.

The first factor was named lifestyle patterns, while the second was named improved lifestyle. The first factor consisted of male single-parents' aspirations met, basic needs met, conditions of household environment, effective resource management, situations changed, improved healthcare, problems solved and lifestyles changed. They are the factors that pertain to family living and social status. The second factors consisted of family survival, adequate financial resources, satisfactory living standards, problems solved, happy home and present attainment in life. They are factors that have to do with attainment and satisfaction with life (Table 21).

Table 21: Rotated component matrix

Factors	Component		Communalities
	1	2	
<u>Lifestyle partterns</u>			
Aspirations met	.842		.730
Basic needs met	.807		.689
Condition of household environment	.805		.749
Effective resource managemewnt	.737		.574
Situations changed	.757		.574
Improved healthcare	.697		.565
Problems solved	.643		.536
Lifestyles changed	.567		.349
<u>Improved lifestyle</u>			
Family survival		.762	.651
Adequate financial resources		.879	.786
Satisfactory living standards		.729	.083
Problems solved		.889	.801
Happy home		.820	.656
Present attainment in life		.751	.649

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Male single-parents' achievement of the indicators of quality of life

To ascertain the respondents' acheivement of the indicators of quality of life, they were asked to rate the level of achievement of the indicators of quality of life as very high, high, low and very low to statements on a four-

point likert type scale to indicate their achievement of the indicators of quality of life. The results are shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Respondents' ratings of the achieved indicators of the quality of life

life	(In Percentages)			
	Ratings of achievement of quality of life			
Indicators of the quality of life	Very high	High	Low	Very low
Aspirations met	67.0	33.0	0.0	0.0
Basic needs met	63.7	33.7	1.3	2.7
Living standards improved	65.0	32.0	1.3	1.3
Life goals achieved	65.7	31.7	1.3	1.3
Adequate financial resources	31.7	64.3	3.3	0.7
Problems solved	61.0	33.7	5.3	0.0
Improved health care	36.0	58.0	3.0	3.0
Effective resource management	33.0	60.3	4.0	2.7
Happy home	33.3	56.7	4.3	5.7
Family survival	59.0	30.0	7.0	4.0
Lifestyle improved	51.7	34.0	11.3	4.0
Satisfactory living standard	31.0	47.7	17.3	12.0
Situations changed/improved	23.7	45.0	24.7	12.0
Household environment conditions improved	25.0	38.3	3.0	3.0

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The results in Table 22 show that the major indicators of quality of life were: aspirations met (100%); basic needs met (97.4%); life goals achieved (97.4%); living standards improved (97.0%); adequacy of financial resources (96.0%); problems solved (94.7%); improved health care (94.0%); effective use of resources (93.3%); happy home (90.0%); family survival (89.0%); lifestyle improved (85.7%); satisfactory living standard (78.7%); situations improved (68.7%); and household environment conditions improved (63.3%).

The results indicate that all the respondents rated aspirations met as a very high indicator of quality of life. The respondents reported that an aspiration met is the strongest indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. To indicate that their aspirations were met, the respondents gave answers such as improved children's upbringing; disciplined children; children now very helpful and respectful; and children are coping well and feeling normal. This confirms Paolucci et al's. (1977) explanation of aspiration as a means of achieving a means, a goal or objective desired. People's aspirations are the freedom and choices to fulfil their needs, desires and wants.

Basic needs met was rated 97.4 percent as a very high indicator of quality of life by the respondents. They reported that they were in a position to provide the basic needs of their families. The respondents reported that they had access to many goods and services, food, clothing and other necessities of life. Family members require certain things, such as good food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and transport, among others. These are the basic needs that families must provide for their survival. In order to satisfy these needs, the family uses what it has, such as money, energy, time, abilities and skills of members.

Living standards are the ease by which people, living at a point in time or place, are able to satisfy their needs and wants (Rice & Tucker, 1986). Living standard improved was highly rated (97.0%) as an indicator of the attainment of the quality of life by the respondents. They reported that they had achieved decent standards of living which included: adequate nutrition, adequate living arrangements, improved health care, education, and protection against environmental hazards. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) have reiterated that setting standards for the achievement of goals is very important because standards determine the level or degree at which goals could be achieved. Values, needs, knowledge, skills and availability of resources are some of the factors that influence the setting and achievement of standards. Goode (2002) is in agreement and states that the individual needs command over resources in the form of money, possessions, knowledge, living space, mental and physical energy, social relations and security, among others, through which he can control and consciously direct his living conditions.

Life goals achieved was also rated very high (97%) as an indicator of the quality of life. The respondents reported that a matching of personal goals and needs was vital for a positive evaluation of well-being. They indicated that they were satisfied with their present level of living and what they had achieved for themselves and their family. The setting of goals may be the single most important activity that may be carried out towards the attainment of the quality of life desired. This is because it is difficult to achieve anything meaningful without a target or goal. Goals set direct affairs and guide the courses of action.

The adequacy of financial resources was rated 96 percent as a strong indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. The respondents indicated they were able to meet their financial needs adequately. Grief (1985) indicated that a male single-parent household may usually have more financial resources than a female single-parent. The reason is that men tend to work longer hours and generate a higher income than women, so the financial burden of male single-parents may be significantly less than other single-parents. This confirms Norton and Glick's (1986) assertion that male single-parents usually do not suffer poverty to the same extent as do female single-parents, even though financial pressure is still one of the most common complaints of some male single-parents. Most have a larger income than do their female counterparts but still not as large an income as that of both couple.

Problems solved was rated highly (94.7%) as a strong indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. The respondents stated that problem solving was a managerial tool and, when used effectively, enhanced quality family living. The results of the present study agree with Rice and Tucker's (1996) assertion that management becomes very effective and efficient when problems are identified and analyzed to determine whether resources, including information, capacity, knowledge, skills, money, energy and time, are available, harnessed and used.

Additionally, improved healthcare was rated high (94.0%) as a strong indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. The concept of health in general has been understood very broadly to include not only physical health but also psychological well-being. For example, the World Health

Organisation (1946) has defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Effective resource management was rated 93.3 percent as a strong indicator of the achievement of the quality of life. The respondents indicated that the management of resources effectively enabled them to meet demands in terms of goals, needs, and satisfactory standards. In working towards the achievement of a goal, it is important to identify current resources (both human and non-human) that may be needed. Rice and Tucker (1986) define resources as assets used to accomplish goals. Family resources are what the family has or can create to get what it wants or needs. They provide the means to satisfy the family system's purposes or demands. Resources vary in kind and in their potential for meeting the complex and unique needs and interests of individuals and families.

A happy home was highly rated (90%) as a strong indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. A growing body of evidence suggests that happiness is experienced along a good-bad continuum and can be measured through a single question. In this study, the respondents reported that home life was lively and that the children were in the right frame of mind and enjoyed home life.

The result confirms those of Davidson's (2004) study which indicates that happiness is best thought of as complementing other measures of well-being, not as a sole measure. It is a mental process or emotional state of well-being, characterized by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happiness may be the label for a family of related emotional states, such as joy, amusement, satisfaction, gratification, euphoria

and triumph (Davidson, 2004). Family experts argue that a happy two-parent home is the ideal. However, many studies have shown that children are better off in a happy single-parent home than in an unhappy two-parent home.

Family survival was rated 89 percent as an indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. The respondents indicated that family survival presupposed that the family was in equilibrium and, hence, functioning properly. They also reported that family goals were met as to the resources available and conformed to satisfactory standards. To buttress this point of family survival, some respondents reported that they confidently and effectively discharged their duties at home. Others indicated that their living conditions had improved and their families were doing well in many situations at home and that home was a better place to live.

Improved lifestyle was rated 85.7 percent as an indicator for the achievement of the quality of life. Responses provided by the respondents to buttress this point were: the children were aware of the situation that their mother was not around; children tried to cooperate to run the home effectively; and single-parenthood was a choice. Others included: it looks like getting married was a mistake; marriage had never been a desire; solitude was more enjoyable; we felt secured without a disgruntled woman; and living this way ensured inward happiness. These responses attest to the fact that improved lifestyle is a good indicator of well-being of families, a view shared by Rice and Tucker (1986).

The quality of life is both the output of the life management system and a standard for measuring the satisfaction people gain from their lifestyles. There are some indications of the increasing diversity of lifestyles. The results

agree with Macklin's (1981) indication that this is a time of rapid changes in the pattern of family life. Pluralism in lifestyles is one of the significant trends in family form in recent times. The United States Bureau of the Census (1997) indicates that, at any given point in time, the majority of households in the United States do not represent traditional nuclear families. The census report indicated there has been a slow but steady increase in the percentages of persons residing in single-parent or dual career nuclear families, as well as an increase in those living alone or in households comprised of non-related individuals. Tracing the labour force activities of family members from 1950 to 1993, Waldman (1985) predicts that today's schoolage and preschool children are more likely to be living with one parent or a stepparent.

Improved or changed family life situation was rated 68.7 percent as an indicator of the attainment of the quality of life. Some of the respondents indicated that they were better off without their spouses. The result agrees with those of Dizard and Gadlin's (1990) observation that male single-parents, who attained their status by choice are willing to remain as such. This also confirms the results of a study done by Rice (1999) which has revealed that, with regard to the household structure, it is now evident that a new type of single-headed household has emerged and formed both from necessity and by choice.

The findings had generally revealed that the majority (90%) of the indicators of the attainment of the quality of life were rated very highly. This confirms Grief's (1985) assertion that single-parents who have high self-confidence are usually better able to perform their duties and responsibilities successfully, while those with low self-confidence tend to function less

effectively. Grief then concludes that developing and maintaining a high level of self-confidence can improve the lives of single- parents and their children.

The evidence emerging from this study further suggests that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with their life-styles. They claimed to be stable, rather rational, and established men with a strong motivation to be with their children. Most felt comfortable and competent as single parents.

It could therefore, be inferred that the quality of life is due to the excellence of management skills and behaviours exhibited or practised which, in turn, is based on the brilliance of decisions made in relation to the use of resources in everyday living. Thus, the quality of life can be said to be a function of the management skills of which decision-making is the core and resource manipulations, and the resultant effect is the derivation of maximum or less satisfaction. This confirms Stephens' (1985) assertion that management procedures contribute significantly to the satisfaction derived from the use of resources and that management procedures are second to income in predicting satisfaction which is a component of the quality of life.

Correlation among the indicators of the quality of life

To examine the correlation among the indicators of the quality of life, Pearson's correlation was conducted to assess the correlation among the indicators at the 0.05 level of significance. Table 23 presents the Pearson's correlation among the indicators of the quality of life.

The findings indicate that there were highly significant correlations among improved healthcare, problems solved, basic needs met, life goals achieved, effective use of resources, and happy home. Similarly, there was a

highly significant correlation among life goals achieved and problems solved, lifestyle changed and basic needs met. For example, lifestyle changed correlates positively with problems solved (0.313); basic needs met (0.348); life goals achieved (0.469); happy home (0.415); improved healthcare (0.383); at 0.01 significance level. It also has a positive correlation with effective use of resources (0.132); household environment conditions (0.188) at 0.05 significance level. It was, however, found that there was no significant correlation among household environmental conditions and life goals achieved.

From the findings, there was a highly significant correlation among the indicators. It implies that the quality of life is not achieved by only one variable and that, to achieve the quality of life, attention must be paid to all other indicators.

The indicators of quality of life which showed high correlations were further subjected to regression analysis in order to determine the actual percentage of their significance to the achievement of quality of life. These indicators were: problems solved and life goals achieved; improved healthcare and happy home; as well as happy home and life goals achieved. The regression analysis between problems solved and life goals achieved is presented in Table 24. The table showed an R - square value of (0.399), with an adjusted R -square (0.397), which indicates that 39.7 percent of the problems solved accounted for life goals achieved.

Table 23: Pearson's correlation among the indicators of quality of life

Quality of life indicators	Life style change	Problems solved	Basic needs met	Life goals achieved	Effective use of resources	Household environment conditions	Happy home	Improved health care
Life style changed								
Problems solved	0.313**							
Basic needs met	0.348**	0.493**						
Life goals achieved	0.469**	0.632**	0.516**					
Effective use of resources	0.132*	0.463**	0.404**	0.444**				
Household environment conditions	0.188*	0.312**	0.158*	0.066	0.167*			
Happy home	0.415**	0.388**	0.316**	0.509**	0.328**	0.201**		
Improved health care	0.383**	0.434**	0.349**	0.483**	0.456**	0.242**	0.692**	

**Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The F - value (198.1), which is significant at 0.000 ($P < 0.000$), shows that life goals achieved is significant to the quality of life of male single-parents. The beta value of 0.632 indicates that life goals achieved has a positive effect on the quality of life of male single-parents.

Table 24: Regression analysis between problems solved and life goals acheived

Variable	Beta	Sig t	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Sig F
Life goals acheived	0.632	14.08	0.399	0.397	198.1	0.000

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Similarly, the effect of improved healthcare on happy home as indicators of the quality of life was carried out using regression analysis. The extent of the effect obtained is shown in Table 25. As shown in the table, an adusted R-square value of 0.476 is an indication that improved healthcare can contribute to 47.6 percent of happy home among male single-parents. The F-value (237.1), which is significant at 0.000, shows that a happy home is significant to the achievement of quality of life. The beta value of 0.692 also shows that a happy home contributes significantly towards the achievement of the quality of life among male single-parents.

Table 25: Regression analysis between happy home and improved healthcare

Variable	Beta	Sig t	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Sig F
Happy home	0.692	16.53	0.478	0.476	237.1	0.000

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Further regression analysis was carried out between happy home and life goals achieved. The result indicated that life goals achieved has effect on happy home, which leads to the achievement of the quality of life. Table 26 presents the results obtained. The result indicates that the adjusted R- square value of 0.527 shows that, in male single-parent homes, life goals achieved accounted for 52.7 percent of the achievement of the quality of life. The F - value of 104.3, which is significant at 0.000 ($P < 0.000$), shows that happy home has a positive effect on the achievement of the quality of life. The beta value of 0.509 shows that happy home can be used to predict the achievement of the quality of life of male single-parents.

Table 26: Regression analysis between happy home and life goals achieved

Variable	Beta	Sig t	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Sig F
Happy home	0.509	10.21	0.259	0.257	104.3	0.000

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The quality of life is both the output of the life management system and a standard for measuring the satisfaction people gain from their lifestyles as observed by Paolucci et al. (1977). It involves the use of resources and decision-making about how much of resources to be used. The process of management, namely planning, implementing and evaluation, will have to be followed for the achievement of goals and derivation of satisfaction (quality of life). The quality of life can also be defined in terms of the experience of individuals. If a person experiences his/her life as good and desirable, it is assumed to be so. In this approach, factors, such as feelings of joy, pleasure, contentment, and life satisfaction, are paramount.

The quality of life could be said to be the achievement of what is desired for life over time based on thoughtful processes and judicious use of resources. It is thought that the quality of life depends on how people are able to manipulate the available resources in their environment to their advantage. The satisfaction people derive from the use of resources and the lifestyles they lead determine the quality of their life.

Rice and Tucker (1984) have identified certain managerial strategies for improving the quality of life. These include: starting with a refined goal-setting technique and a framework for creating and allocating resources; learning to make realistic decisions; and developing skills in clarifying values, that is, coming to grips with personal values, meshing them with those of the family, and resolving any conflicts that may exist between personal and group values.

Managerial strategies for performing instrumental roles

Managerial strategies mean any action consciously and deliberately taken by male single-parents to manage home-related activities to ensure their well being and quality of life. Managerial strategies are needed in life management for improving the quality of life. Life management means planning goals relating to the everyday living environments and establishing patterns of action and interaction with others that are directed toward a more satisfying lifestyle (Rice and Tucker, 1984).

In the Ghanaian socio-cultural context, responsibilities of the male and female as parents are enshrined in traditional gender roles. Boateng (1995), cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995), indicates that, usually, while the man is responsible for the instrumental roles, such as the provision of money for food, clothing, shelter, security, discipline and major physical infrastructure that provide comfort and pleasure for the home, the female plays expressive roles, such as cooking, performing household chores, and caring for the daily needs of the household.

To ascertain the kinds of managerial strategies respondents employed in performing instrumental roles at home, the respondents were asked to indicate various managerial strategies used. Significant among the strategies were: creating a happy home (83.7%); having open communication channels (80.7%); spending quality time with each child (78.0%); helping the children feel secure (77.3%); and setting aside personal time to relax and socialize (73.7%) as presented in Table 27.

The results indicate that the majority (83.7%) of the respondents adopted the managerial strategy of creating a happy home for the family. The

respondents reported that they made the household environment stimulating and healthy for the children. They also indicated that they were fair and firm in their parenting and nurturance and showered the children with lots of affection. Showing affection can be as simple as saying a few kind words when a child scrapes a knee or praising a drawing when a child proudly displays it.

The result is consistent with Smith and Apicelli's (1982) assertion that children need a safe, stimulating and healthy environment where they can play and explore their surroundings. Smith and Apicelli also indicate that parents are also responsible for nurturing children. To nurture means to help children learn, and it involves providing love, encouragement and attention. Children are constantly learning because the whole world is new to them. To help them learn, they need stimulation: chances to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. Parents also provide children with love, affection, and a sense of security. Children need someone to comfort them when they are hurt or upset. Nurturing involves comforting children when they are unhappy, hurt or scared. They need to know that the people who are responsible for them really care about them. McHale (1995) has also reiterated that male single-parents can still make all the difference in their children's lives by giving them lots of love. He also states that, in many families, parents and children are engaged in ongoing strategies for power and control, making family life joyless for everyone. He, therefore, concludes that, no matter the situation, the bottom-line is to create a happy home for the child or children.

Table 27: Manageial strategies for performing instrumental roles at home

Strategies	Percent
Creating a happy home	83.7
Having open communication channels	80.7
Spent quality time with each child	78.0
Helped children to feel secure	77.3
Set aside personal time to relax and socialze	73.7
Neglected aspects of housework	58.7
Having firm rules and standards	47.0
Sought professional help when needed	36.7
Made and followed a budget	34.7
Received financial support	31.3
Joined a support group	27.3
Asked for leave at work	25.7
Pre-school children taken to crèche	19.3

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

The strategy of having open communication channels was employed by 80.7% of the respondents to manage their homes. The respondents reported that they: communicated openly and honestly with the children; allowed children to help make family decisions; discussed pertinent issues with the children; allowed up-down and bottom-up channels of communication so that the children freely expressed their emotions; gave clear messages that helped the children to understand the realities of the change; helped children understand what type of behaviour was acceptable and what type was not; and

set limits to what they could and what they could not do. They emphasized that young children did not know right from wrong and, if given complete freedom, they might be confused about what to do and might be frightened.

The result of the study is consistent with Moore, Blumstein and Schwartz's (1994) assertion that any type of parenting can be constructive if it has a positive effect on children's development. Constructive parenting is characterised by warmth, inductive reasoning, clear communication and appropriate care. It tends to promote cognitive functioning, social skills, moral development and psychological adjustment in children.

The respondents spent quality time with each child (78%) as a strategy in managing their households to improve the well-being of their families. In this connection, they: scheduled bedtime routines and personal time with each child; helped children with homework and monitored each child's activity; assigned age-appropriate tasks to each child; established a household routine; were sensitive to each child's needs; helped the children feel secure; expressed their love and commitment to each child; and provided personal space for each member. The results agree with Asare and Kwafoa's (2007) indication that parenting involves being a role model for the child, teaching acceptable values and assisting the child to develop self-esteem. Parents also need to establish healthy parent-child relationship in all spheres, socially, financially, healthwise and emotionally.

To avoid being socially isolated, 73.7 percent of the respondents reported that they employed a strategy to set aside personal time to relax and socialize. The respondents reported that they sometimes watched some television programmes alone; got involved in church and community

activities; and took a break from routine stresses of everyday life. The single-parents, who took “time out” for themselves, even just a few minutes a day, reported that they were able to approach their roles and responsibilities with renewed energy. The result is in line with the suggestion by Stacey (1990) that indicated that many mental health professionals advise single-parents to set aside some personal time for recreation and solitude - without children.

However, Segall et al. (1999) have observed that single-parents often become socially isolated. Some are not able to develop meaningful relationships because of their many roles and responsibilities. They suggest that dating, friendship and other forms of social contact can help parents meet their personal needs. Single-parents who wish to make social contacts and be part of a social network may wish to contact Parent Without Partners, if it is available and single-parents networking.

Stacey (1990) has argued that it is important for single-parents to build and maintain a social support system: Experts who have studied the survivors of death and divorce emphasize the importance of building and maintaining a social support system. They sometimes refer to this support system as a social “lifeline” and consider it an important key to the emotional well-being of single-parents and their children. Single-parents who accept the support of family and friends make their lives easier and contribute to their children’s emotional well-being. A supportive social network can improve a single-parent’s self-image. When single-parents feel good about themselves, they do better at home and at work; which, in turn, ultimately benefits the children.

The respondents reported that they also adopted strategies that had emotional and psychological significance to ensure their own survival and that

of their families. These included: helped the children to feel secure (77.3%); neglected aspects of housework (58.7%); having firm rules and standards for the children (47.0%); sought professional help when needed (36.7%); made and followed a budget (34.7%); received financial support (31.3%); joined a support group (27.3%); asked for leave at work (25.7%); and pre-school children taken to crèche (19.3). The implication is that the male single-parents in the study employed various managerial strategies which are paramount in their managerial activities to ensure the well-being of their families.

The respondents reported that these managerial strategies were more critical, hence, their adoption and use. The findings agree with those of Gross et al (1980) which indicated that pressures and events within and outside the family may compete with family goals and such situations make demands on family managerial competencies. It is when management competencies and strategies are acquired and adopted in everyday living that the desired quality of life of life can be achieved. The findings of the present study support the suggestions made by a GNA (2009) report that single-parenting can be successful in cases where they received support from family, friends and neighbours, especially in times of need.

Finally, the findings support those of Byer et al. (1999), which suggested the following ways to make the process of single-parenting easier and more effective:

1. approach single-parenting with a positive attitude and set a good example for the children through your own behaviour;
2. be sensitive to each child's needs, assign the children age-appropriate tasks and allow the children to help make family decisions;

3. prioritize tasks and manage time wisely, avoid being socially isolated and set aside personal time to relax and socialize;
4. determine whether you can afford further education or training;
5. establish household routine and have confidence in parenting;
6. establish financial security, make and follow a budget and seek financial help when needed;
7. form and maintain a social network and plan activities outside;
8. practise consistent parenting skills and spend quality time with each child; and
9. provide personal space for each family member and communicate openly and honestly with the children.

Managerial strategies for performing expressive roles

In single-parent families, only one parent has custody of the children and bears the burden of multiple roles. They combine instrumental and expressive roles in the household. Respondents were asked to indicate the managerial strategies they employed in performing expressive roles at home as single-parents. Their responses are presented in Table 28.

The results of the study show that the respondents employed various strategies to perform expressive roles as male single-parents. The main strategies included: sequenced activities effectively (58.8%); older children cared for younger siblings (58.7%); and being a good mother as well (54.7%). Other minor strategies were: woke up early to do some housework (47.0); used labour saving devices (41.3%); stayed late to complete housework (36.3%); identified reliable children services (33.0%); used checklists to

organize activities (30.3%); relatives took care of children (27.3%); neglected aspects of housework and househelp took care of children (18.7%).

With regard to sequenced activities effectively, 58.8 percent of the respondents reported that they developed strategies for the implementation of plans made by organising activities, through which goals could be achieved effectively in a sequential order to make work more effective and less tiring. The respondents reported that they made and followed work plans or schedules. They also identified aspects of work that children could perform and assigned those responsibilities to them.

The findings agree with those of Deacon and Firebaugh (1988), which posited that a work plan is made at the action sequencing stage of the management process. Work plans spell out what is to be done at what time and in what manner. Work plans help in identifying activities that are necessary for the achievement of goals. They also help in identifying activities that could be sequenced or done serially and those that could be carried out concurrently. In group activities, work plans are important to determine who performs which task. These ensure effective work performance for goal attainment.

The findings revealed that 58.7 percent of the respondents solicited help from older children to take care of younger siblings. This agrees with a research finding by Stacey (1990), which indicates that trends in children's roles change in a single-parent home. He notes that children who live in single-parent homes usually accept more responsibilities for taking care of themselves. Older children may act as junior parents to younger siblings. They may help make adult decisions or try to fill the absent parent's shoes. They also may become very much attached to the custodian parent, who may be

feeling socially isolated. Parents should remember that children have age-specific needs and responsibilities. Parents should see to it that each child's behaviour is appropriate to his or her age and current stage of development.

Table 28: Managerial strategies for performing expressive roles at home

Strategies	Percent
Sequenced activities effectively	58.8
Older children cared for younger siblings	58.7
Being a good mother as well	54.7
Woke up early to do some housework	47.0
Used labour-saving devices	41.3
Planned daily activities	37.0
Stayed late to complete housework	36.3
Identified reliable child services	33.0
Used checklists to organize housework	30.3
Relatives took care of children	27.3
Neglected aspects of housework	18.7
Househelp took care of children	18.7

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2012)

Concerning the strategy of the use of labour-saving devices, 41.3 percent of the respondents employed the use of labour-saving devices as a strategy to perform household chores. They reported that, as a result of technological advancement, they could employ the use of labour-saving devices, such as blenders, rice cookers and washing machines. They also used

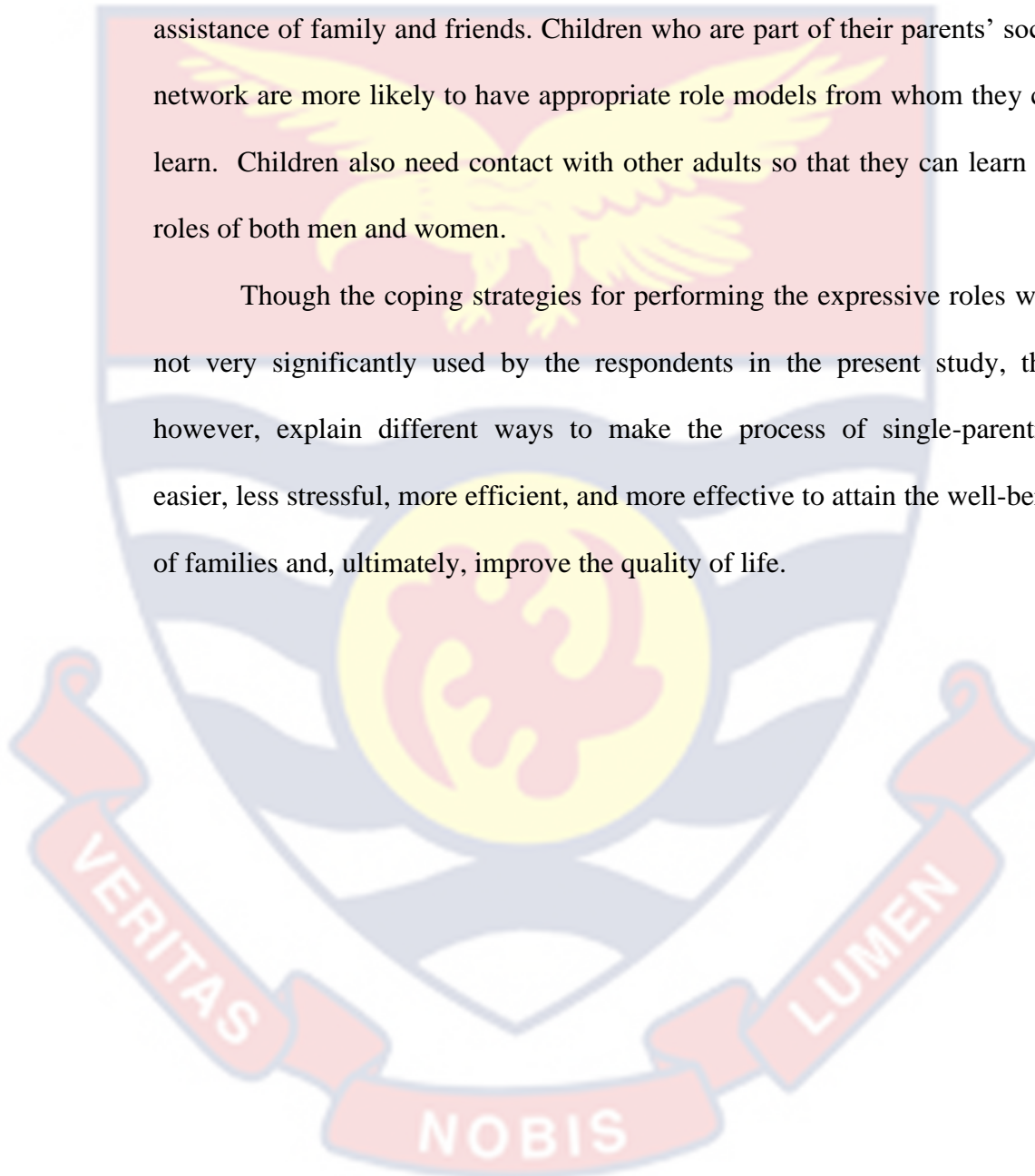
some convenience foods to save time in meal preparation. The findings of the study confirms those of Goode (2004), which revealed that the use of labour - saving devices and new improved household gadgets as well as the availability of commercial products and services contribute to lessen the time and energy required for household roles and, thereby, reduce their workloads.

Being a good mother as well was used by 54.7 percent as a managerial strategy. The respondents reported that they tried to do things mothers especially did for their children: helped the children feel secure by expressing love; spend lots of time with the children; provided attention when needed; helped the children to maintain a routine; did not say bad things about the absent mothers; had confidence in their parenting skills; and set a good example for the children through their parenting skills.

Rice (1999) has reiterated that, in the ideal situation, there are two people at home who are able and willing to meet children's needs. Normally, in traditional two-parent families, mothers and fathers split up chores and responsibilities and stick to their areas of child's life. They just cross the boundaries when the other person is not there or busy in something else. Thus, both of them miss out on some significant aspects of their children. Single-parents, on the other hand, know everything about their children and become an all-rounder. They tend to become totally dedicated and committed to their children. It may be harder for them to cope up but then they are also the 'special' parents who can do anything they want for their children and take all the decisions about how to raise them and what is good or bad for them, without having to fight it out with their partner.

However, Paolucci et al. (1997) have asserted that a single-parent cannot provide all that a child needs in the way of male and female roles. It is important for single parents to realize that, even though they may be able to raise healthy children on their own, they also may sometimes need the assistance of family and friends. Children who are part of their parents' social network are more likely to have appropriate role models from whom they can learn. Children also need contact with other adults so that they can learn the roles of both men and women.

Though the coping strategies for performing the expressive roles were not very significantly used by the respondents in the present study, they however, explain different ways to make the process of single-parenting easier, less stressful, more efficient, and more effective to attain the well-being of families and, ultimately, improve the quality of life.



CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study as well as conclusions based on the findings. It provides recommendations on how best male single-parents can employ more effective managerial strategies in order to improve their quality of life. It also presents the study's contribution to knowledge and the limitations of the study. It concludes with the areas for further study.

Summary

The study generally sought to examine the managerial strategies for improving the quality of life of male single-parents in the Central Region of Ghana. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 300 male single-parents from six districts in the region. Data was collected using questionnaire for literate respondents and interview schedule for illiterate respondents. Data were organised into percentage and frequency distribution tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between the background characteristics of the male single-parents and their willingness to remain single-parents. For the purpose of this study, the collected data was collapsed into two categories, that is, whether a male single-parent was willing to remain single or not. After assessing the factorability of the data on indicators of quality of life, Kaiser's criterion or Eigen value rule was used to decide on the number of factors to extract.

Pearson's correlation was conducted to assess the relationship among the indicators of quality of life.

Key findings of the study

Based on the results and the discussion, the major findings of the work were as follows:

1. The results indicate that most (83.7%) of the respondents were relatively young in the age cohort < 31 – 50;
2. The performance of both instrumental and expressive roles was found to have adversely affected the major fundamental aspects of the lives of the respondents. These were: parental relationship with children (79.7%); career (60.7%); finances (59.3%); social life (58.0%); leisure (57.3%); and meeting basic needs (50.7%);
3. The major challenges faced by the respondents were: time constraints (73.3%); fatigue/tiredness (72.7%); loneliness (68.7%); and constant strain and stress (60.7%);
4. The main sources of support for the respondents were from relatives (52.3%); friends (51.0%); and neighbours (45.7%). The respondents received very negligible intervention from governmental and non-governmental agencies. These were: Children and Youth service (9.3%); Parents Without Partners (6.0%); and District Assembly (4%);
5. The percentage ratings of the perceived indicators of the quality of life were: family survival (96.0%); lifestyle improved (96.0%); satisfactory living standards (95.4%); situations changed (91.3%); and living standards improved (91.3%);

6. The majority of the respondents rated the indicators of achievement of quality of life as high or very high. These included: aspirations met (100%); basic needs met (97.4%); life goals achieved (97.4%); living standards improved (97.0%); adequate financial resources (96%); problems solved (94.7%); improved healthcare (94%); effective resources management (93.3%); happy home (90%); and family survival (89%);
7. The correlation result showed that there was a significant correlation among the indicators of the quality of life at a 0, 05 level of significance. These were: life goals achieved (0.469); happy home (0.415); improved healthcare (0.383); basic needs met (0.348); and problems solved (0.313);
8. The respondents employed different managerial strategies for performing instrumental roles at home. Significant amongst them were: creating a happy home for the family (83.7%); having open communication channels with children (80.7%); spending quality time with each child (78.0%); helping the children feel secure (77.3%); and setting aside personal time to relax (73.7%); and
9. The respondents employed different managerial strategies for performing expressive roles in the home to improve the quality of their life. Notable among them were: sequenced activities effectively (58.8%); older children cared for younger siblings (58.7%); and being as a good mother as well (54.7%).

Conclusions

Male single-parent households form an important segment of the population. The findings have revealed that the situation of male single-parents is symptomatic of the inadequate support services for male single-parents in general. The study revealed an overwhelming lack of support and/or intervention from governmental and non-governmental agencies for the respondents.

The study has also revealed that time constraints; fatigue/tiredness; loneliness; and constant strain and stress loneliness were the major challenges faced by male single-parents. The study, however, revealed that the respondents employed some kinds of managerial strategies for performing instrumental roles at home to ensure their own survival and that of their families. These included: creating a happy home for the family; having open communication channels with children; spending quality time with each child; helping the children feel secure; and setting aside personal time to relax; The strategies for performing expressive roles at home were: sequenced activities effectively; older children cared for younger siblings; and being a good mother as well.

The most significant perceived indicators of the quality of life were: family survival; lifestyle improved; satisfactory living standards; situations changed; and living standards improved. There was generally, a significant correlation among the indicators of the quality of life. This implies that the quality of life is not achieved by only one variable and that, to achieve the quality of life, attention must be paid to all other indicators. It can be

concluded that, with appropriate managerial strategies, male single-parents can perform all roles at home and improve the quality of their lives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Family life professionals could expand their programmes to cater for the interests and struggles of male single-parents;
2. There could be a human resource development programme in the Central Region that is intended to equip male single-parents with the necessary skills and attitudes for the performance of both expressive and instrumental roles in the home by the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs);
3. Local and professional agencies, such as Parents Without Partners, and Single-parent Network could be formed and organised by the Department of Social Welfare to help single-parents form new relationships and develop a support system in the Central Region;
4. Services and support systems should be targeted specifically to male single-parents. In this connection, the MMDAs and the Department of Social Welfare should collaborate with non-governmental agencies and community-based organisations to provide the needed support and intervention for male single-parents;
5. Outreach programmes should be organized by governmental and non-governmental organisations, through seminars and workshops, for male single-parents and equip them with appropriate and effective

managerial strategies for effective management of challenges to improve the quality of their lives;

6. The MMDAs could embark on conducting quality of life surveys in the region country to create awareness of the indicators of quality of life;
7. For male single-parents to achieve quality of life, they must pay attention to all the indicators of the quality of life; and
8. Family specialists could collaborate with the Central Regional Coordinating Council to embark on outreach programmes, seminars and workshops to educate male single-parent families in improving the quality of their lives by showing how management can change their lives in a positive way.

Contribution to knowledge

In the context of doctoral research, it has been argued by Philips and Pugh (1994) that an original contribution to knowledge is a very shaded term: it does not mean an enormous breakthrough which has the subject rocking on its foundation; rather, it demonstrates that you have a good grasp of how research is normally done in your area. In a similar vein, Silverman (2005) has submitted that, in the context of demonstrating independent critical thought by the researcher, contribution to knowledge could be displayed in four areas: developing a concept or a methodology; thinking critically about your approach; building on an existing study; and being prepared to change direction.

Specifically, some modest contributions to knowledge of this study could be in the following areas:

1. Most studies on single-parenthood have largely focused on female single-parenthood. This study has, to a fairly large extent, highlighted two key issues: problems and challenges on the phenomenon of male single-parenting; and how managerial strategies could be used to improve the quality of life.
2. The research was able to build on an existing study (Deacon & Firebaugh 1988) that assessed a conceptual framework for family system life management (Figure 2). Their study identified three major areas that impede increased efficiency in family system life management including input, throughput and output. However, the present study came out with a conceptual framework for studying role performance of single-parent families. It identified four major areas that impede increased efficiency in a single-parent family system life management: input; throughput; output; and outcome (Figure 3).

Limitations of the study

In the researcher's view, the results of the study have fairly well addressed the main objectives and the key questions the research sought to answer. However, there are some grey areas that need to be acknowledged. Among the limitations warranting attention are:

1. Owing to logistical, financial, time and other constraints, only six districts in the Central Region were used for the study. It will, therefore, be difficult to generalize the findings and conclusions of the study for the entire region or the nation as a whole.

2. The data on respondents from coastal and inland districts were not segregated. It would have been appropriate to have identified and dealt with respondents from coastal and inland separately. This is because the social and cultural dynamics could differ among inland and coastal dwellers. However, this approach would have had enormous time, logistic and financial implications that was beyond the means of the researcher and the scope of the research.

Areas for further study

The present study has opened an opportunity for other researchers to contribute to enriching the research on male single-parenting. The potential areas that need to be covered for further research include:

1. The expansion of the current study to cover a wider area, including the entire region and possibly the whole country so that the managerial strategies of male single-parents can be broadly determined to guide policies on the phenomenon of increasing male single-parenting;
2. Replication of the present study, focusing on a comparative assessment of differences in the managerial strategies used by coastal and inland dwellers to improve the quality of their lives.
3. Exploring the relationship between managerial strategies of male single-parent families and the indicators of the quality of life.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MALE SINGLE-PARENTS

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to find out the managerial strategies for improving the quality of life of male single-parents in the Central Region. The result will be very helpful in getting information for the education of others on how to cope successfully as male single-parents. You are one of the few people in this community that have been selected to participate in the study and your prompt completion of the questionnaire will contribute immensely to the success of the study. The study is basically for academic purpose. Your responses will be confidential and your anonymity is assured.

Thank you in advance.

Instruction

Please tick (✓) where appropriate and provide the answer in the space provided where necessary.

Section A: Demographic characteristics of respondents

1. Age (years)
2. Educational level
 - a. No Formal Education []
 - b. Basic []
 - c. Senior High school []
 - d. Post-Secondary []
 - e. Tertiary []

f. Others (Specify)

3. Please indicate the number of dependents in your household, by sex, age, and schooling

Number of dependents	Sex M / F	Age	Schooling Yes / No

4. Please indicate the type of work that you do

- a) Farming
- b) Nursing
- c) Teaching
- d) Artisan
- e) Trading
- f) Driving
- g) Office clerk
- h) Banking
- i) Administration

j) Other Specify

4. Please indicate your average monthly income.

.....

5. What factor necessitated your present status as a male single-parent?

Please Tick

a. Unwed parent []

b. Separation []

c. Abandoned / deserted []

d. Divorced []

e. Widowed []

f. Adoption []

g. Wife terminally ill, []

h. Wife alcoholic []

i. Others (Specify)

6. How long have you been a single-parent?

.....

7. Will you continue to be a single-parent?

a. Yes []

b. No []

9. If yes, why?

.....
.....

10. If no, why not?

.....
.....

Section B: Roles the respondents perform in the home

12. Which roles do you perceive as a man's instrumental roles in the home?

(Tick as many options as possible).

- a) Breadwinner
- b) Disciplinarian
- c) Supervisor
- d) Head of the household
- e) Decision maker
- f) Leader
- g) Advisor
- h) Manager
- i) Financial controller
- j) Administrator
- k) Helping children to learn
- l) Social network
- m) Establishing standards for achieving goals
- n) Identifying and assessing resources
- o) Planner

- p) Controller
- q) Other Specify

13. Which roles do you perceive as a woman's expressive roles in the home?

(Tick as many options as possible).

- a) Caring for children
- b) Cleaning the house
- c) Cooking
- d) Washing
- e) Ironing
- f) Marketing
- g) Sweeping compound
- h) Washing dishes
- i) House keeping
- j) Socialization of children
- k) Nurturing
- l) Entertaining
- m) Establishing a social network in the family
- n) Comforter
- o) Time manager

Other Specify

14. Indicate the kind of roles you perform in the house and their related constraints

Domestic chores	Constraints
Cooking	
Washing	
Ironing	
Marketing	
Cleaning the house	
Sweeping compound	
Washing dishes	
Caring for small children	
Gardening	
Supervising children's school work	
Getting children ready for school	
Sending children to and from school	
Others (Specify)	

15. Indicate why you are constrained with the roles above as a man?

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. How has being a single-parent affected you in the following aspects of life?

a. Career

.....

b. Social life

.....

.....

c. Finances

.....

.....

d. House work

.....

.....

e. Relationship with the children

.....

.....

f. Meeting basic needs of family members

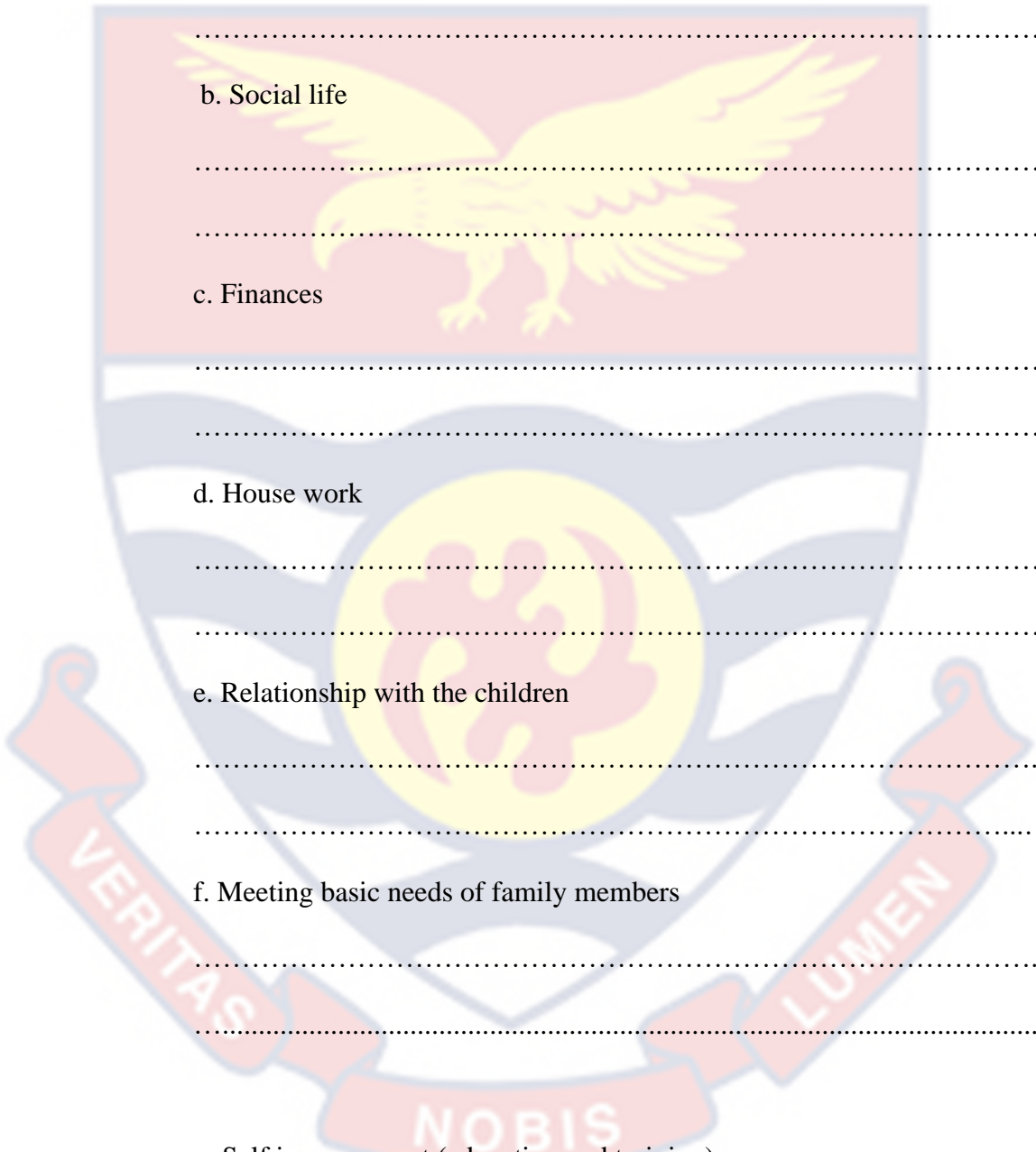
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g. Self improvement (education and training)

.....

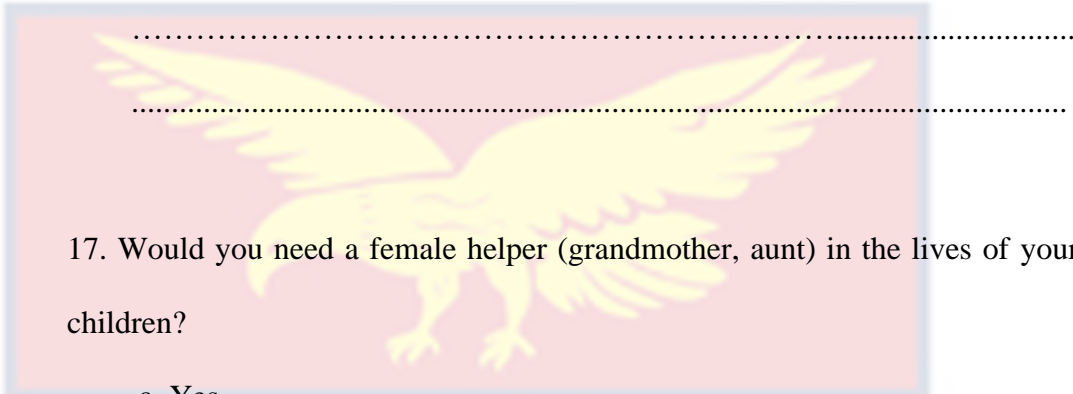
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h. Leisure

.....
.....

Others specify



17. Would you need a female helper (grandmother, aunt) in the lives of your children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. If yes, why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

19. If no, why not?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Support and interventions that male single-parents receive

20. In the table below, indicate the form of support that you receive from these sources.

Source of support	Form of support
Relatives	
Friends	
Neighbours	
Social groups	
NGO	
Government agencies	
Church	
District Assembly	
Social welfare	

21. Please indicate the kind of intervention that you get from these sources

Source of Service	Kind of Intervention
District Assembly	
National Agencies	
Local Agencies and Professionals	
National Bar Association	
Mental Health Care Centre	
Children and Youth Service	
Parent Without Partners	
Single Parent Network	
Other (Specify)	

Section D: Challenges faced by male single parents

22. Please indicate the challenges you face as a single parent by ticking against the options that apply to you.

- a. Fatigue / tiredness []
- b. Constant stress and strain []
- c. Late meals for the family []
- d. Loneliness []
- e. Financial constraints []
- f. Time constraints []
- g. Poor child care and support []
- h. Inability to cater for the needs of children []
- i. Inability to supervise their school work []
- j. No leisure []
- k. Children are often late to school []
- l. Lateness to work []
- m. Poor performance at work place []
- n. Some aspects of house work are neglected []
- o. Other (Specify)

23. Which effects do these challenges have on you and your family? (Tick as many options as applicable).

- a. Poor healthy []
- b. Indebtedness []
- c. Poor nutrition []
- d. Fear []

- e. Anxiety []
- f. Indiscipline and truancy among children []
- g. Child delinquency []
- h. Poor work output []
- i. Social isolation []
- j. Others (Specify)

Section E: Respondents perception of quality of life

26. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree to indicate your perception of the following as indications of quality life.

Perceived indicators	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
	%	%	%	%
Family survival				
Lifestyle changed				
Problems solved				
Aspirations met				
Basic needs met				
Living standards improved				
Life goals achieved				
Effective mgt. of resources				
Satisfactory living standard				
Adequacy of fin. resources				

Situations changed/

improved

Household envt. conditions

Happy home

Improved health care

27. Please indicate the level to which you have achieved each of the following indicators of quality life.

Indicator of quality of life	Ratings of achievement of quality life			
	Very high	High	Low	Very low
1 Family survival				
2 Lifestyle changed				
3 Problems solved				
4 Aspirations met				
5 Basic needs met				
6 Living stds improved				
7 Life goals achieved				
8 Effective mgt of res.				
9 Satisfactory living stds.				
10 Adequacy of financial res				
11 Situations changed/impd				
12 Household envt. condts.				
13 Happy home				

14 Improved health care

15 Other (specify)

Section F: Managerial strategies of respondents

28. Indicate the whether you use the outlined strategies or not to cope as a single parent

Factor	Yes	No
--------	-----	----

Older children take care of pre-school children		
---	--	--

Grandparent and other relatives take care of children		
---	--	--

House help take care of children		
----------------------------------	--	--

Pre-school children are taken to crèche		
---	--	--

Employ somebody to do household work		
--------------------------------------	--	--

Use labour saving device such as washing machine		
--	--	--

Wake up early to do some house work		
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Stay up late to complete house work		
-------------------------------------	--	--

Often ask for leave at work to take care of sick children		
---	--	--

Plan and follow a time chart		
------------------------------	--	--

Sequence activities to make working more effective and less tiring		
--	--	--

Neglect some aspect of house work		
-----------------------------------	--	--

Receive financial support from relatives in times of need		
---	--	--

Having open communication channels with children		
--	--	--

Having firm rules and standards with children		
---	--	--

Joining and participating in a support group		
--	--	--

Creating a happy home for the family

Set aside personal time to relax and socialize

Spend quality time with each child

Use check lists to organize activities

Seek financial help when needed

Seek professional help when needed

Make and follow a budget

Help the children feel secure

Identify reliable childcare services

Being a good mother as well

29. In what ways have these coping strategies improved the well-being of your family?

.....

.....

.....

.....

30. Any other comments

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU

APPENDIX B

TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE FROM A GIVEN
POPULATION

N*	S!	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

• N is the population size

! S is the sample size

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970). p 607-610

