

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**EFFECTS OF SINGLE MOTHER PARENTING ON THE BOY CHILD
IN WASSA AMENFI EAST MUNICIPALITY**



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**A thesis in the Department of Social Studies Education,
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Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Social Studies Education)
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Betty Ampofowaah Osei, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Simon Kyei

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

To the Glory of God and to my loving Prophetess Mrs Rebecca Osei Asibey



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the effects of single mother parenting on the boy child in Wassa Akropong within the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana. The study adopted the description survey research design using the mixed method approach. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample a total population of 89 participants comprising 30 teachers, 38 boy children and 21 single mother parents. Instrument used for the study was two sets of self-designed questionnaire for teachers and boy children and one interview guide for single mother parents. The researcher's supervisor validated the instrument. Reliability was established with Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.72. Data was analysed using frequency and percentages and presented in Table, bar charts and pie charts. It was also found that single parenting homes have diverse moral influences on boy-children. Diverse answers were obtained from teachers as to whether the children were rebellious to rules. It also came to light that majority of the boys engage in drug abuse but not often while some of them drop out of school. Sometimes there are delays in getting school supplies. Again, sometimes the children are not supervised in the house concerning their academic work. Furthermore, the results show that most boys from single mother homes adopts varying coping strategies to cope with their academic work including endangering their lives in an attempt to stay in school by engaging in these economic activities. Based on the findings it was recommended among other things that the Municipal Assembly should solicit for help from NGOs to aid single mothers and to support them financially. Government should set up education funds to support boys from single mother homes. The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) should intensify education on family life and family planning to help parents reduce the number of divorce cases.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The continuity of any society largely depends on the socialization children receive. The family is regarded as the most important agent of socialization. In most societies, children are raised in a highly structured and disciplined manner. According to Santrock (2002), parents help to instil and inculcate strong basic moral, spiritual, social, physical and cognitive principles in their children.

The system of raising children such as within the context of extended family patterns in the traditional African setting has dramatically changed. In the opinion of Olaleye and Oladeji (2010), the changed system of child nurturing is due to the influence of industrialization and globalization. Olaleye and Oladeji (2010), further explained that social changes that are associated with globalization has disrupted the pattern of family, family structure and life. The disrupted social and family patterns have led to an upsurge in the cases of single parenting.

Stephen and Udisi (2016), observed that the phenomenon of single parenthood was uncommon and was considered as exceptional cases especially in some African countries. On the contrary, single parenthood is currently a very rapid growing family pattern across the world. Single parenthood has become more common than the much talked about nuclear family, made up of the mother, father and the children. D Mello, Govindaraju and Monteiro (2016), explained single parenting as a situation in which a father or a mother lives solitary with the children in the absence of the other partner. By extension, a single mother is a mother who lives solitary with the child(ren) in the absence of the other partner.

The increasing incidences of single-parent family have made it a social problem in most communities. According to Glaveanu (2015), single parent families represent approximately 13.4% of the total number of families. In Ghana, the population of single-parents have seen sharp increases. For instance, data from the 2010 Ghana population and housing census revealed that single parent nuclear family constitutes about 13% of total households in Ghana. Similarly, statistics from Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, 2014 indicate that, the proportion of children living in single- parent families were 30%.

Furthermore, approximately 16% of children live with neither parent. Single-parent families consist of a single parent along with the child/children, and its' existence can be determined by multiple causes: divorce/death of one of the parents, the leave of one of the parents in the non-married couples after the birth of a child; the decision of some women to have a child without entering a conjugal relation etc. (Glăveanu, 2015; Voinea, 2005). Amato (2000), reports that the incidences of single mother parenting are attributable to factors such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples, and single parent adoption are the major causes of single parenthood in our society today.

In most traditional African settings, parental roles are culturally determined and distributed. The maternal roles involve child nurturing, home training and playing of complementary roles while the paternal roles involve taking economic responsibilities of the family and discipline of the children. Tenibiaje and Tenibiaje (2011), stated that, a child brought up by both parents is morally, mentally and emotionally balanced and upright. While raising children is a major responsibility and protracted undertaking for couples, it becomes increasingly more demanding and often difficult

for single mothers. Life becomes demanding and challenging for a single mother who has to shoulder all the child nurturing responsibilities.

Olaleye and Oladeji (2010), indicated that, the single mother faces doubled responsibilities that requires time, attention and money of the parent and this tends to impact negatively on both the child and the single mother. The negative impact becomes more pronounced against the background that, several traditional customs and practices which have long kept families together and offered security for a child or a single mother are no longer considered important, useful or acceptable. This is because family and social practices which are alien to our society have fast gained grounds as acceptable norms.

Hiratani and Hohashi (2009), asserted that, the variable of family structure such as single mother parenting presents huge challenges to both the single mother and the child. Findings from studies have identified some of the experiences of single mothers to be role overload and conflicts. Single mother families tend to have poor community relationships and lower economic and healthcare functioning. In the opinion of Hiratani and Hohashi (2009), this is because single mothers invest relatively less effort in building close community relationships.

Stephen and Udisi (2016), argued that maladjustment in life may occur if the phase of training and nurturing in the child's life is not well managed. Children can also be socialized by people outside the immediate family. Olaleye and Oladeji(2010); Adelani and Ogunbanwo (2008) found that, in situations of poor parental care and guidance due to single mother parenting, children become exposed to potentially damaging situations such as poor feeding, negligence, not inspired to study or learn, emotional disturbance (fear, insecurity) as such, the children are not likely to perform

up to expectation in school. Olaleye and Oladeji (2010); Adelani and Ogunbanwo (2008) further affirmed that children raised in such conditions suffer from mental retardation, personality disorders and are miserable. Such children show behavioural response like lying, stealing, and playing truant in school.

Several studies from different parts of the world have shown some of the negative impact of single mother parenting on both the children and the single parents. The effects of single mother parenting on some parental parameters such as financial status, parent-child interaction, adaptability, stigmatization, social isolation, emotional stress, health-related problems, and role change issues have been documented by researchers. Parenthood even under the best conditions can be challenging. Stephen and Udisi (2016) aver that being a single parent is difficult and onerous. This is because with one parent, the challenges are multifaceted.

Many of the challenges confronting single parents are similar to those experienced by double parents, however, these problems become exceedingly difficult to bear or manage when the family is taken care of by only the mother. Stephen and Udisi, (2016) stated for instance that, all children become hostile towards their parents as they grow-up and try to be independent, however in situations where the anger and rebellion are directed towards one parent, it may appear worse and unbearable as compared to situations involving both parents.

Carlson and Corcoran (2001), documented that, children raised by single mothers are usually disadvantaged and therefore do not fare well as much as those brought up by both parents. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994), opined that irrespective of race, education, or parental remarriage, averagely children from families headed by single mothers are more likely to experience increased academic difficulties and higher

levels of emotional, psychological, and behavioural problems. In similar terms, Yang (2008); Friedman, Bowden and Jones (2003); McGrath, Yeung, and Bedi (2002) predicted that children growing up with a single mother are more likely to be poorer than children with two parents since poorer children are generally more likely to be school drop outs or commit a crime.

According to Hamburg (2004), marital separation commonly involves major emotional distress for child relationship. About twice as many children from single mother families compared to two parent families drop out of school. Children living with both parents are not faced with much stressful experiences as those living with only their mothers. Stephen and Udisi (2016), reported that, some problems such as bitterness towards the absent spouse, loneliness, poverty and insecurity about raising children alone without a help which are peculiar to single mothers make the upbringing of the child difficult.

According to Glaveanu (2015), a frequently encountered problem in our contemporary societies is single mother parenting. It represents approximately 13.4% of total families. Single mother parenting has far reaching consequences on the development of the boy child. Cheronoh (2016), explains that children nurtured in single mother parent homes have a higher risk of low educational levels, twice fold likelihood to drop out of school, higher chance of becoming teenage parents, frequently run into conflicts with parents and other authorities. Cheronoh further indicates further that, these children have increased risks of becoming truants, frequently engaging in drug, alcohol and substance abuse, indulge in very risky sexual behaviour, more likely to join gangs, receive jail sentences or commit suicide.

There has been huge public outcry on faulted parenting of the boy child and challenges associated with single mother parenting of the boy child. According to Fancy (2016), this public outcry is partly due to the over emphasis on the girl child. The boy child is considered a liability other than asset and pride of the family. The African pride in parenting the boy child seems to be gradually fading away in our modern societies. Fancy further asserts that instead of training the boy child to take up responsibilities, he has received little attention and has become dependent, endangered and hence engage in drug and substance abuse and other social vices. Through such activities, the boy child end being killed, jailed or contracts diseases such as sexually transmitted diseases causing more pain to the only parent. The boy child appears to be unproductive and a burden to their families to the extent that some parents have entrusted their property to their daughters; a complete reversal of African traditional transfer of responsibilities where the son took over the role of the father in guarding the family's property.

Although in many countries there is adequate data on the challenges facing the boy child especially in the circumstances of single parenting, in Africa, not much is known on the impact of single mother parenting on the boy child. For instance, in a bid to develop a national policy and legal framework for boys in Kenya, the Kenyan National Gender and Equality Commission – NGECE (2015) was commissioned to conduct a study. This study revealed that in the effort to empower girls, boys had been greatly marginalized and were lagging behind. The study brought to the fore, the challenges facing family structures and the boy child in Kenya. An improperly socialized boy child is a burden to society, an affront to accept socio-cultural and moral principles and a threat to the very core of societal existence. Boateng, Adomako-Ampofo, Flanagan, and Yakah (2006), point out that, in the traditional and

cultural upbringing of girls, they are taught to consider men and boys as stronger, wiser and more responsible. Boys are therefore socialized to lead girls and women.

The observation above becomes even more critical because, in most societies in general and in Ghana in particular, men are considered as symbols of power and authority. Otu (2015), mentioned that, men exhibit leadership, possess and exercise authority. In the home for instance, fathers or male adults are considered as breadwinners, people who must take crucial decisions and issue instructions. Therefore, the negligence of issues that ensure the proper and effective upbringing and socialization of the boy child can affect the very foundations on which the society stands and can throw the organized state of society into disarray.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Studies and policy interventions on single-parents and their children have predominantly featured only the girl child at the expense of the boy child (Ram & Ram, 2018; Banigo, Azeez & Ezelote, 2017; Alhassan, 2010). For instance, in Ghana most social and educational interventions have targeted and focused on the girl child. According to Ghana Education Service (2012) there are many interventions tailored for the girl child. For example, there are several special interventions such as scholarship/stipends for girls and the formation of girl child education units in the Ministry of Education to promote the welfare of the girl child. The ever-increasing population of single mothers coupled with the over concentration of resources and attention on the girl child have dwarfed the challenges faced by the boy child raised by a single mother parent (Lu, Walker, Richard & Younis, 2019). As a result of the limited number of studies and data focusing on single mothers and the boy child, the magnitude of the problem confronting single mothers and the boy child is not known

and hence no appropriate and relevant policy and legal frame work can be designed to address the ever increasing challenge of single mother parenting and the neglect of the boy child. In Ghana, there are limited studies on the impact of single-parenting on the boy child.

The importance of fathers in the upbringing of the child cannot be overemphasized. The positive effects fathers bring to their children cannot be provided by any other person (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). The involvement of fathers especially the formative years of the child results in positive developmental and psychological outcomes in the child (Jessee & Adamsons, 2018). According to the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice (2002), children with fathers tend to be emotionally stable, have self-confidence and better inter personal relationships, are well behaved and become better and law-abiding adults.

According to Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006), fathers facilitate independence and orientation of their children; and play a phenomenal role as disciplinarians. The role of discipline is mostly arduous and frustrating; fathers therefore make child upbringing easier by taking up substantial part in child discipline. Fathers are distinctly successful in the discipline of the boy child, because boys are mostly responsive only to discipline by a man (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). The single mother is therefore unable to successfully execute the distinctive roles reserved for the father. Undoubtedly, the boy child raised by a single mother parent will be denied the discipline, good behaviour and manners, emotional and other psychosocial benefits the presence of the father brings. The main issue that needs to be addressed is how single mothers in the study area would be able to nurture their male children to fit well in the society without the assistance of the fathers. It is for this important reason

that this study sought to examine the effects of single mother parenting on the boy child.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the effects of single mother parenting on the boy child in Wassa Amenfi East Municipal District of the Western Region of Ghana.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child.
2. Analyse the extent to which single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child.
3. Explain challenges facing boy child from single mothers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality.
4. Explore the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child?
2. How does single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child?
3. What are the challenges facing boy-child from single mothers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality?

4. What are the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will help parents, social workers, educational planners and policy makers to develop appropriate interventions to support single mothers and the boy child. The findings will also reveal the challenges facing single mothers with boy child as are challenges facing boy child in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality and the coping strategies adopted by these boys to sustain themselves in school. The findings would draw the attention of teachers on the need to vary their teaching methodologies and skills to satisfy children from different single mother parenting homes. Results of this study would help educational planners to make important decisions on educational reforms that will benefit all social groups of children. Policy makers will see the need to undertake adult literacy and financial empowerment of parents as a pre-requisite for good academic performance in children in basic schools in Ghana. It will equally serve as a valuable material to those who are interested in researching into single mother parenting and boy child and finally it will add to literature available on boy child education in Ghana.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

Single mothers with at least a boy child were included in the study. Furthermore, the study was delimited to only single mothers in Wassa Akropong within the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality who gave their consent.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and delimitation of the study are discussed in Chapter One. In chapter two, relevant literature was reviewed based on thematic areas inferred from the objectives of the study and research questions. Chapter Two also captures the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study. The focus of chapter three was the research methodology, research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection, validity and reliability of data collection instruments as well as ethical issues. The data are analysed and the results presented and discussed in Chapter Four. The findings or conclusions and recommendations are made in Chapter Five.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Single Mother: It refers to a mother who lives solitary with the child (ren) in the absence of the other partner.

Coping Strategies: This refers to the strategies and techniques that students use to be able to make a living and still come to school.

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

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

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

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



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the review of relevant literature associated with the study. The review of literature was done under themes relevant to the research objectives and broadly put under three areas, theoretical framework, conceptual frame work and review of relevant previous studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) described a theoretical framework as a blueprint or a guide for a research. According to Dickson, Kamil and Agyem (2018), a theoretical framework is based on an existing theory and is related to a hypothesis or reflects the hypothesis of a study and serves as the foundation upon which a researcher constructs his research. Like a map, the theoretical frame work guides the researcher so as for him not to deviate from the core objective of the study (Dickson, Kamil, Agyem, 2018; Krainovich-Miller, 2010; Sinclair, 2017). Two theories namely the McMaster Model of family functioning (MMFF) and the Social Learning theory were adopted and used to delineate and explain the theoretical basis of the study.

Bello, Irinoye and Akpor, (2018) emphasized that the MMFF considers the family as an open system that is composed of a complex interplay between different subsystems such as the individual, marital state that relate with external systems such as extended family relations, school, church and work. Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop and Epstein (2000) averred that the MMFF is based on some assumptions such as:

1. All parts of the family are interrelated.
2. One part of the family cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of the family system.
3. A family's structure and organization are important factors that strongly influence and determine the behaviour of family members.
4. The transactional patterns of the family system strongly shape the behaviour of family members.

The family is influenced by factors such as problem-solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, and behaviour control (Miller *et al*, 2000). According to Bello, Irinoye and Akpor, (2018) intervening factors such as financial resources, parental personal resources, socialization, stress, time resources as well as the social support available for the family affect the family structure and functioning. Bello, Irinoye and Akpor, (2018) argued that families are considered to be functioning effectively, if they exhibit actions such as effective problem solving, effective communication, responsible display of family roles, and maintenance of standards for behaviour among others.

Two parent families are composed of both parents and children, single mother families on the other hand are made up of the mother and the child. The structure within two parent families is considered the golden or ideal standard family structure (Bello *et al.*, 2018). Researchers believe that two-parent families have better effective family functioning because parents in such families have better economic status, enhanced ability to support or complement one another among others. The better functioning in two-parent families is contrary to the malfunctioning in single mother

families owing to factors such as low income because such families have only one source of income.

Another theory which was explored for the study was the Social Learning Theory. Introduced by Bandura in 1971, the social learning theory is a cognitive and behavioural theory that explains human behaviour through the interaction of personal (cognitive), environmental, and behavioural factors in a social setting (Johnson, 2017). Bandura (1987) revised the then existing theories by proposing that the environment of an individual plays a critical role in the behaviour of a person (Olaleye, Ajayi, Oyebola and Ajayi, 2017). Bandura's conclusions were drawn from the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1971).

2.1.1 Implications of the theories to the study

According to the MMFF the family system functions properly if intervening factors like financial resources, personal parental resources, socialization, stress and time resources are adequately provided. With the absence of the father, the mother becomes overburdened with double responsibilities and as such is unable to adequately meet the needs and demands of the family. The inability of the single mother to adequately provide for the family results in the malfunctioning of the family system and this result in its attendant adverse effects on the individuals in the single mother family and the society at large.

Social Learning Theory postulates that the environment of an individual influences the behaviour of the individual. In two parent families, the shared parental responsibility results in better child nurturing through discipline, provision of social, economic and emotional needs of the children. The serene environment usually provided by two-parent families, influences the behaviour of children coming from

these homes, as such children in most cases are well behaved and tend to have superior emotional, economic, psychological and academic prowess and advantage over their colleagues from single parent homes. Children from single mother homes are mostly raised in difficult socio-economic environments and circumstances owing to the inability of the single mother to effectively shoulder all the parental responsibilities. The difficult and harsh environment associated with single mother families tend to negatively influence the behaviour of the children.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

According to Camp (2001), a conceptual framework is a structure which in the opinion of the researcher explains the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied in the best possible way. The conceptual framework chosen by the researcher was to help elucidate the connections and links between single mother parenting, challenges of single mother parenting and effects of single mother parenting on both the child and the single mother.

In this conceptual framework, the researcher conceptualized the structure of the family into two types, two parent families which consist of both parents and children and single mother families which consist of only the mother and boy-children. Two parent families have the advantage of experiencing effective family functioning. The observed effective family functioning in two parent families can be explained on the basis that the presence of both the father and the mother presents shared parental responsibility which results in effective communication among members of the family, solving of family problems, affective and effective child monitoring resulting in behavioural control of children. The resultant effect of the effective functioning is positive, because children and parents have improved overall well-being and quality

of life. The children show improved physical health, improved mental and emotional health and superior or enhanced academic performance. Besides, such children are mostly well behaved and eventually grow up as responsible adults who benefit their families and the general society.

On the contrary, the absence of the father in single mother families skews all the overwhelming parental responsibility on the single mother. Owing to the doubled parental responsibility, single mothers are mostly unable to maintain effective family functioning. The ineffective family functioning is evident in poor communication, ineffective discharge of roles and poor behavioural control of the children. The ineffective or poor behavioural control of children from single mother families results in such children becoming deviants and social misfits in some cases.

However, the framework further assumes that the family organization whether two parent families or single mother families can be influenced by the culture of the family which comprises family values, family practices, interaction between family members, life style of the family members as well as the standard of living of the family. The family culture can in turn influence the overall outcomes of the family. For instance, two parent families tend to have positive family culture such as healthy family values and practices, good life style and good standard of living as such both parents and children enjoy enhanced physical, emotional and mental health, children enjoy improved academic performance among others. Single mother families on the other hand have poor family culture reflected in poor family values and practices, poor life style of members and poor standard of living. As a result, the single mother and children are prone to poor quality of life, poor physical, mental and emotional

health. The children may suffer poor academic performance in schools, may drop out of school and end up as social deviants and social misfits.

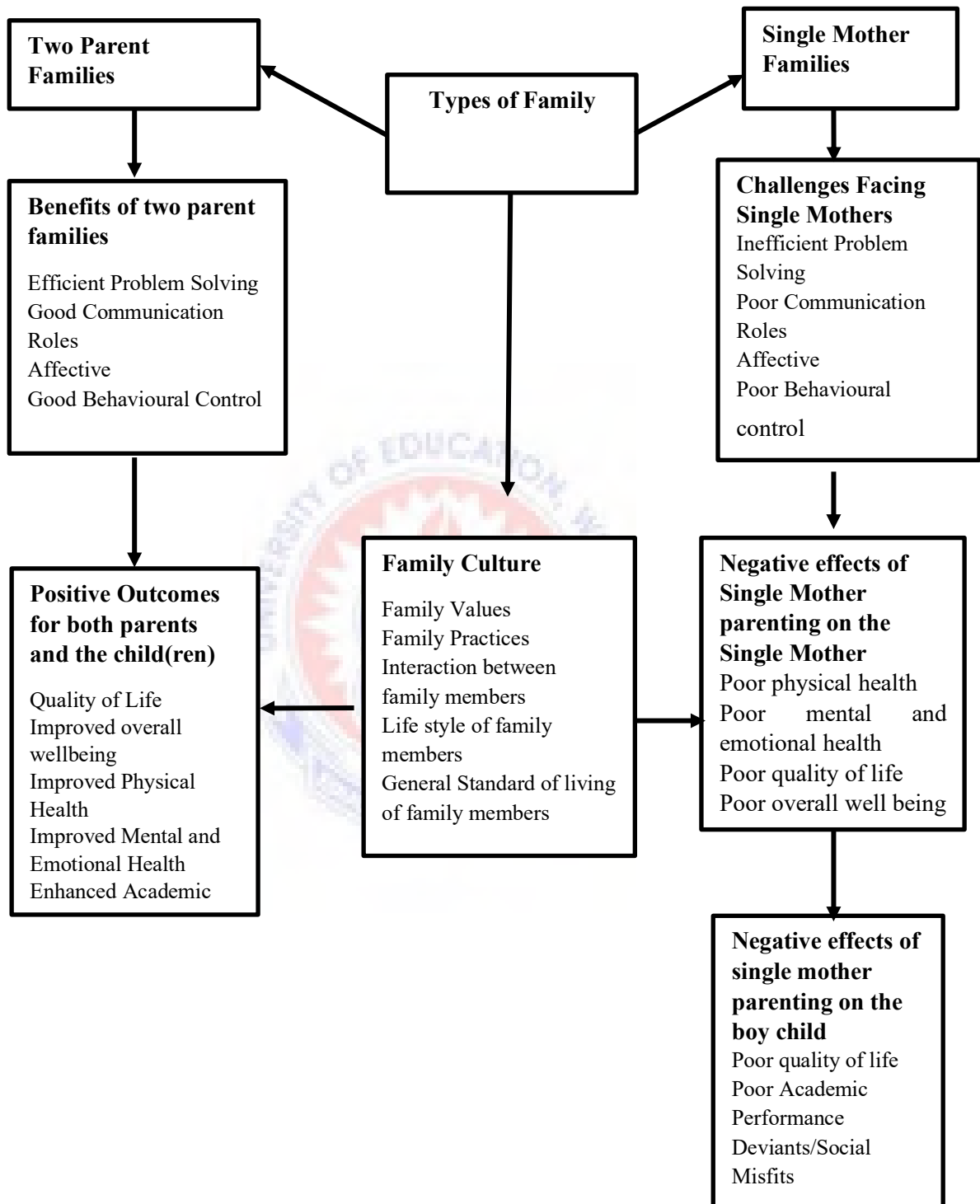


Figure 2.1: Pictorial Representation of the Conceptual Framework

Source: Bello, Irinoye and Akpor, (2018) adopted modified in (2020).

2.3 The Concept of Parenting

A family is the basic social institution to which every individual belongs (Ardayfio-Schandorf & Kwafo-Akoto, 1990). According to Amissah, Mensah and Antwi (2015) the family perpetuates society and the society benefits from the individual members of the family and the family as a whole. Within the family set up, the individual members can be considered as subsystems in various positions and play important roles inuring to the mutual benefit of the group using available resources. When the individual members in the family effectively play their roles, the family unit becomes self-directed and self-driven in interacting with various environments for achieving the quality of life. The family carries out many important functions in a society. It is regarded as the basic economic unit of production and consumption. It socializes the young and enforces norms and laws, transmits cultural heritage and serves as the first line of social security. The family is responsible for the provision of necessities of food, shelter, clothing, are and protection (Amissah, et al., 2015).

Universally, certain behaviours and characteristics are defined as acceptable by all societies. Members who want to function adequately and properly fix into such societies must conform to such societal do's and don'ts. According to Maccoby (2000) such universal societal prescriptions and proscriptions include the requirement for parents to provide nurturance and protection for children. Maccoby (2000) further explained that although standards greatly vary across cultural settings, the training of children takes place in all societies. The primary rationale for this training is to ensure that children are socialized or brought up in an acceptable way such that each generation acquires the accepted patterns of beliefs and behaviours.

Every society therefore thrives on the effectiveness of parenting. The continuity of the culture of any society is hinged on how well children are socialized or brought up by their parents or surrogates of their parents. Santrock (2004) averred that parents help instil and inculcate strong and acceptable fundamental socio-spiritual and physio-cognitive principles into their children by nurturing the children in very disciplined and structured ways.

Maccoby (2000) emphasized the crucial and important role of parents in the nurturing of their children. According to her, the role of parents in the socialization of their children is hinged on the idea that “as the twig is bent, so grows the tree”. She clarifies that “in most societies, parents are the ones assigned the primary responsibility for “bending” the children in desirable directions, by supervising, teaching, and disciplining them as they grow up (p3). Stephen and Udisi (2016) supported the assertion by Maccoby with the indication that the family is considered to be the most important agent of socialization, especially for children.

2.4 Parenting Styles

Parenting styles can be defined as directly observable specific behaviours that parents use to socialize their children (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2018). According to Santrock (2006), parenting makes emotional demands and requires interpersonal skills. Parenting styles considered as a characteristic of a parent that changes the effectiveness of practices of family socialization and children’s receptiveness to such practices (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Parenting styles are broad patterns of child nurturing practices, values, and behaviours (Mensah and Kuranchie, 2013). It is the way parents take care of their children which can have impact on the personality development of the children and the ways of interacting with social and close

relations (Akhtar, 2012). Some parenting practices pertain to positive reinforcement, discipline, or problem solving (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2018). Different parenting styles affect children differently. The temperament of the child often changes the impact of the behaviour of the parent. For instance, children whose parents are hostile or aloof are more likely to exhibit anti-social behaviour (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). The typology of Baumrind (1991) has been largely accepted and comprehensively used. The various parenting styles are differentiated from one another based on their levels of demandingness and responsiveness to children (Merlin, Okerson, and Hess, 2013; Baumrind, 1991).

According to Baumrind (1966), responsiveness expresses the degree of regard given to the needs and wants of the child. That is there are two extremes, at one extreme end being extremely responsive to the needs and wants of the child at and at the other end being totally unresponsive. Demandingness emphasizes the extent to which boundaries are set and demands are made. The demandingness ranges from setting and making firm demands to setting no boundaries and making requests that are quickly withdrawn at the first sign of resistance.

2.4.1 Authoritative parenting style

The authoritative style balances clear, high expectations with emotional support and recognizes the autonomy of children's autonomy. The authoritative parent tries to direct the child, but in a rational manner (Baumrind, 1991). Such parents give the reasoning behind their rules (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013). These parents value both autonomous self-will and conformity to discipline. Although authoritative parents exercise firm control on their children, they do not tie their children up with restrictions (Baumrind, 1991). They encourage and support assertiveness and

individuality. Authoritative parents provide an atmosphere of family warmth, define expectations and encourage independence in their children (Kracke, 1997).

According to Mensah & Kuranchie (2013), authoritative parenting is characterized by high levels of nurturance, involvement, sensitivity, reasoning and encouragement of autonomy. Authoritative parents are not only assertive but also intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive rather than punitive. Authoritative parents' direct activities and decisions of their children with reasoning and discipline (Turner, Chadler & Heffer, 2009). Authoritarian parents place a high value on obedience and conformity and tend to support more punitive absolute and forceful disciplinary measures. These parents do not allow give and take in their jurisdictions, because they believe the child should obey whatever instruction given without question.

Authoritative parents are very strict with their children and emphasize discipline over nurturing (Miller, Lambert, and Speirs Neumeister, 2012). They do not encourage independent behaviour but instead prioritize the restriction of the child's autonomy (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). Similarly, Cherry (2012) explains that authoritarian parents expect the child to follow the strict rules established by the parents. Failure to follow the rules will result in punishment. The harsh and often unwarranted punishments that are characteristic of authoritative parent can be potentially damaging for children (Merlin, Okerson & Hess, 2013).

Usually, because the parents exhibit ordered rules and standards, they must be followed without explanations and questions (Amos, 2013). Studies have shown that children raised by authoritative parents are more likely to become independent, self-reliant, socially accepted, academically successful, well-behaved, good emotional

control and regulation, and have happier dispositions (Carlo, White, Streit, Knight, and Zeiders, 2017; Karim, Sharafat, and Mahmud, 2013; Kenney, Lac, Hummer, Grimaldi, and Labrie, 2015; Leung, Lo, Tsang, & Chan, 2017; Li & Xie, 2017; Majumder, 2015; Mckinney, Morse, and Pastuszak, 2014; Pinquart, 2015; Raboteg-Saric and Sakic, 2013; Smokowski, Bacallao, Cotter, and Evans, 2014). Authoritative parenting is associated with a higher degree of self-control, favourable self-concepts and negatively associated with social withdrawal (Cheung, 2014; Palmer, 2010).

In a cross sectional survey by Mensah and Kuranchie, (2013) to ascertain the dominant parenting styles of parents in the in the Sunyani East and West Educational Districts of the then Brong Ahafo region of Ghana and their influence on children's social development. The study utilised a sample of 480 basic school pupils who were in their adolescent stage and 16 teachers employing a pre tested structured interview schedule and questionnaire for the data collection. The results of the study revealed that the majority of the parents were perceived to adopt authoritative parenting styles in the upbringing of their children. It was also revealed that parenting style has influence on students' social development. It is inferred that authoritative parenting based on reasoning, understanding, consensus and trust resulted in pro-social behaviour while authoritarian parenting based on strict rules, force, threat, verbal and physical punishments resulted in anti-social behaviour.

The researchers therefore recommended that parents should endeavour to adopt authoritative parenting style to enable their children and wards to develop pro-social behaviour. The study was significant in helping parents, guardians, teachers and school authorities to understand and appreciate the relationship between parenting style and children's social development. It was fascinating that parents were

admonished by the study to employ authoritative parenting style to aid their children to be socially competent, a virtue required for personal life and work ethos.

2.4.2 Authoritarian parenting style

According to Baumrind (1991) an authoritarian parent tries to shape, control, and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance with a defined standard of behaviour. Obedience is a virtue and punitive measures are used to curb self-will. The word of the parent is accepted as right. When the child exhibits actions or beliefs that are not in accordance with that of the parent or when the child's actions or beliefs go contravenes the standards the parent deems good, the child is penalized. This type of parenting tries to establish respect of authority, work and preservation of order and traditional structure (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013). The authoritarian parenting style is much more democratic and such parents are always ready to listen and cooperate with their children. Authoritarian parents show a high degree of directive behaviours, imposition of restrictions on their children and maintain order (Turner, *et al* 2009).

Parenting who adopt the authoritarian style of parenting discourage emotional dependency and infantile behaviour (Baumrind, 1971). They provide rewards for positive behaviours and use discipline without physical punishment to curb delinquent behavior (Merlin, Okerson & Hess, 2013). Authoritarian parenting is associated with many externalizing and internalizing problems in children. Children who experience perfectionist pressures from parents are more likely to exhibit high levels of perfectionism, rigidity, critical attitudes, and anxiety (Randall, Bohner & Travers, 2015). On the contrary, children raised by authoritarian parents have been found to show less engagement in classroom activities. Besides, authoritarian parenting has

been found to be negatively associated with academic achievement in children (Wang, Deng & Du, 2017).

2.4.3 Permissive parenting style

The permissive parent behaves in a non-punitive, accepting, and affirmative manner towards the impulses, desires, and actions of the child (Baumrind, 1991). Few demands are expected from the child. Parents are not required to act as active agent in shaping and modifying the behaviour of the child (Baumrind, 1991). The child is given the chance to regulate his or her own activities. The parent does not control the child nor encourages the child to obey external standards. Permissive parents regard punishment as a measure with inevitable negative consequences and ineffective in altering behavior (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013). They consider self-regulation to be the right of a child to live freely without outside authority.

Such parents have the feeling that close supervision, high expectations and exertion of parental authority evoke rebellion in children and encourage passivity and dependence in the child (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013; Baumrind, 1991). Permissive parenting is associated with making few demands, showing non-controlling behaviours and using minimal punishment. These parents are warm and responsible but not demanding and have few expectations of their children, as they do not set rules for their children (Mensah & Kuranchie, 2013). Such parents hardly punish or discipline their children.

Although permissive parents offer considerable support to their children, the lack of control of their children negates the benefits of their responsiveness (Merlin, Okerson & Hess, 2013). Permissive parenting has been reported to influence behaviour, risk-taking and academic achievement of children (Baumrind, 1971; Rhee *et al.*, 2006; Rinaldi and Howe, 2012). Permissive parenting style has negative effects on the

children, including resistance, hostility and lack of social responsibility that is not found with the authoritative parenting style (Merlin, Okerson & Hess, 2013). Male children with permissive parents lack social responsibility and independence as compared with children with authoritative parents. Furthermore, male children with permissive parents score high on behavioural tendencies including hostility, resistance, and dominance (Baumrind, 1971). Female children with permissive parents are more resistive and less independent as compared with female children of authoritative parents (Baumrind, 1971).

Permissive parenting style is associated with risk of initial delinquent activity across a variety of delinquent behaviours (Bronte-Tinkew *et al.*, 2006). Children of permissive parents are prone to risk-taking behaviours such as sexual risk-taking and alcohol or drug experimentation (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Huebner & Howell, 2003; Patock-Peckham, and Morgan-Lopez, 2006). The permissive parenting style increases impulsiveness alcohol use and alcohol-related issues for children and decreases personal control (Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006).

Negative effects of permissive parenting style have been reported on the mental health of children relative to children raised by authoritative parent. Although children with permissive parents are self-confident, they exhibit lower levels of self-control, high aggression, and independence (McClun and Merrell, 1998; Rhee *et al.*, 2006). According to Baumrind (1971) children raised by permissive parents are less achievement oriented and may have lower academic performances relative to children raised under other parenting styles. These children appear to score low in social and cognitive competence and score high on measures that demonstrate immaturity, lack of impulse control, and self-reliance (Dornbusch *et al.*, 1987; Jutengren & Palmerus,

2006). In addition, children with permissive parents demonstrate low persistence with difficult tasks (Kang and Moore, 2011). However, Miller, Lambert, and Speirs-Neumeister, (2012) found that children raised under permissive parenting style tend to have a high association with creativity. Perhaps the high degree of responsiveness found in permissive parenting is the most important factor for nurturing creativity (Baumrind, 1991; Miller *et al.*, 2012).

2.4.4 Uninvolved or neglecting parenting style

Uninvolved parenting is characterized with few demands and little communication. Though the parents fulfil the needs of the child, they rarely get attached to the child (Cherry, 2012). Similarly, uninvolved parents make few or no demands of their children and they are often indifferent, dismissive or even completely neglectful of their children (Amos, 2013). Uninvolved parenting represents a style of parenting that is low on both control and affiliation, with low levels of demandingness and responsiveness (Merlin, Okerson & Hess, 2013).

Uninvolved or neglecting parenting style is associated with unfavourable outcomes, such as high rates of depression, high rates of smoking, poor school achievement, and low psychosocial development (Rhee, Lumeng, Appugliese, Kaciroti & Bradley, 2006). Children with neglecting or uninvolved parents are prone to experimenting smoking, drinking and illicit drug or substance abuse (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001). According to Huebner & Howell (2003) children whose whereabouts are not monitored by their parents are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours such as sexual risk-taking behaviours. Relative to children raised under other parenting styles, children raised under uninvolved or neglecting parenting style exhibit the lowest levels of psychological and social adjustment, with low levels

of self-regulation and cognitive competence (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg & Ritter, 1997).

2.4.5 Helicopter parenting style

The helicopter parenting style evolved from the traditional parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). Helicopter parenting refers to a parenting style that involves very close, open communication between teenagers and their parents, often including close contact with the school of the child (Rainey, 2006). Parents with the helicopter style of parenting are characterized as overly involved, protective parents who provide phenomenal support such as financial, emotional, physical and health advice to their emerging adult children, often intervening in their affairs and making decisions for them (Reed, Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle & Ferraro, 2016).

Helicopter parents engage in actions such as contacting the adult child's university, constantly wondering about the adult child's whereabouts, and monitoring other aspects of the adult child's life such as his/her diet, exercise, or relationships (Bartlett, 2017). Such actions are perceived to be controlling instead of responsive. In effect helicopter parenting results in over parenting. Although over parenting is carried out with good motives to help the child become successful, take away any obstacle the child may face, and to ensure happiness for the child, its negative outcomes for the child. Researchers have compared helicopter parenting to authoritarian parenting, as neither of the two types of parents seems to know when to let their children take control of a situation, and to make a decision for themselves (Bartlett, 2017).

Using a four-factor model, Hind (2016) assessed four dimensions of parenting and used that as a basis to classify parents as helicopter. The four models were problem solving, precautionary actions, physical concerns, and whereabouts concerns. These four dimensions comprise various aspects of parental behaviour that are considered over-involvement in an adult child's life. According to Bartlett (2017) problem solving behaviours refer to behaviours in which parents invest more time into their adult child's problems and projects than the child him/herself does. Whereabouts concerns refer to actions which involves tracking or monitoring of their adult child's whereabouts or daily activities.

Precautionary actions refer to actions which encompass voicing opinions about their adult child's relationships, and physical concerns refer to actions such which deal with monitoring an adult child's exercise schedule or diet. In Hind's four-factor model questions were asked about actions from each of these four dimensions of parenting to determine whether a person fell under the category of helicopter parenting. Some studies have demonstrated that helicopter parenting fosters dependence on parents. This may be due to over involved parents undermining the sense of independence of their adult children and the children's ability to perform on their own. Helicopter parents feel that they can abolish obstacles that their children may potentially face, even into adulthood (Bartlett, 2017).

Studies have suggested that helicopter parenting can have deleterious effects on the child. For instance, Schiffrin, Liss, Miles-McLean, Geary, Erchull and Tashner (2014) reported that helicopter parenting had negative effects on the mental health and self-efficacy of the child.

2.5 Single Parenting

The foundation to the future outcome of a person in the society is laid in the home at the initial stage of life. Nonetheless, certain events in families demand that the parenting role be left in the hands of a single parent, resulting in single parenting (Olaleye, Ajayi, Oyebola and Ajayi, 2017). D'Mello, Govindaraju and Monteiro (2016), explained single parenting as a situation in which a father or a mother lives solitary with the children in the absence of the other partner.

D'Mello *et al.*, (2016) postulate death, divorce or separation as possible causes of single parenting. Similarly, Azuka-Obieke (2013) defined single parenthood as the situation which arises when one of two parents who are responsible for the nurturing and child rearing is not available and the responsibilities meant for two people is now being carried out by one person. The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) defines single parents as divorced, separated, widowed, or single never married, non-cohabitating men (single fathers) or women (single mothers) aged 15 years or older living in a household with one or more biological or adopted child younger than 25 years and no other adults.

In a related context, Dowd (1997) mentioned that a single parent is a parent not living with a spouse or partner, who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the children. A single parent is usually considered the primary caregiver. According to Dowd (1997), the parent with whom the child resides with most of the time is the primary caregiver. In situations of separation or divorce, children live with their custodial parent and are allowed visitations or secondary residence with their non-custodial parent (Benokraitis, Nijole, 2012, 2011, 2008). Findings from the Statistics Ginger Bread in 2010, show that in most western countries, a child gets into the

custody of the primary caregiver mostly the father. In such situations, judgments by courts determine whom the child will spend most of their time with.

2.6 Gender and Parental Roles

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 (Amissah, et al, 2015). The stratification of gender roles in the Ghanaian community is influenced by many traditions and these roles are passed on from one generation to the next in order to reinforce them (Boateng, Adomako-Ampofo, Flanagan & Yakah, 2006).

The role of parents is mostly shaped and guided by cultural factors and changing institutional arrangements (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013). Culture plays a vital role in the organization of domestic and cultural activities in Ghana. For instance, “the behaviour of males in their families is influenced by expectations of their fellow men about what it means to be a man in the community in which they live and conformity with certain norms and practices and these expectations perpetuate masculine tendencies among boys and men” (Dako-Gyeke&Owusu, 2013, 482). Furthermore, some gender related proverbs are often used in our everyday life to ensure males and females acknowledge and respect their appropriate roles in the society (Adomako-Ampofo, 2001; Boateng *et al.*, 2006).

Within socio-economic circles, men are mostly given responsibilities that involve leaving the home and the centre of their training focuses on public activities while women are assigned duties that are based in the home (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013). According to Boateng et al, women and girls are taught to consider men and boys as stronger, wiser, and more responsible and men are socialized to lead and control women. Girls are therefore expected to carry the greater burden of domestic work and

boys are permitted more time for play and to be away from home (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013).

Notwithstanding the fact that both mothers and fathers are capable of caring for a child (e.g. Silverstein, 1996), the continuing differences between the level of parental involvement may be due to sociocultural factors (Renk, Roberts, Roddenberry, Luick, Hillhouse, Meehan, Oliveros & Phares, 2003). The different parental roles lead to varied patterns of interactions between parents and their children. The ways in which mothers and fathers situate their roles influence their behaviour towards their children (Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, & Buehler, 1993). According to the role theory social roles are shared norms and expectations about how an individual should behave in certain situations Renk *et al.*, 2003).

2.6.1 Roles of the father

According to Danso and Acquah (2014), the family is generally duty-bound to direct and nurture the child in the norms and values of the community. The role theory suggests that the role of the father is dependent on his internalized concept of appropriate paternal behaviour (Rent *et al.*, 2003; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). A determinant of the participation of the father in childcare is his belief about appropriate maternal and paternal parenting roles (Rent *et al.*, 2003).

They are to be responsible for the psychological and emotional welfare of the child as well as the instructive and development of the child. In Ghana, the parental roles are indomitable and resolute and are culturally defined and executed. The roles of the father include the provision of economic responsibilities and discipline of children (Danso & Acquah, 2014). Otu (2015) documented that, the responsibility of the father is primarily economic. Corroborating this finding, Stephen and Udisi, (2016) reported

that paternal roles involve economic responsibilities and discipline of children. Similarly, Otu (2015), explained that, the role of a father entails that of a disciplinarian and a gate watcher of the happenings in the family. Fathers are required to provide the basic amenities of the family even when their spouses are working or gainfully employed. The father is required to be present at home to instruct and direct the way their children should behave (Otu, 2015). Furthermore, Amissah et al in (2015) posited that in many communities, the primary role of the man in the family is that of an economic provider. The father is minimally involved in the day-to-day care of the children. In the Ghanaian traditional society, the is responsible for the roles such as provision of money for food, clothing and shelter, security, discipline and major physical infrastructure that provide comfort and pleasure for the family.

2.6.2 Roles of the mother

Responsibility defines the degree to which the parent takes responsibility for the child and ensures the care of the child. The concept of parental responsibility or role assumes that the parent is doing more than just “helping out” (Renk, Roberts, Roddenberry, Luick, Hillhouse, Meehan, Oliveros & Phares, 2003). The woman is responsible for expressive roles such as affection, moral support, cooking, performing of household chores and caring for the daily needs of the family. The demands of everyday living present huge challenges to single-parents’ families. These challenges demand adequate supply and skilled managements of resources that are available (Amissah, Mensah & Antwi, 2015). According to Stephen and Udisi (2016), maternal responsibilities or roles are confined to nurturing of children, home training and playing of complementary roles to the fathers.

Danso and Acquah (2014) observed that the maternal responsibility is that of child care and home making. Mothers mostly spend more time with their children in direct physical and nonphysical care, such as engaging in specific activities like food preparation, caring for ill children, shopping for their children, and nurturing (Renk *et al.*, 2003). Women who support strict traditional gender roles may not look forward to sharing their parental responsibilities with their partners or may not want to relinquish their childcare role (Bonney *et al.*, 1999). By gate keeping the domain of the home and family, mothers restrict paternal involvement in the family upkeep (Allen and Hawkins, 1999). In the traditional family setting, the absence of preparation and social support systems for new fathers often enforces the view that highlights the mother as the childcare specialist. However, in non-traditional situations, mothers balance and integrate their dual roles as mothers and workers (Renk *et al.*, 2003).

2.7 Problems Faced by Single Parents

Danso and Acquah (2014) posited that parenthood is difficult and demanding even under the best circumstances. Single-parent families may be due to divorce or separation, unwedded parents or death of one of the spouses (Amissah, 2014). In single parent families, only one of the children takes custody of the children and shoulders all the accompanying responsibilities. Single parents seem to be more socially isolated than married parents. Besides, single parents work more hours and receive less emotional parental support. They appear to have reduced social networks and encounter more potentially stressful changes in life (Amissah, Mensah & Antwi, 2015).

The challenges and difficulties of parenting become compounded with one parent. Coping with the task of nurturing children for single parents becomes more difficult because of role burden. According to Danso and Acquah (2014), When one parent takes all the responsibilities and provides all the needs of the family it results in chore over-load, high demands for work, housework and can be very devastating for the emotional and general wellbeing of the single parent. Studies have revealed that two parent families maintain a hierarchy that is absent in single parent families. The absence of hierarchy allows the single parent who works full time to share managerial responsibility for the household with the children. The consequences for the children is fostering of an early maturity, greater intimacies and nurturing tendencies (Weiss 1979). The bulk of available evidence shows that the single parent home by itself is not the culprit. It is the poverty associated with it, conflict ridden milieu, power struggles, faulty patterns of communication patterns or enhanced expressed emotions that determine the nature or extent of emotional-behavioural problems in children irrespective of their being part of single or two parent families (Ganesha & Venkatesan, 2012).

Danso and Acquah (2014) argued that the composition of the family ultimately provides a good sense of security and steadiness that is indispensable for children and parents. Life in a single parent home can be unimaginably daunting for both the single parent and the children. In the view of Danso and Acquah (2014), the single parent may experience the challenging combined responsibility of caring for the children, maintaining a profession and keeping up with the bills and other domestic responsibilities

2.8 Causes of Single Parenting

Several factors have been implicated in the cause of single parenting. Amato (2000) outlined; divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples, and single parent adoption as the major causes of single parenthood in our contemporary society. For instance, Ntoimo and Odimegwu (2014) reported that Sub-Saharan Africa has increased cases of out-of-wedlock motherhood, marital instability, and widowhood. These causes of single parenting have been heightened by factors such as wars and HIV/AIDS pandemic (Ntoimo & Odimegwu, 2014).

2.8.1 Divorce

In advanced countries, divorce is one of the main events that lead to single parenting (Amato 2000). Divorce is the legal termination of a marriage union between a man and a woman. Researchers have reported a rise in the rates of cases of divorce in sub-Saharan Africa (Nkyi, 2013) leading to single parenting. According to Nkyi (2013), divorce rates in Ghana rose from about 40% in the 1970s to over 60% by the late 1980. Key predictors of divorce include age of first marriage; marriage at a very younger age and pre-marital childbearing (Nkyi, 2013).

For instance, in Mozambique women who marry early before age 18 have a 24% higher risk of getting divorced than those who marry at age 25 or older (Arnaldo, 2004). Similarly, Olaleye, Ajayi, Oyebola and Ajayi (2017) argued that the risk of divorce may be due to factors such as different social circumstances, personal attributes and certain genetic disposition. Marital instability is mostly associated with premarital cohabitation and pregnancy, young age at the time of marriage, economic hardship, high levels of residential mobility and growing up in a disrupted or divorced

family. Besides heavy drinking and drug use are strongly associated with higher risk of divorce (Olaleye *et al.*, 2017).

According to Ntoimo and Odimegwu (2014) the population of married women in Cameroon who were separated, divorced or had absent spouses rose by 65% between 1976 and 2005. In Nigeria, about one million women aged 10–85 years old were either divorced or separated women in 2006. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, divorce and separation increased by more than 50% in women aged 15–49 years between 1984 and 2007(Ntoimo and Odimegwu, 2014). Data from the Ghana Statistical Service indicate that about 10.2% of the population in Ghana are single parents, this proportion involves those separated, divorced and widowed. Current trends of modernization and urbanization have led to an upsurge in divorce cases. This is because of the increasing autonomy of women and their active participation on the labor market (Takyi, 2006). Childlessness has a large positive effect on the probability of getting divorced (Takyi, 2006).

Similarly, in a study conducted by Danso and Acquah,(2014) aimed at assessing the effects of single parenting on child's health in the Mampong Municipality of Ghana, a survey research was used, purposive and snowball sampling was used to select one hundred respondents who were single parents with a child or children residing in various communities in the Mampong Municipality using questionnaires and unstructured interviews. The findings showed that divorce is the major cause of single parenting and constituted 55 percent of the single parents interviewed. Several studies have reported a rather surprising rise in the rates of divorce in sub-Saharan Africa (Blanc & Lloyd 1994; Hutchinson 1990; Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1993; Mbugua 1992; Takyi 2001; Takyi & Gymiah, 2007).

Even in countries where divorce was historically extremely rare, like Nigeria, an estimated 10% of ever-married women have been divorced. In high divorce countries like Ghana, divorce rates rose from about 40% in the 1970s to over 70% by 2010 among ever-married women aged 40-49. By the age of 50 only about half of women living in Togo are still in their first marriage and about 45% of marriages in Ethiopia will eventually end in divorce (Tilson & Larsen, 2000). Modernization and urbanization have brought about increasing levels of women's autonomy and greater participation in the labour market which may contribute to the rise in divorce rates (Takyi 2006). Studies also consistently show higher levels of divorce in matrilineal societies relative to patrilineal groups (Arnaldo, 2004; Takyi 2001; Takyi & Gymiah 2007). Another key predictor of divorce is age of first marriage (Amoateng & Heaton 1989). In Ethiopia, for example, girls who marry before the age of 15 are significantly more likely to get divorced (Tilson and Larsen 2000), while in Mozambique women who marry before the age of 18 have a 24% higher risk of getting divorced than those who marry at age 25 or older (Arnaldo, 2004).

Lastly, several studies find a large and positive effect of being childless on the probability of divorce (Takyi 2006; Tilson & Larsen, 2000). Divorce women are primary responsible for both child rearing and economic support, Strong et al (2002). As a result, women are at greater risk for poverty than when they were in marriage. A single mother's income shows about a decline, whereas the income of a divorced man results in a 10 percent decline of his pre divorce income. When separation takes place in the family, the other parent does not know what to do or expect; there are no divorce ceremonies or rituals to mark this major turning point.

2.8.2 Desertion

Stephen and Udisi (2016) explained desertion as a situation whereby either the father or mother walks away from the marriage, leaving the other partner helpless and/or without support. They refer to desertion as the poor man's divorce. Kendall (2003) explained that it is called poor man's divorce because one partner leaves the marriage without going through the legal processes of divorce, which can be expensive. According to Stephen and Udisi (2016), children of deserted parents find it extremely difficult to understand the reason why they have to grow up without the other parent. Santrock (2002) had earlier observed that such children see themselves as unloved and unwanted by the deserted parents. This creates a mental imagery in the minds of the children that the absence of the other parent is the fault of the children.

2.8.3 Separation

D'Mello et al. (2016) explained that divorce is a legal consequence that follows separation. It is always preceded by separation but added that not all separations may lead to divorce. According to them, a legal separation is a legal agreement that makes provision for the couple to live apart, to divide their property and provide for their children. Most cases of the separation or divorce occurs in the first ten years of marriage and many involve small children. After the breakdown of marriage, one partner may want to invest in new relationships, and may not want to have further contact with the other parent. In certain cases, both parents will hesitate in engaging new relationships. However, in many situations, partners are affected by the stress and bitterness of separation and they are unable to plan their lives according to their children's needs, especially when these needs come into conflict with their own.

The crucial event of a marital breakdown is the act of separation. This usually occurs when the relationship between both parents had gone cold (Olaleye and Oladeji, 2010). Although separation generally precedes divorce, some couples are able to iron out their misunderstanding and misgivings and are able to put the separation period behind them and move on with their lives. Strong et al, (1986) opined that as many as one couple out of every six marriages are likely to have separated for at least two days. The most damaging consequences of separation are that it systematically impoverishes single mothers with their children (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010).

Stephen and Udisi (2016) asserted that one of the critical causes of the breakdown of marital union is separation. They explain that separation usually occurs when the marital relationship between both parents had waxed cold. According to Strong, De Vault and Cohen (2010) one out of every six marriages will have couples who are likely to have separated for at least two days. In furtherance of this, Stephen and Udisi (2016) explained that during separation between couples, the changes that take place during that period of separation are critical because the emotions of the individuals are raw and very pronounced. According to them, men and women react in very different ways during this period. Similarly, Danso and Acquah (2014) stated that single parenting can occur when a couple separates after cohabitation or in a marriage and one of the ex-spouses takes physical custody of the children.

2.8.4 Death

Historically single parent families were caused by the death of a parent. Death is an inevitable biological event in the life of man. Death is a major cause of single parenting (Stephen & Udisi, 2016). According to Stephen and Udisi (2016), the increased cases of single parenting can be partly attributed to increasing incidences of

parental death. For instance, in Cameroon Ntoimo and Odimegwu (2014) reported that between 1976 and 2005, the number of widows increased by about 58%. While in Nigeria a whopping 1.7 million people were widowed in 2006.

As a result of the low life expectancy for men in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa coupled with the typically large age differences between husbands and wives as well as the continuation of childbearing throughout women's reproductive years, an appreciable proportion of widows are left with the care of younger children. This situation has been worsened by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Research findings from about two decades longitudinal study has shown that single mothers have about twice greater mortality rates than partnered mothers. This higher mortality might be associated with inadequate household resources, inadequate or lack of social assistance and employment status (Rahman, Vigod, Lau, Cairney & Kurdyak, 2018). In situations where adequate provisions are not made for the surviving spouse, the surviving spouse is left to shoulder all the needs of the family. For instance, Olaleye *et al.*, (2017) mentioned that many widows are left to care for their families all alone. Many of the widows are ejected from the homes of their husbands and denied their properties.

Such practices tend to have emotional and traumatic effect on both the widow and the children. Women may become single mothers following the death of a spouse. Older widows may have adult children who are no longer residing in the household and these adult children may be an important source of economic assistance to their mothers. However, given the relatively low life expectancy for men in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the typically large age differences between husbands and wives, and the continuation of childbearing throughout women's reproductive years, a

sizeable proportion of widows are left with the care of younger children. This situation appears to be worse in countries had hit by the epidemics such as AIDS where life expectancy for both men and women has actually fallen.

2.8.5 Unintended pregnancy

Many cases of births out of wedlock are unintended. Bearing children out of wedlock may result in single parenting (Stephen & Udisi, 2016). A parent may shirk his or her responsibility or leave the relationship entirely if a child is given birth to, from a union borne out of wedlock. Besides, single parenting occurs when a woman gives birth to a child and does not live with the child's father or any other partner. In other words, single parenting results from non-conjugal births. Furthermore, teenage pregnancy may also lead to single parenting and single handedly raising a child during teenage can be very difficult. Teen single parents undergo stresses because of young age and inability to prepare for the future (Danso & Acquah, 2014). According to Garenne, Tollman and Kahn (2000), premarital childbearing in sub-Saharan Africa is quite common and generally considered high by the standards of Europe or North America.

In South Africa, for example, never-married women contribute nearly half of all births to women ages 12 to 26. Nonetheless, there is considerable variation found throughout sub-Saharan Africa in rates of premarital fertility. In countries such as Burundi, Ghana, and Zimbabwe less than 10% of never married women aged 15-24 have given birth (Gage-Brandon & Meekers 1993). Some researchers have suggested that the fast rising age of first marriage for women will inevitably result in higher levels of premarital childbirth. Earlier estimates of premarital childbirth by. However, data from nine countries in southern and eastern Africa find that despite increasing

age of first marriage, premarital fertility rates have remained relatively constant (Harwood-Lejeune, 2001). Higher rates of education and urbanization with correspondingly greater knowledge of and access to contraceptives may at least partially explain the why the number of premarital births has not increased.

2.8.6 Single parent adoption

Single parenting can arise when a person decides to adopt children. Danso and Acquah (2014) explained that single parenting may happen when a single (divorced, never-married, or widowed) man or woman adopts a child. According to Danso and Acquah (2014), adoption is the most common option for single people who feel deficient in life.

2.9 Effects of Single Mother Parenting

Research findings have shown consistently that family structure has many effects. According to Amato and Keith (2000) family structure can facilitate or limit the ways in which parents are able to positively influence the psycho-social and educational outcomes of their children. For instance, Hiratani and Hohashi (2009) observed that many single mother parents are confronted with the overwhelming effects of role overload and conflicts, poor community relationships and lower economic and healthcare functioning. Averagely, single mothers have been reported to present with poorer health than couple mothers.

Single mothers face economic hardship compared to two-parent families. Single mothers experience difficulties with role identity (Comstock, 2005; Richard & Schmierge, 1993). Irrespective of how single parenting is acquired, some level of social stigma is still attached to single-parents status. Part of the stigma of single parent families can be linked to a higher incidence of adjustment problems among

children of single parents compared to two-parent families. Some of these are attributed to single parent's inability to support their families financially, ineffective parenting practices of the non-custodial parent, low income status of the single parent, parental conflict before and after the divorce or separation (Nkyi, 2013). Parents can play an important role in reducing child mortality. The inability of one or both parents to care for their children due to death, illness, divorce or separation increases the risk of death of their children. There is increasing evidence that the health, education, and socioeconomic status of mothers and fathers have significant impact on the health and survival of their children.

Atrash (2011) conducted a literature review to explore the impact of the death of parents on the survival and wellbeing of their children and the mechanisms through which this impact is mediated. Studies have generally concluded that the death of a mother significantly increased the risk of death of her children, especially during the early years; the effect continues but is significantly reduced with increasing age through the age of 15 years. The effect of the loss of a father had less impact than the effect of losing a mother although it too had negative consequences for the survival prospect of the child. A mother's health, education, socioeconomic status, fertility behaviour, environmental health conditions, nutritional status and infant feeding, and the use of health services all play an important role in the level of risk of death of her children.

Factors that have been implicated to influence how children develop in single parent families include parent's age, education, occupation, family income, family support network, among others. Ganesha and Venkatesan (2012) hold the view that single mother parenting enhances the risk for child abuse and domestic violence, decreased

physical activity, school drop outs, stagnation, frequent absenteeism, truancy, teenage pregnancy, lower levels of educational achievement, getting into drug abuse, delinquency, or acts of sexual misconduct. Single mother parent families therefore have significantly lower family functioning than two-parent families (Hiratani & Hohashi, 2010).

The home of the child provides an environment for learning and socialization. The quality and nature of the features of the home and its environment have critical impact on the outcomes of the child (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). An enabling home environment with opportunities for learning and exploration and that provides warmth and emotional support will facilitate healthy growth and development of children (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). In the opinion of Carlson and Corcoran (2001), the presence of two parents in the home help in the sharing of the parental responsibilities of the child such as monitoring, providing support and instilling discipline.

The separation of parents results in situations where the residential parent often becomes the primary or in some cases the sole person to provide parental resources and economic upkeep, hence such parent invests little time in the monitoring and socialization of the children. The non-residential parent on the other hand is in distal proximity to the activities of the child and therefore, has less frequent interaction and involvement in the everyday activities of the child (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). Nkyi (2013) observed that the absence of a supportive social network for single mothers elicits more psychological distress for single mothers than for double parents, who have the advantage of benefitting from the socio-economic support of a partner.

According to Hellwig (1984) many single parents especially single mothers have special need to forgive because most women who bore children out of wedlock are carrying a double burden since the other partner is free of the consequences of the union. Such double burdened factors cause the single mother to experience trauma which ultimately produces feelings of despair, hopelessness, self-blame and shame. Divorced or separated parents who suffered domestic violence or abused in their marriage develop chronic posttraumatic stress disorders (Nkyi, 2013).

Stack and Meredith (2017), reported that financial hardship had a negative influence on the social interactions of single mothers. Social isolation, loneliness and withdrawal were seen as factors which led to the corrosion of the psychological wellbeing and mental health of single mothers. Stack and Meredith (2017) further observed that lack of money, or having very little money to participate in social activities were physical, social and psychological barriers which underpinned the tendency of single parents to withdraw socially. In a related finding, Odumosu (1997) reported very high rates of poverty among single mother families.

According to Stack and Meredith (2017), this meant that social withdrawal and isolation were associated with financial stress and hardship. Sleepless nights, frustration and distress, feelings of paranoia, suicidal thoughts were common mental challenges single mothers endure (Stack and Meredith, 2017). For instance, data from the Robert Koch Institute's report on the health of men in Germany, suggests that single fathers are more likely to rate their general health as poor, are more frequently diagnosed with depression, and are more likely to smoke than fathers living with a partner.

Rattay, Der Lippe, Borgmann and Lampert (2017) reported that single fathers face heavy psychological challenges and show a higher prevalence of mental disorders. Similarly, Chiu, Rahman, Vigod, Lau, Cairney and Kurdyak (2018) reported that single mothers generally have lower socioeconomic status, poorer self-rated health and mental health, higher levels of psychological distress, and more health-related problems and hospital admissions than mothers with partners. In a cross-sectional study conducted among single parents in Canada, Rahman, Vigod, Lau, Cairney and Kurdyak (2018) found that compared with partnered fathers, single fathers for instance had a poor profile of behavioral and lifestyle risk factors and had the highest mortality.

2.9.1 Psychological/emotional and health effect of single mother parenting

Danso and Acquah (2014) reported that children from single mother homes have a greater chance of experiencing health-related problems as a result of the decline in their living standard, including the absence of health insurance. Olaleye *et al.*, (2017) similarly opined that single mothers more often than not have little or no time for the general supervision and daily monitoring of their children and hence mothers and children from single mother families may communicate less about the needs of the children than children from two parent families. Furthermore, research has shown that single parenting has health implications on both the single mother and their child(ren). For instance, it has been reported that in spite of the progress made toward reducing child morbidity and mortality globally, a large number of children in sub-saharan Africa still suffer from chronic malnutrition and death due to the single parent status of the mother (Ntoimo & Odimegwu, 2014).

In a comparative analysis of data from Demographic and Health Survey in Cameroon to investigate the influence of single motherhood on stunting and under-5 mortality in Cameroon, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) paying particular attention to the influence of mother's economic resources, parental care and health behaviour on the difference in children's health in single and two-parent families, it was reported that compared with children whose mothers were in union, children of single mothers who were not widows were more likely to be stunted. Economic resources and parental care significantly influenced the higher odds of stunting in single mother households in Cameroon and DRC. Relative to children of mothers in union, the risk of under-5 mortality in single mother families was higher in the three countries. Economic resources, parental care and health behaviour accounted for the difference in Nigeria and Cameroon; in DRC, only economic resources had marginal influence. Based on these findings the researchers concluded that Single motherhood is a risk factor for children's nutritional status and chances of survival before age 5 years in sub-Saharan Africa. To achieve improved reduction in children's exposure to stunting and under-5 mortalities.

Danso and Acquah (2014) emphasized that a breakdown in the composition of the family may have a grave effect on children and their abilities to function properly. In most cases, the children may lack a biological father to rely on for their upkeep. For that reason, children have to solely depend on the mother to meet all or most of their requirements in life. Danso and Acquah (2014) further posited that with inadequate finances, time and parents' accessibility, parents are less likely to offer the needed support that children require in all their undertakings including good health. Olaleye, Ajayi, Oyebola and Ajayi (2017) argued that life in a single mother family can be

traumatic, as a result, children raised in single mother parent homes often suffer some emotional challenges such as love, warmth and disciplinary problems.

Conversely children raised in two parent families are often emotionally stable and suffer less emotional challenges. Hamburg (2004) indicated that marital separation imposes profuse emotional distress on both the single mother and the child. Olaleye et al., (2017) observed that children aged six to eight react to the absence of one parent with grief, fear and intense longing for reconciliation. Those aged nine to twelve (9-12) tend to be openly angry and are inclined to reject a step parent as father.

Stephen and Udisi (2016) argued that single mothers become bitter towards the absent spouse and experience loneliness. Stress as defined by Stephen and Udisi (2016) is the situation that arises when external demands exceed peoples coping resources, results in feelings in emotional distress and increase in indicators of abnormal physiological arousal. According to Hill, Yeung and Duncan (2001) the stress theory postulates that alterations in family organization and circumstances can lead to stress in children. This observed stress is due to the fact that changes may result in modifications in family dynamics, organization and roles that produce modifications in the behavior of both children and adults. Certain family events such as observed conflict and tension between their parents, changes in household composition, or changes in residential location may directly cause stress in children. As a reaction to challenges in the home, children may disconnect from the home environment and as result be subject to little supervision and socialization thereby becoming more susceptible to negative peer influences. Conversely, some researchers have argued that the stress due to family change is cumulative because any disruption requires re-adaption, and therefore the

number of family transitions has greater negative consequences for children than any particular family structure experienced (Amato, 1993; Wu & Martinson, 1993).

According to Azuka-Obieke (2013), children from single mother homes suffer from mental retardation, personality disorders and are often miserable. Such children are more likely to suffer deprivations and denial of some fundamental rights and opportunities. Single mother parenting has enormous effect on children in general and adolescents in particular. According to Santrock (2004), adolescence which is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood involves a lot of biological, cognitive and social and emotional changes. Adolescents are therefore associated with emotional instabilities and hyper-activities which can predispose the adolescents to emotional storms and stress (Salami & Alawode, 2000).

Stephen and Udisi (2016) argued that since adolescence is a critical stage in the development of an individual, any aberration in nurturing or laxity due to factors such as single mother parenting may result in academic non-performance and the development of unacceptable and unwholesome attitudes. In most instances of single mother parenting, little or no attention is given to the psychological well-being and education of the child (Azuka-Obieke, 2013). Single mothers report higher rates of depression and lower levels of psychological functioning than do other mothers (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). This could be as a result of the stress associated with marital disruption or to the everyday strain of coping with family problems with limited financial and social resources (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001).

Mothers' poor mental health has been reported to adversely affect child behavior (Downey & Coyne, 1990). For instance, Carlson and Corcoran (2001) posited the psychological health of the mother is an important mechanism that might account for

effects of family structure on children's behaviour and cognitive functioning. This is because lower psychological health may lead to inferior and less effective parenting or the depressed mother may have a negative outlook and perception of her child (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001).

In a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Stack and Meredith (2017) to explore the impact of financial hardship on wellbeing on single parents, the results showed that not having enough financial resources to support their children and needing to rely on other people were described as stressful and worrying. Participants presented themselves as trapped and helpless, and constructed their position as one where there was a persistent battle with finances; with the need to fight for everything. Participants described a range of feelings in response to the constant worry about providing for a child by a single person, including feeling miserable and stressed. These feelings and stressors did not dissipate with time, and were worsened by unanticipated life events p. 235.

The findings further revealed that money worries were viewed as being a central part of everyday life, and was a recurring stressor which was unavoidable. On the health and mental wellbeing of single parent participants, Stack and Meredith (2017) reported that single mothers considered their personal responsibility for feeding children as vital, and unquestionable. Participants detailed doing whatever it took to ensure that their children had food, so that their children would not go hungry. In sacrificing so, however, participants would reduce their own food intake or go hungry, arguably leading to the detriment of their own physical and mental health. Participants would also skip meals in order to make enough money to pay utility bills.

2.9.2 Educational effect of single mother parenting

Olaleye, Ajayi, Oyebola and Ajayi (2017) mentioned that the family is primarily the first social group the child associate with, and thus the family has a greater influence on the physical, emotional and mental development of the child. Olaleye *et al.*, (2017) further advanced the argument that because the family lays the foundation of education before the child is enrolled into school, the kind of personality the child will show in school as well as his educational attainment will to a greater extent be influenced by the family. Olaleye et al. (2017) posited that the structure of the family is the most sensitive factor that affects the success of the academic performance of children because the structure of the family can influence the emotion, psychology, socio-economic state of the members of the family negatively or positively.

In a study conducted by Abudu and Fuseini in (2013) to examine the influence of single parenting on pupils' academic performance with a focus on whether academic performance differed between child from single parents' home and those from two parent homes. A cross-sectional study design was used, questionnaires were used in collecting primary data and secondary data on test scores was obtained from pupils' report cards. Using a sample size of 170 respondents and analysing data analysis using cross tabulation and t – test. It was found that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of pupils from single mother parent homes and those from two parent homes. The main conclusion drawn from the study was that single mother parenting has negative impact on a child's academic performance, as a result the researchers recommended that teachers should give pupils from single parent homes attention to enable them cope and that they should equally be counselled to make them adjust to the academic environment.

According to Hamburg (2004), the children from single mother families who drop out of school is about twice the number from double parent families. These children have a reduced capacity to function in school (Stephen & Udisi, 2016). Similarly, Danso and Acquah (2014) observed that higher absentee rates at school, lower levels of education, and higher dropout rates are mostly associated with children from single mother homes. Both parents have their own unique roles to play in the education and moral development of their children, the father is responsible for the provision of all the necessary tools for educational advancement, while the mother has the obligation to supplement and complement the efforts of the father. Salami and Alawode (2000) corroborated these observations when they mentioned that both parents have roles to play in the education of their children and that the father has the obligation to provide the necessary academic logistics for their children, while the mother's role is to provide assistance and complement the role of the father. According to Salami and Alawode (2000) the primary responsibility for the educational and career development of children hangs on parents. Nyarko, 2011; Nyarko and Vorgelegt, 2007 found that when both parents are actively involved in the education of their children, the academic performance of the children improves.

Nyarko (2011) observed that, double parents are more likely than single mothers to involve themselves in the education of their children. Stephen and Udisi (2016) suggested that the academic performance of children is positively influenced as both parents become engaged in the academic activities of their children.

Donkor (2010) found that poor parental supervision resulted in poor academic performance of children. The absence of one of the fathers from the home thus adversely affects the education and academic activities of the children. Stephen and

Udisi (2016) explain that when one of the parents is absent from the home, the single parent becomes overburdened and may poorly discharge their parental roles effectively, thus the academic performance of the children declines. For instance, in situations where the father is absent from the home and the mother is not privileged enough to provide all the necessary needs of the child, supervise the academic activities of the child by checking the academic record of the child via perusing the lesson notes and exercise books of the child frequently or provide appropriate educational counselling to the child, the academic performance of the child may be derailed (Olaleye *et al.*, 2017).

Owing to the positive influence of the involvement of parents in the educational achievement of children, children from single mother families may likely not receive the needed attention. Abankwa (2013) reported that, as compared to children from two-parent families, children from single mother families are three times more likely to drop out of high school. In explaining this observation, Abankwa (2013) explained that single mothers are primarily the sole source of financial inflows in the family, as a result they have less time to help their children academically, they are less likely to subject their children to strict discipline, may have less parental control and all these may lead to poor academic performance.

In a related observation, Olaleye *et al.* (2017) found that the educational achievements of children depend very strongly on the socio-economic status of the parents. Stephen and Udisi (2016) stated that parental divorce is characterized by low socio-economic status. Thus, children with single or divorced parents are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to attend college and complete fewer years in school. The bad educational outcomes according to Stephen and Udisi (2016) are due

to emotional imbalance caused by disrupted and chaotic households and the formation of a poor sense of self by the child.

This poor self-worth and instability in relationship can cascade into series of other problems in relationships such as infidelity, reoccurring divorce and remarriages and cases of spousal and domestic abuse. In sharp contrast, few studies have reported that single parent families may not have the much-publicized widespread adverse effect on the academic achievements of the children (Stephen & Udisi, 2016). Debell (2007) suggested that there is a much-reduced effect on the academic performance of the child, once the socio-economic factors are controlled.

According to Nyarko (2011) and Chowa et al. (2012) showed that parents worry about the affairs of the school environment of their children. As a result, Nyarko (2011) observed that Ghanaian parents for instance, mostly help on a limited basis towards ensuring completion of their children's homework. Similarly, Abudu and Fuseini (2013) reported that two-parental involvement in the school environment appears high, this is evident in about 87% of parents participating in Parent Teacher Association meetings, discuss expectations with their children, discuss school work and help in the execution of their children's homework.

Abudu and Fuseini (2013) further explained that married parents are more likely to be involved in the education of their children than single parents. Using a Likert scale of 1 (never involved) to 5 (very often involved), married parents reported checking whether their children have done their homework more often ($M=3.51$) than single parents ($M=3.37$; $p<.001$). Among the 1,270 single parents' participants, 38.7% assisted their children with homework, but 44.8% of the 3,291 married parents give more direct help with homework. The engagements of parents in the academic

activities of their children impose a positive influence on the academic performances the children (Abudu & Fuseini, 2013). Nyarko (2007); Nyarko and Vorgelegt (2007); Topor, Keane, Shelton, and Calkins (2010) found that parental involvement is positively associated with students' academic performance in school (as cited in Abudu and Fuseini, 2013).

Donkor (2010) reported that poor performance of children sometimes emanates from the lack of proper parental supervision of their children's homework. To test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students from single parent families and those from two parent families at a significance level of 0.05, Uwaifo (2008) recruited 240 students drawn from some randomly selected Universities in Nigeria. A *t*-test statistical analysis of the result revealed that there was a significant difference between academic performance of students from single parent families as well as those from double parent families. These findings were corroborated by Abudu and Fuseini (2013) in a cross-sectional study. In their study they examined the effects of single parenting on the academic performance of pupils from basic schools in Ghana.

The study involved 170 students from some selected basic schools drawn from the Wa Municipality. Testing a null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in academic performance of pupils from single parent homes compared with those from two parent homes at a significance level of 0.05 using *t*-test statistical analysis, the results showed that a significant difference existed between the academic performance of pupils from single parent homes and those from two parent homes. The results further revealed that single parenting has a negative effect on the academic performance of pupils. Olaleye et al., (2017) observed the following as crucial factors

that negatively influence the academic outcomes of children from single mother homes.

1. The parent with the custody of the child spend less time with children in with reference to supervision of school-work and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline;
2. The lack of an appropriate role model, especially for males when the father is absent, increased responsibilities on children such as childcare roles, domestic duties which exhaust the time available for school work; and
3. The nature of parent-child relationships in single mother families may cause emotional and behavioural problems for the child.

Findings from many comprehensive studies on socio-economic background of children from single parent and two parent families revealed a recurring pattern that children from single parent families exhibit certain patterns. For instance, Olaleye et al.,(2017) observed that children from single mother families with low socio-economic status suffer from lower retention rates and as such are more likely to drop out of school early, have lower rates of participation in education evident in the observation that such children are less likely to progress academically to the University, show higher levels of problematic behaviour such as truancy in school, are more likely to have challenges with their studies and show negative attitudes towards school.

Olaleye et al., (2017) argued that in two parent families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically, the parents can foster a higher level of achievement in their children and may be able to also provide higher levels of

psychological support for their children through environments that promote the development of skills necessary for success at school.

2.9.3 Economic effect of single mother parenting

Socio-economic status is determined by an individual's achievements in education, employment and occupational status, and income and wealth (Olaleye *et al.*, 2017). Single parent families are at a higher risk of poverty than couple families (Grown & Valodia, 2010). Danso and Acquah (2014) reported that children from single parent homes have a higher tendency to experience short-and long-term economic and psychological disadvantages. Single mothers are faced with the challenge of poverty and insecurity about raising their children single handedly without help. Stephen and Udisi (2016) averred that the emotional distress single mothers go through results in reduced capacity to work and reduced function in family roles. Rutter et al. (1976) re-iterate that larger families are poorer than smaller families and many of the observed outcomes found in children in large families may be related to factors associated with economic duress-from living in high-crime neighbourhoods and crowd inadequate housing, to malnutrition, unemployment and parental stress.

Single mother families are at high risk of financial hardship which may impact on psychological wellbeing. Stack & Meredith, (2017) conducted a study in England to explore the impact of financial hardship on wellbeing on 15 single parents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using constructivist thematic analysis. The study participants described food and fuel poverty, and the need to make sacrifices to ensure that children's basic needs were met. In some cases, participants went without food and struggled to pay bills. Isolation, anxiety, depression, paranoia, and suicidal thoughts were described.

Economic hardship has been reported to cause emotional distress in single mothers, which can have the ripple effect of hampering the single mother's ability to be supportive, sensitive and consistent in their relationship with their children (Dearing, McCartney & Taylor, 2006).

According to Azuka-Obieke (2013), single mother homes are more likely to show low-economic status. Such children are exposed to challenges such as lower educational level, lower economic achievement, depression and isolation. In a study conducted to investigate the effect of the absence of one parent on the well-being of the child, Single-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) reported that children raised by single mothers fared far worse on a host of socio-economic indicators as compared with children raised by both parents. They further reported that single mother families tend to be poorer than two-parent families.

Similarly, Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (1997) reported a correlation between family structure and economic status, with low income having negative consequences on children. Considering the fact that economic status is a key determinant of the education of children, it can be inferred that the differences in educational outcomes between children from single parent families and those from two parent families could be explained on the basis of economic status. Benokraitis (2012) argued that the absence of the father from the home has serious repercussions on the family and such families experience very low income.

In a study conducted in the United States, Baugher and Lamison-White (1996) reported that families with children headed by females have more than 5 times chance of about 44.8% to be poor as compared to 8.7% for married couple families with children. Besides, they further observed that single mother families have an average

family income of \$15,400 which is about one third of an average income of \$44,600 for married-couple families. Children who experience persistent poverty face developmental deficits (Carlson and Corcoran, 2001). This developmental deficit according to Carlson and Corcoran (2001) can be attributed to the fact that low income families are unable to afford adequate food, shelter, and other material things required for healthy cognitive and social development of children.

Family income tends to influence the type of neighbourhood in which families can afford to live in. Children growing up or nurtured in higher income communities are more likely to experience positive peer influences that encourage achievement and pro-social behaviour (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Poverty is the most profound and pervasive factor underlying developmental problems of the young. Roughly, one of two families headed by a single mother is living in poverty compared with one of ten married couples with children (McLanahan & Booth, 1989). Single parents are twice as likely to report that they worry “all or most of the time” that their total income is not enough to meet family expenses. On average, poor children in families headed by single mothers are poor for several years, more than a third of their childhood (Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986). The economic differences result, not only from lower income preceding divorce, but also from the decline in income that accompanies divorce (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1989); the effect may differ somewhat for families who start out poor or become poor.

Nevertheless, the income of single mothers and their children after divorce is only 67 percent of their income before divorce, while the income of divorced men is 90 percent of the pre-divorce income (McLanahan & Booth, 1989). In one study using four nationally representative data bases, lack of income emerged as the single most

important factor in accounting for the differences in children from single parent and intact families; differences in income are estimated to account for over half of the differences in the educational attainment and steady employment of young adults, and just under half of the differences in non-marital childbearing (McLanahan & Sandefur, in press). Lack of income, however, does not appear to account for the differences in child well-being between intact and stepfamilies (McLanahan & Sandefur, in press) or in intact and divorced families (Amato & Keith, 1991). Families headed by single mothers are more likely to be poor because of the lower earning capacity of single mothers, the insufficient benefits provided by the state, and the lack of child support provided from the non-residential father (Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986).

2.9.4 Behavioural effect of single mother parenting

Poverty and economic hardship may result in stress that may lead to less effective parenting which ultimately has adverse consequences for the development of children and their subsequent adjustment in life (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). Stephen and Udisi (2016) asserted that children raised by single mothers show negative behavioural response such as lying, stealing and truancy in school. Anti-social behaviour is a major problem associated with children raised in single mother homes. In 1991 Amato and Keith examined the results of 92 studies involving 13,000 children ranging from preschool to young adulthood to determine what the overall results indicated. The overall result of this analysis was that children from divorced families are on "average" somewhat worse off than children who have lived in intact families. These children have more difficulty in school, more behaviour problems, more negative self-concepts, more problems with peers, and more trouble getting along with their parents.

Copeland (2010) opined that the overall relationship between parents and their children is most likely to negatively affect the psychosocial well-being of the children, resulting in the children indulging in risky and anti-social behaviours such as drinking, delinquency, violence, unsafe sexual activity and suicide attempts. Due to the fact that parents in large families cannot interact as closely with their children as those in smaller families, there is less opportunity for overprotection, infantilizing, constant harassing, or close supervision of children. The results of this relationship are reflected in the greater independence, anti-social behaviour and delinquency, but lower self-esteem and academic achievement of children from large families.

Copeland (2010) further argued that if a child is unhappy, that child is more likely to smoke or drink, children need a sense of security which is absent in single mother homes. In a study conducted by Salami and Alawode (2000), it was reported that children from two parent homes where both parents are present, are well taken care of and are socialized in the best way possible owing to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents and is thus effectively carried out when both parents play complementary roles in the upbringing of the children. Predictably, children raised by both parents are more likely to achieve self-actualization later in life (Olaleye *et al.*, 2017).

Levitin (1999) and Duncan (1994) reported that children from single mother family in most cases became delinquents, failed in school, developed inappropriate sex role attitudes and behaviour, or exhibited other types of pathological conditions. Olaleye *et al.*, (2017) corroborated these findings when they reported that as compared to children from two parent families, Teachers frequently described children from single

parent families as more fearful, hostile, aggressive, anxious, hyperactive and distractible.

According to Cherlin (2005), children who experience any form of change in family status have poorer behavioural tendencies than children from stable two-parent families. A similar observation had earlier been reported by Single-Rushton and McLanahan, (2004) that children raised from single mother families are more likely to exhibit poorer cognitive and behavioural outcomes as compared to children from two-parent families. Children from single parent families have greater problems with behaviour (Ackerman, D'Eramo, Umylny, Schultz & Izard, 2001). Bad companies, drug and substance abuse, rebellion, idleness and marginalization are some of the unwholesome behavioural traits that are mostly put up by children from single parent homes.

Interestingly, Olaleye et al., (2017) suggested that social contacts with members of the opposite sex by the single parent may be a catalyst for unacceptable behaviour. The mother's friend is seen to be an interloper by the children who attract attention seeking behaviour and sometimes exhibit aggressive acts directed at the visitor. According to Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz and Miller (2000) youths from single mother families appear more amenable to peer pressure and more likely to take decisions without consulting the parent. Cairney, Pevalin, Wada, Veldhuizen and Arboleda (2006) reported higher percentages of psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, mood disorders and alcoholism among families headed by single mothers. In a similar vein, Danso and Acquah (2014) observed that children from single mother homes exhibit more antisocial activity, including alcohol and drug addiction.

Karst (2000) attributed this high prevalence to factors such as limited supervision, strained financial re-sources, social isolation, fewer coping strategies compared with children in traditional two-parent families. Hollist and Mcdroom (2006) observed that children raised in single mother homes have a double risk of developing emotional behavioural problems.

According to them, single mothers and their children exhibit low self-esteem, less empathy, reduced ego, increased aggression, quarrelsome and fighting behaviour, reduced tolerance, and increased tendency of vandalism. These problems can be linked to challenges such as future adult crimes, alcohol and substance abuse, poor physical health and psychological disorders (Stephen & Udisi, 2016). Research has shown greater problem with behaviours in children from single parent families. Besides, more boys than girls have behaviour problems (Ackerman, D'Eramo, Umylny, Schultz & Izard, 2001).

Similarly, Cairney et al. (2006) found higher percentage of psychiatric disorders such as depressive, anxiety and mood disorders or alcoholism in single mothers. Children raised in single mother homes face double the risk for children to develop emotional-behaviour problems. Single mothers and their children as well as their parents show lower ego functioning, self-esteem, less empathy, greater aggression, fighting and vandalism, less tolerance for negative behaviours, and more likelihood to display non-age appropriate behaviours (Ganesha & Venkatesan, 2012).

In a study conducted by Ganesha and Venkatesan (2012), involving a sample size of 300 children within the age bracket of 6-18 years from an equal number of single parent and double parent families, using cross comparative two group random survey design to examine their reported prevalence of problem behaviours in relation to

certain socio-demographic characteristics of the children and their parents using the school age version of the Child Behaviour Check List (CBCL); it was reported that on the whole, children from dual parent family homes have fewer behaviour problems than those from single parent households.

However, within the single parent group it was found that, children from single father households have greater propensity for problem behaviours than those from homes of single mothers. In relation to associated variables, more girls than boys and more rural over urban children were reported as having additional problem behaviours within the studied sample of single parent households in the study. Children raised in single-mother families are at increased risk for psychopathology, but the mechanisms that help explain this relationship are understudied.

In a community sample of diverse adolescents (N= 385, 52% female, 48% Caucasian) and their mothers, Daryanai, Hamilton, Abramson and Alloy (2016) hypothesized that single mothers would be more likely than cohabitating mothers to engage in negative parenting behaviours, which would predict adolescent psychopathology prospectively. Single mothers were more likely to engage in psychologically controlling behaviours, which predicted to their adolescent offspring experiencing higher rates of depressive symptoms and externalizing disorders. Girls were more susceptible to depressive symptoms via psychologically controlling parenting than boys in single-mother families. Further, single mothers were more likely to engage in rejecting parenting behaviours, which predicted to a higher prevalence of adolescent externalizing disorders.

Surprisingly, rejection in single-mother families predicted to less severe anxiety symptoms in adolescents relative to two-parent families. The researchers argued that it is likely that single mothers are not inherently inferior parents relative to cohabitating mothers; rather, their parenting practices are often compromised by a myriad of demands and stressors. Consistent with their postulate, low socioeconomic status was associated with single motherhood and negative parenting behaviours. In a study aimed to study the influences of parenting stress, physical discipline practices, and non-resident fathers' relations with their children on behaviour problems in kindergarten, Jackson, Preston and Franke, (2010) reported that higher levels of parent stress, more frequent spanking, and less frequent father-child contact at time 1 were associated with increased teacher-reported behaviour problems at time 2.

In addition, more frequent contact between non-resident biological fathers and their children moderated the negative effect of harsh discipline by mothers on subsequent child behaviour problems. Specifically, when contact with the father was low, maternal spanking resulted in elevated levels of behaviour problems; with average contact, this negative effect of spanking was muted; and with high contact, spanking was not associated with increased behaviour problems in kindergarten.

2.10 Coping Strategies of Boy child from Single Parenting Homes

Lazarus and Folkman (2014) explains coping as a psychological process in which a person is constantly changing cognitive demands and behavioural efforts to manage specific internal or external demands that are excessive. It is an attempt to manage and deal with uncomfortable situations. Boy child from single mother parenting homes thus are exposed to high rate of parental neglect, emotional stress, and physical as well as social threats to their survival. Therefore, the coping strategies of boy child

from single mother parenting homes in Wassa Amenfi East Municipal District is seen in the efforts they make to raise the needed income to support their education. Coping strategies is also seen as a reflection of important competencies of these children.

Rizzin (2003) opine that coping with academic work involves getting food, school uniform, books, shelter and health. Obtaining these depends on the ability of the individual pupil to solve problems quickly and efficiently with available resources and ability to do well despite difficult life circumstances which determines to large extent the survival of the pupil. This means that coping is influenced by the personality characteristics of an individual (Bolger, 1990) as well as situational demands. Majumdar and Ray (2010) stated that coping strategies is influenced by social characteristics of the environment where the person finds him/herself.

Studies also show that children from poor socio-economic background and single mother parenting homes engage in petty business such as street hawking to be able to make a living (Lawuo, Machumu & Kimaros, 2015). Most of these children run from school or skip school to engage in such petty businesses to be able to provide their needs. Some of these children eventually engage in alcoholism/drugs addiction and other social vices.

Similarly, Asikhia (2010) noted that pupils from single mother parenting homes are forced out of school and made to engage in hawking, selling packaged drinking water and the likes so as to save money for their school expenses. Most of the time, they cannot afford instructional materials, and are always at the mercy of examiners during examination period. The persistence of this in the life of an individual student may spell doom for his academic success. Asikhia (2010) also indicated that individuals at the lowest economic level are often the least well-served by the school system. It is

for some of these challenges that the government introduced social interventions such as the free compulsory universal basic education, school feeding and free school uniform programmes in Ghana. However, there are still many cost elements in Junior and Senior High schools which affect pupils from poor and single mother parenting homes.

Majumdar and Ray (2010) found that children from deprived homes sought support from friends, relatives and strange persons without regards to vulnerability factors in the environment. They could get emotional support provided by classmates and teachers who befriend them. Students from deprived homes sometimes engage in religious activities as a way of coping with your situation. Others engage in romantic relationships in order to get emotional attachment which they don't get at home (Lawuo, Machumu & Kimaro, 2015). However, children who engage in romantic relationship with the opposite sex usually do not get reciprocation of feelings by their supposed loved ones.

Lawuo, Machumu and Kimaro (2015) found that children from single mother parenting homes joined youth groups and gangs where they normally meet at secluded locations to share ideas. They sometimes meet to play draft, games, cards, and sometimes discuss romantic issues. They sometimes commit crimes in the community and engage in other deviant behaviours such as smoking, taking drugs, sex, etc. They found that children joined gangs because of parental neglect and pressure from home. Majumdar and Ray (2010) opined that coping strategies are characterized by emotional discharge and cognitive avoidance and seeking new sources of satisfaction. Problem focused coping is inversely related to anxiety whereas emotion focused coping is found to be predictive of anxiety (Majumdar & Ray, 2010).

Lawuo, Machumu and Kimaro (2015) found that children from single mother parenting homes cope with their academic work by seeking support from peers and teachers on a number of issues. For instance, they seek information from teachers concerning getting support for their studies. Some of them spend time reading books and studying. However, most of them are not able to attend extra classes organized by their schools due to financial constraints.

2.11 Summary of Literature

The literature review focused on the theoretical framework based on two types of families, both parents and single mother families and conceptual framework focused on the single mother parents and children, challenges single mother parenting and effects of single mother parenting on both the boy child and single mother. The literature reviewed focused on the concept of parenting, parenting styles, single parenting, gender and parental roles, roles of the father, roles of the mother, problems facing single parenting, causes of single parenting and effects of single mother parenting.

Findings of the literature review indicates that the living in a single mother family was likely to be detrimental to the effects of the boy child due to the fact that most single mothers are overburdened partly with financial responsibilities and inadequate time to interact with their boy children among other factors.

Some of single mothers too have low educational levels and therefore do not provide good model for academic achievement. Finally, literature suggest that pupils from single mother parenting homes are forced out of school and made to engage in hawking, selling packaged drinking water and the likes so as to save money for their school expenses. Most of the time, they cannot afford instructional materials, and are

always at the mercy of examiners during examination period. The persistence of this in the life of an individual student may spell doom for his academic success.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter of the study gives a brief description of the study site detailing the location and size of the area, population and economic activities of the inhabitants. The chapter also focuses on the research approach and design, population, sample size, sampling technique, instruments of data collection. The reliability and validity of the research instrument as well as ethical considerations relating to the study are discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), all research needs a foundation, and that this foundation, whether explicit or implicit, is found in the ‘worldview’ or philosophical framework chosen by the researcher. The research approach adopted by the researcher is the mixed method or the pragmatic approach. The pragmatic paradigm in its simplest terms implies that, the overall approach to research is that of mixing data collection procedures and analysis within the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Pragmatism is seen as “debunking concepts such as ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ and focuses instead on ‘what works’ as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 713). It draws on many ideas including using “what works,” diverse approaches, and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge (Creswell, 2014).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that mixed methods research approach attempts to fit together the insights provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a workable solution. Thus, for the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens

the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study. This study was conducted in a school setting where students and teachers interacted freely and in a structured manner. In the school environment, teachers and students were familiar with each other and classroom interactions were seen as natural. In order to describe the effects of single mother parenting on boy child on their academic work, it was imperative to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. This research approach therefore enabled the researcher to develop thorough understanding of the influence of single mother parenting on their academic work of boy child.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive survey design was used to conduct the study. Aggarwal (2008) asserts that descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. The design will enable the researcher to collect and gather information on the effects of single mother parenting on the boy child in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality.

Downey (2015) expressed that research design is a master plan specifying the research methods and procedures. It is a detailed plan, which researchers use to guide and focus the research. The concurrent triangulation design of mixed research approach was adopted for the study. The mixed approach of research involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating both forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The central assumption of mixed method of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell, 2014).

The main objective of mixed methods research is to fully investigate a problem by drawing on quantitative measures to determine frequencies and relationship of variables as well as on qualitative tools to provide insight into meaning and understanding. It combines qualitative and quantitative methods in a way that emphasizes the strength of each method and avoids overlapping weaknesses. It involves the recognition that all methods have their limitations as well as their strengths. The fundamental principle is followed for at least three reasons: (a) to obtain convergence or corroboration of findings, (b) to eliminate or minimize key plausible alternative explanations for conclusions drawn from the research data, and (c) to elucidate the divergent aspects of a phenomenon.

Concurrent mixed methods design “are those in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem” (Creswell, 2009 p. 228). In this procedure, there is one data collection phase in which the qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously, and there are two separate analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data. In the interpretation phase, the findings are either merged, or they are compared in a discussion section (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

The concurrent triangulation design was chosen by the researcher on the basis that that the research sought to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data in order to identify the challenges facing single parents in the up-bringing of the boy child. This approach was consistent with the explanation of the mixed method of concurrent triangulation given by Schoonenboom and Johnson, (2017) that in concurrent triangulation there is one phase of data collection in which the qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously, and there are two phases of

statistical analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data. In the interpretation phase, the findings are either merged, or they are compared in a discussion section.

3.3 The Study Area

The study was conducted in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality. The Municipality was created out of the then Wassa Amenfi District Assembly in 2004 by LI 1788. The District was inaugurated on 27th August, 2004 with Wassa Akropong as its capital. The Municipal capital Wassa Akropong is about 180km away from the Western Regional capital Sekondi – Takoradi and 136km from Kumasi by road.

The Wassa Amenfi East Municipality lies in the southern part of the Western region of Ghana and occupies a total land area of 1,600 square kilometers. It lies between Latitudes 5, 30 N, 6,15N, Longitudes 1, 45 W and 2, 11 W. It is bounded to the west by Wassa Amenfi Central District Assembly, to the East by Mponohor Wassa East District Assembly, to the south by Preastea Huni Valley District Assembly and to the north by Upper Denkyira West and East District Assemblies. The district occupies a total land area of 1,600 square kilometres. The Wassa Amenfi East recorded a population of 83,478 in the 2010 Population and Housing Census. Therefore, at the current population growth rate of 3% per annum, the population is expected to increase to over 102,000 by the end of 2017.

The people of Wassa Amenfi East are predominantly farmers. However, most of the youth are engaged in illegal mining activities popularly known as galamsey. The main crops grown are cocoa, oil palm, rice, plantain and cassava. Vegetable growing is mostly done on subsistent basis. The Municipality has one major market at Wassa Akropong with the market day on Thursdays. Other satellite markets such as Opon Valley market, Nananko market, Bawdie/Dompim market and Japa market also boost

economic activities in the area Wassa Amenfi Municipality Assembly Composite Budget, (WAEDA/CB, 2015). Therefore, it is possible that the activities of single mother parenting could have effect on the boy child in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality, hence the need for this study in the study area.

3.4 Study Population

The population is the larger group to which a researcher intends to apply and generalize the findings of a study (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011). In other words, a population in statistical sense refers to an entire group of individuals in whom the researcher is interested in (Campbell & Walters, 2007).

Most researchers make a distinction between target population and accessible population. The target population is the actual population to which a researcher really intends to generalize the findings of a study. However, in reality the target population is rarely available. The accessible population is the population to which a researcher is able to generalize the findings of a study. Simply speaking the target population is the ideal choice of a researcher while the accessible population is his realistic choice (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011). The findings from a study are generalized first to the accessible population and then, if appropriate, more abstractly to the target population (Gray, Grovea & Sutherland, 2013).

According to the Ghana Statistical Service, GSS (2013) the 2010 National Population and Housing Census, estimated the proportion of single parents to be 10% of the national population. The proportion of males to females in Wassa Akropong is 51% to 49%. In this study the target population was all single parents in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality. Data from the 2010 population and housing census estimates the population of the Municipality to be 83,478. Assuming a population of 40% in

Akropong, a female proportion of 49% and a single mother population of 4.9%, the population of single mothers in the municipality was estimated to be $\frac{4.9}{100} \times 16363 = 802$. Hence the target population for the study was 802. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size determination, 260 single mothers were estimated to be sampled. However, due to time and resource constraint, 50 single mothers were accessible for this study. However, 21 of them agreed to take part in the study.

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size is the number of participants required in a study. The estimation of the sample size is very important because it determines the power and the impact of the study (Noordzij, Dekker, Zoccali, Jager, 2011). According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2011), in research a sample is a group on which data is obtained. Accurate conclusions can be made on a larger group of people using a fairly small sample if the sample is representative enough. The crucial relevance of a representative sample size is that it is the basis for generalization. Generalizing means that the outcome of the study can be applied to more than just the sample under study because it is representative of the target population. A sample size of 89 participants made up of 30 teachers, 21 single mothers and 38 male students were used for the study.

3.6 Sampling Technique

Sampling is the process of selecting a sample that is statistically representative of individuals from the population (Kamangar & Islami, 2013). Similarly, Sharma (2017) defined sampling as a procedure used by a researcher to systematically choose a comparatively smaller number of representative individuals (a subset) from a predefined population to serve the purpose as subjects or data source in order to achieve the objectives of a research.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the members in the study. In purposive sampling, the researcher uses her judgment to select a sample that he believes will provide the data required (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011). Purposive sampling is mostly used for identifying and selecting information- rich subjects for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Similarly, Teddlie and Yu (2007) defined purposive sampling as the method of selecting people, groups of people or institutions based on specific purposes associated with answering research questions.

This involves the identification and selection of people or group of people that are knowledgeable about or experienced with an issue of interest (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Besides knowledge and experience, availability and willingness to participate and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate and reflective manner (Bernard, 2002; Spradley, 1979) are important factors to consider in purposive sampling as cited by (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). The researcher first sampled 21 single mothers with boy child from schools and local churches in Wassa Akropong. Then boy children of these mothers were all sampled while their teachers were also involved in the study.

To select the 38-boy child for the study, the researcher used purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon. This implies that the researcher purposively selected the 38-boy child from the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality who have experienced Single Mother Parenting and were willing and ready to provide the needed information for the study.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is the process of choosing subjects and gathering information from them. A structured questionnaire and structured interview guide were used for the collection of data on the study subjects (See Appendix A, B and C). A questionnaire is a written self-report form designed to elicit information that can be obtained from the written report of a subject (Gray, Grove and Sutherland, 2017). Roopa and Rani (2012) defined a questionnaire as a list of written questions that is completed by or for a respondent to provide information or give his opinion. Structured close ended questionnaires involve definite, concrete and predetermined questions. The wording in the questionnaires are exactly the same and in the same order to all respondents. All the questions and answers are specified and the personal comments of the respondents are minimized (Roopa & Rani, 2012).

The questionnaires are designed to determine facts about the study participants, facts about events or situations known by the participants; or beliefs, attitudes, opinions, levels of knowledge, or intentions of the participants. The questionnaire as method of data collection was chosen by the researcher on the basis that it is relatively inexpensive, easy to administer, not time consuming and provides for maximum protection and privacy of respondents and so respondents respond honestly (Roopa & Rani, 2012). Besides, data from other data collection strategies have been found to corroborate findings from studies using questionnaires. Furthermore, information derived through questionnaires is similar to those obtained by interview (Gray, Grove & Sutherland, 2017).

Two questionnaires were administered to teachers and the boy-child. The questionnaire for teachers was structured into four sections. Section A focused on the demographic background of the participants. Section B, C and D dealt with questions intended to solicit information on the economic challenges, psychological/emotional and health challenges and behavioural challenges respectively confronting single parents.

Items on sections B, C, D of the questionnaire were rated using often, not often, sometimes and never. The questionnaire for the boy-child also contained 42 items structured into five sections. Section A sought information on their demographic data, Section B sought to find out the academic challenges of the boy child, section C sought to find out the effects of single mother parenting on the academic performance of the boy-child, section D sought to determine the challenges faced by boy child from single mother parenting homes while section E sought to find the coping strategies adopted by the boy-children from single mother homes rated YES or NO.

One structured interview guide was also administered to single mothers and boy-child. The interviews guide for single mothers contained 31 items which sought information of the background information of single mothers, their economic challenges, psychological challenges, social challenges and behavioural challenges.

3.8 Pilot Testing of Instrument

A pilot test is a preliminary part of a research conducted before a complete survey to test the effectiveness of the research methodology (Roopa & Rani, 2012). The questionnaire was pilot tested to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pilot tested by administering the questionnaire to 10 single mothers in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. The sample for the pilot

testing was chosen because it had similar socioeconomic and geographical background to the subjects to be used in the actual study.

The pilot test was conducted to provide the researcher with the opportunity of getting an insight into the challenges and difficulties that may have arisen with the administration of the questionnaire in the actual study. The challenges so identified were resolved. Further, the pilot test gave new insights and ideas to the researcher so that difficult or ambiguous questions could be refined. This gave some guarantee of a much easier administration of the instrument and clearer answers from the questionnaire. The absence of the pilot test would have made the data collection relatively difficult with the possible emergence of unanticipated difficulties.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Validity of an instrument refers the extent it measures what it is intended to measure (Field, 2005). The validity of the research instrument was determined by the Supervisor of the researcher who proof-read the questions to check if the questions measured what they were intended to measure.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a questionnaire or measurement process produces the same results on repeated trials. In other words, reliability is the consistency of scores over time or across ratters (Bolarinwa, 2015). The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the test-retest method and thereafter calculating the Cronbach coefficient. The measured Cronbach reliability coefficient was 0.72 indicating an appropriate and sound questionnaire.

Conducting the Interviews

One form of interviews was conducted by the researcher that is the face- to- face. Each interview session lasted for 20 to 30 minutes. The face- to- face interviews was conducted with the respondents who created time to physically participate in the personal interviews. All the interviews were conducted at dates and times convenient to the respondents. Respondents in the face- to- face interviews were given the opportunity select the location for the interviews. Each interview started by the researcher with an exchange of greetings and a note of thanks for the interviewee's acceptance to participate in the study. After a brief self-introduction, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the research study and how the information is going to be used. Interviewees were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially and would be used only for the purposes the research study.

In the course of the interviews, the researcher listened attentively to the interviewees and was probed to clarify information as and when necessary. With the face- to- face interviews, eye contact was maintained with the interviewees and some non- verbal expressions such as nodding and smiling was used to acknowledge responses and to indicate interest as the researcher made notes.

3.10 Data Analysis

The responses to the questions on the questionnaire were coded and subsequently entered into Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software version 24 and analysed. Percentages and frequencies were indicated for categorical variables such as sex, religious affiliation, and cause of single parenthood among others. Descriptive Statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data.

The responses from the interviews were described and explained in the form of phenomenon. Sometimes responses were quoted verbatim to authenticate claims made. Koul (2000) on this issue as expressing the view that “responses from open-ended questions in the form of direct quotations reveal level of emotions of respondents, the way in which they have organised their world, their thought and experiences about certain happenings and their perceptions’.

3.11 Ethical Issues

Ary, Jacobs and Winston (2013) points out that there are four stages in research ethics, namely: planning, data gathering, processing and interpretation of data as well as the dissemination of results. At the data collection stage, in conducting administering questionnaires, due honesty was exercised. The respondents had the opportunity to fill their questionnaires privately, in order to ensure confidentiality. In dissemination of results, measures were taken to ensure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of all participants. This means that the names of the participants were not used or revealed throughout the research project (Maree, 2007). The discussion of the findings was based on the trends that emerged from the data and not from any preconceived ideas.

Informed consent

According to Baloch and Shah (2014), informed consent implies the agreement to participate in research after learning about the study, including possible risks and benefits. This implies that the participants must be aware of what the research entails and how they are going to benefit from the research. The respondents were given time to consider the risks and benefits of being involved in this research and decide whether to take part without being coerced. Participants were also informed of all the

benefits and risks of the study. The participants were told about the general nature of the study as well as about any potential harm or risk that the study may cause.

Confidentiality

Cohen et al. (2011) defined confidentiality as not disclosing information from the participant in any way that might identify that individual or that might enable the individual to be traced. The researcher used coding abstracted data with unique identifiers rather than names and masking features of specific cases, institutions or settings that may make them recognisable even without names (WHO, 2013). The researcher considered the way the data was protected from unauthorised persons. Passwords were also used to protect the data on soft copies.

Anonymity

Anonymity means that we do not name the person or research site involved but in research it is usually extended to mean that I did not include information about any individual or research site that enabled that individual or research site to be identified by others (Walford, 2005). In the current study, numbers were used on questionnaires in place of participants and schools' names.

Harm to participants

The balance of protecting respondents from harm by hiding their identity while, at the same time, preventing “loss of ownership” are issues that need to be addressed by each researcher on an individual basis with each respondent (Grinyer, 2002). The researcher in this study made sure that participants were not exposed to physical, psychological and emotional harm. Sufficient information will be provided to the participants so that they could make informed decisions. Data will not be disclosed to

any other person without the consent of the participants. The researcher will carry out a thorough risk/benefit analysis.

Conforming to standard and laid down ethical principles is very crucial to the success of every research. Ethical clearance was therefore sought from the Ethical Review Board of the University of Education, Winneba. Furthermore, informed consent of all respondents was obtained before the study.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

The results and discussions of the findings of the study are discussed in this chapter. The data collected based on the objectives set for the study and were analysed as understood. This study sought to ascertain the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child, describe the extent to which single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child, describe challenges facing boy child from single mothers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality and ascertain the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work.

Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22 was used to summarize and analyse the data. Descriptive statistics was used as data were presented in tables, bar charts and pie charts.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.1.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the teacher respondents

The socio-demographic data of the respondents is presented in Table 4.1. Out of the 30 respondents, almost 67% (20) were males whilst 33% (10) were females. Most 57% (17) of the respondent teachers were between 30-39 years of age. In terms of educational level, 50% (15) were Degree (BA/B.Ed.) holders, 23% (7) had Diploma and MPhil or MA/MSc were 17% (5) and 10% (3), respectively. Most of the teachers had less than 10 years of working experience.

Table 4.1: Socio demographic characteristics of teachers

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	20	66.7
	Female	10	33.3
Age	20-29 years	6	20.0
	30-39 years	17	56.7
	40 and above	7	23.3
Educational Level	Diploma (DBE)	7	23.3
	Degree (B.Ed./BA)	15	50.0
	MPhil	3	16.7
	MA/MSc	5	16.7
Years of Working Experience	<10 years	13	43.3
	10-15 years	9	30.0
	16-20 years	8	26.7

Source: Field Data, 2020

4.1.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the single mothers

The socio-demographic characteristic of single mother respondents is shown in Table 4.1. The mean age of the mothers was 34.6 years and the mean number of children per mother was approximately 4. However, on average every single mother had at least 1 boy child and at most 4 boy children.

Table 4.2: Age and Birth characteristics of single mothers (N = 21)

Variable	Mean	Min.	Max.
Age	34.6	30	42
Number of children	4.2	3	6
Number of boy-child (children)	1.8	1	4
The average age of boy children	14.7	12	20

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

4.1.3 Socio-demographic characteristics of the boy child from single mother

homes

The mean age of boy-children from single mother parenting is 14.7 years, which range from 10-19 years. On average the sibling-size of boy children with single mother as their care-taker is 4.3 (range 2-7) and about half (2.4, range: 0-4) are enrolled in school.

Table 4.3: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents ($N = 38$)

Variable	Mean	Min.	Max.
Age	14.7	10	19
Number of siblings	4.3	2	7
Number of siblings in school	2.4	0	4

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

4.1.4 Causes of single mother parenting

The causes of single mother parenting are shown below. Majority (47.4%) of the single mother parenting was caused by the death of a spouse, followed by divorce (42.1%) and the least is separation (10.5%).

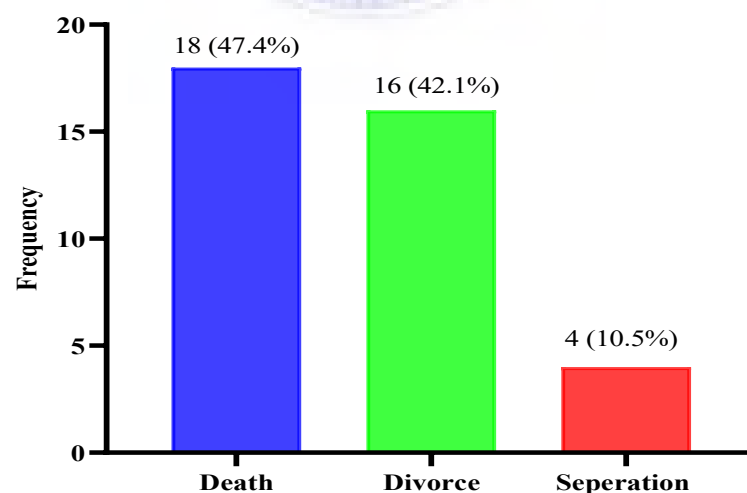


Figure 4.1: Causes of single mother parenting

The data above suggest that many functional marriages end up as a result of divorce or death. This study has shown that divorce and death are the leading causes of single parenting. Similarly, in a study conducted in the Mampong Municipality in Ghana, Danso and Acquah (2014) reported that divorce is the major cause of single parenting. This study further aligns strongly with Mugove (2015) who cited divorce and death as major causes of single parent families. Furthermore, the report of this study corroborates the observation by Stevenson and Wolfers (2007) that the rates of divorce have increased and the defining characteristics of marriage have been altered. These findings again corroborate the findings of Amato and Keith, (2000) who reported that death of a parent was the major cause of single parenting. The increased rates of divorces can be attributed to the fact that that the legal framework governing divorce has changed and it is now relatively easy for one to secure a divorce (Mnookin, 1998).

Furthermore, the theory of the family postulates that marriage is most likely to occur when the potential gains from marriage are huge. Couples marry, and stay married, when the gains from marriage exceed the gains from being single. These gains come from production complementarities such as household specialization and the raising of one's children, the benefits of risk pooling, and from consumption complementarities such as joint consumption of benefits and shared leisure activities. Therefore, altered labour situations and processes as well as technological advances that have facilitated the commercial purchase or production of what hitherto was produced in the home has reduced the benefits from specialization of spouses in the home, thereby decreasing the gains from marriage.

Furthermore, factors such as the introduction of no-fault divorce laws and gender-neutral custody criteria are factors that account for the increase in divorce. (Elrod & Dale, 2008; Kelly, 1994, 2006; Meyer & Garasky, 1993)

4.2 Research Question One: What are the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child?

This objective sought ascertain the challenges facing single mother parents in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality. The challenges identified are economic challenges, psychological challenges, social challenges and behavioural challenges.

4.2.1 Economic challenges of single mothers

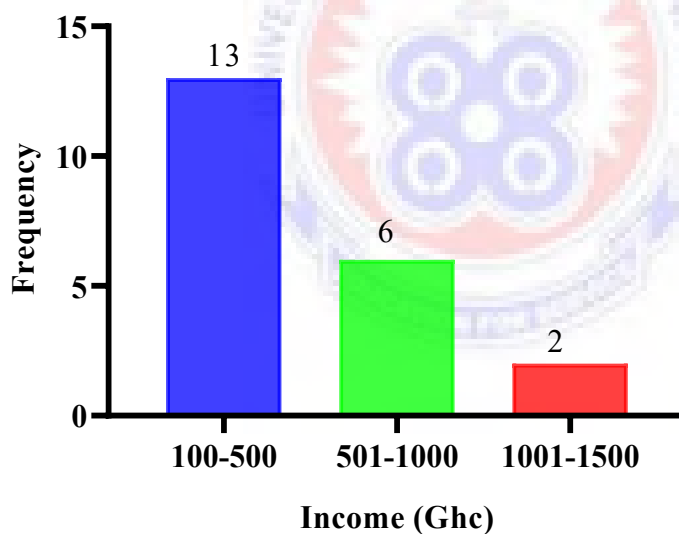


Figure 4.2: Monthly Earnings of single mothers

In Figure 4.2, it is obvious that the majority of the women (13/21) earn between 100-500 Ghana cedis monthly. However, only a few (2/21) earn between 1001-1500 Ghana cedis. This means that greater number of single mothers receive less than Ghs500 monthly. Considering the economic situation in Wassa Amenfi East

Municipality, this indicates that greater number of single mothers have financial challenges.

The results presented in Table 4.3 shows that majority of the single mothers 90.5% (19) indicated that they do not receive any additional financial support while 95.2%(20) of them states that they find it difficult maintaining and keeping their home. Additionally, all the 21 (100%) single mothers involved in the study had challenges in paying utility bills while 95.2% (20) of them have challenges in providing the overall needs of the family. The results show that greater number of single mothers have financial and economic challenges.

Table 4.4: Financial characteristics of single mothers

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Additional Financial support	No	19	90.5
	Yes	2	9.5
Able to save	No	11	52.4
	Sometimes	10	47.6
Difficulty in maintaining or keeping home	No	1	4.8
	Yes	20	95.2
Difficulty in paying utility bills	No	0	0.0
	Yes	21	100.0
Borrow or frequently contact loans	No	3	14.3
	Sometimes	18	85.7
Difficulty in providing the overall needs of the family	No	1	4.8
	Yes	20	95.2

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

To complement the quantitative data, the researcher interacted with some of the selected single mothers. The results accrued from those interviews were not different from the quantitative data. One of the mothers had this to share.....

“Hmmmmm, my sister, parenting is a not easy and single parenting is tougher as it entails added responsibilities. Since I became a single parent, I have met many challenges that has affected my life. My sister...A single parent has to face continuous newer challenges every day. A proper schedule if made will make the task much easier. Giving birth and raising a child is always a challenge. People all over the world are buoyed down when faced with the responsibility of parenthood. But when you have your spouse at your side you feel a lot confident as you are assured of the presence of an emotional support. Single parenthood is a huge challenge in itself as you have to deal with the situation where you have lost your loved one and at the same time, you need to take up the responsibilities of rearing the child and life as a whole. The challenges get multiplied by themselves” (SM-01).

In another depth interaction, one of the mothers had this to share with me...

“My sister I am grateful and thank you very much. I must be frank that single motherhood is very stressful for some of us. My sister, the reason is that having only one income earner in the home puts single parent households at risk for poverty. Living in poverty is stressful and can have many emotional effects on children, including low self-esteem, increased anger and frustration and an increased risk for violent behaviour. Besides financial constraints, other emotional effects of growing up in a single parent household may include feelings of abandonment, sadness, loneliness and difficulty socializing and connecting with others” (SM-02).

On the same issue on the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassaa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child. One of the single mothers had this to aver.....

“Yes!!!! My sister life is not easy for single mothers especially in this part of our world. The fact is that financial problem is perhaps one of the biggest challenges faced by a single parent. You cannot be a stay at home mom or dad as you need to think of the expenses. Thereby you cannot spend all your time for nurturing the child even if you believe that staying with the child throughout his growing up years is important. The challenge magnifies if you are not very well off. It is a tough job to plan your entire expenses and yet have a savings through a single pay check” (SM-03).

In another related results, one of the respondents asserted that.....

.....is a likelihood of the child becoming a misfit in the society when the remaining parent cannot cope with the problem of single parenthood. To me, I believe that children who lived with their fathers had a greater sense of well-being than those who lived with their mothers” (SM-06).

The above data corroborate the observations made by Chanda and Pujar, (2018) who reported that most single mothers have low to moderate economic status. Similarly, Stack and Alex Meredith (2017) reported that single parents are twice as likely to be in poverty as compared with double parents. Single parents face economic hardship compared to two-parents (Nkyi, 2013). Without enough financial resources to support their children, single parents sometimes have to rely on other people for the upkeep of their children. The findings reveal that single mothers are characterized by low socio-economic status and that one of the challenges confronting single mothers is financial difficulties. This finding strongly aligned to the findings by Stack and Meredith (2017) who reported that single parent families are at risk of financial hardship and faced challenges such as inability to pay bills.

Similarly, in a study conducted in Turkey, Öztürk and Boylu (2015) reported that many single parents could not save or make investments and were indebted. Similarly, Cakira in (2010) reported that the major problem single mothers’ face was with the financial matters. Similarly, Richards & Schmiede in (1993) reported that in a qualitative study that single mothers indicated role overload and financial worries as their greatest worries.

Table 5 presents the results of Psychological, Emotional and Health Challenges of single mothers. The results indicate that whereas some respondents 81.0% (17) did not observe change in their health condition since they became single mothers, 33.3%

(7) of the single mothers reported that single parenting has negatively affected their health. Also, greater number of single mothers' experience negative changes in their health conditions as a results of their role as single mothers. For example, 90.5% (19) of the single mothers' report that they suffer issues with depression/stress. That is to say that, single parenting does not physically affect the health of mothers. Instead, they seem to be psychologically and socially. The results further indicate that all the single mothers (100%) frequently fall sick while some of them 66.7%(14) frequently think about their status as single mothers and how they can cope with raising their boy-child(ren). Furthermore, greater number of single mothers 61.9%(13) and 85.7% (18) have problems with neighbours as a result of the child's poor relationship with them and poor relationship with neighbours resulting from their status respectively.

Table 4.5: Psychological, Emotional and Health Challenges of single mothers

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Change in health condition resulting from your status	No	17	81.0
	Yes	4	19.0
Has single parenting negatively affected your health	No	14	66.7
	Yes	7	33.3
Issues with depression or stress	No	2	9.5
	Sometimes	19	90.5
Frequently thinking about your status as a single mother	No	7	33.3
	Yes	14	66.7
Falling sick frequently as a result of your status	No	21	100.0
	Yes	0	0.0
Poor eating or loss of appetite because of your status	No	12	57.1
	Yes	9	42.9
Being comfortable with your status	No	21	100.0
	Yes	0	0.0
Problems with neighbours as a result of the child's poor relationship with them	No	8	38.1
	Yes	13	61.9
Poor relationship with neighbours resulting from your status	No	3	14.3
	Yes	18	85.7
Do you have adequate time for the family	No	16	76.2
	Yes	5	23.8

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

As much as single mothers of boy-child have significant financial constraints, they are also challenged with social and psychological health. Economic strain also has a significant effect on the physical and mental well-being of the single mothers. Kim, Choi and Kim (2018) reported that many single mothers are more likely to suffer from depression and that single mothers have very high levels of chronic stress, experience weak social support, and have infrequent contact with friends and families. Furthermore, the outcome of this study is consistent with data from previous studies. For instance, in a study conducted across twenty-seven (27) European countries, it was reported that single parents as compared to double parents had poorer health (Stack & Meredith, 2017).

Furthermore, studies have documented that single parents experience lower mental health and reduced psychological wellbeing (Ifcher & Zarghamee, 2014). Single parents like all double parents do whatever it takes to make sure there is food for their children. However, in trying to ensure that their children do not go hungry, single parents may in some cases reduce their own food or go hungry. This leads to deterioration in their physical and mental health. Furthermore, meals may have to be missed in order to pay some other bills or debts (Stack and Meredith, 2017). Single parents are worse off and married people better off financially, physically, and emotionally (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2007). Without a spouse or cohabiting partner, single parents must combine child care and other care giving responsibilities with personal work and leisure activities. This task requires huge physical, emotional, and financial capital, the added responsibility hamper's the mental health and the psychological well-being of the single parent (Chanda & Pujar, 2018).

Psychological well-being refers to a state where individuals are mentally healthy and able to maintain harmonious relationships with others, get involved in community activities and can contribute in the community. Psychological well-being consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, personal growth and development. Psychological well-being is attained by achieving a state of balance but in the situation of single parents, their well-being is affected due to imbalance in their life events which results in stressful life events (Chanda & Pujar, 2018).

Furthermore, Cheung and Ching in (1997) explained that stigma of single parenting is characterized by several myths, misconceptions, stereotypes, half-truths and prejudices and this can result in stress and lowered psychological wellbeing for the single parent. Explanations for why single mothers experience lower levels of life satisfaction than partnered mothers are usually based on the notion that single mothers are more exposed to stress and strain.

According to Crosier, Butterworth and Rodgers (2007) single-parent households headed by mothers are more likely to experience poor mental health than two-parent households; and the most significant contributors to such mental health issues are economic hardship and a lack of social support. Economic strain also has a significant effect on single parent families' physical and mental. Many single parents have significantly poor physical and mental health, and that a great many of them suffer from depression. This shows that single mothers typically have poorer mental and physical health relative to the general population or married mothers, and it has been suggested that the risk factors that contribute to their compromised physical and mental well-being include economic hardship and weak social support (Kim, Choi &

Kim, 2018). Similarly, Park (2005) found that single motherhood is associated with poor mental health. Single mothers demonstrate higher levels of psychiatric symptomatology, e.g. depressive symptoms compared to other female groups. Poor mental health in single mothers is associated with financial insecurity and increased frequency of daily stressors (Kim, Choi & Kim, 2018).

The finding that single parenting affects the relationship of many single parents and their neighbours may be due to the numerous responsibilities single parents have to deal with alone. Owing to these responsibilities, single parents are confronted with increased stressors (Schmuck, 2013). These stressors tend to trigger psychiatric disorders like depression, anxiety and mood disorders or alcoholism in single parents (Stephen & Udisi, 2016). These disorders affect the relationship between single parents and their neighbors. Besides, single parents are stigmatized because they are considered to bear set of characteristics that shows a social identity that the society often devalues (Stack and Meredith, 2017). According to Nkyi (2013), some social stigma is attached to the condition of single parenting irrespective of how it was acquired. Similarly, (Hiratani & Hohashi (2009) reported that most single parents encounter role overload and conflicts, and tend to have poor community relationships and lower economic and healthcare functioning (Hiratani & Hohashi, 2009).

Similarly, Azuka-Obieke (2013), argued that single parents are more likely to show low-economic status and their children are mostly exposed to challenges such as lower educational level, lower economic achievement, depression and isolation. Furthermore, social isolation, loneliness and withdrawal often corrode their psychological and mental health. Without enough money to participate in social

activities, there was a physical barrier which seemed to underlie the behavioural problems single parents had with their neighbours.

Some reasons can be ascribed for the reduced health and reduced life satisfaction among single mothers. Material disadvantages may explain the adverse effects of single mother parenting on psychological well-being and physical health (Scharte & Bolte, 2012). Another explanation relates to the negative consequences of financial hardship on well-being. Financial difficulties have been identified as a key determinant of psychological distress (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003), and single mothers are disproportionately affected by economic constraints due to their sole responsibility for the finances of the home besides, single mothers are more likely than mothers with partners to be employed in lower paying jobs, thus earning lower wages (see Dziak, 2010).

Therefore, financial hardship is usually seen as a major contributor to reduced levels of subjective well-being among single mothers. Furthermore, reduced access to instrumental and emotional support for single mothers' accounts for their physical, emotional and health problem. Most single mothers encounter the burdens of household work and childcare single handedly, while partnered mothers are able to share these tasks. Single mothers may also experience more stress than married mothers due to their sole responsibility for the emotional and physical well-being of their children. Concerns related to the child adversely affect the psychological well-being of the parent, and these effects have been found to be stronger for single mothers than for married mothers.

4.3 Research Question Two: How does single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child

To describe the extent to which single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child. This research objective sought to find out how single mother parenting affects the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy-child. The data collected is presented and discussed below.

4.3.1 Summary of responses to moral behaviour and Academic life of Boy-Child with Single Mother Parents

The responses of the teachers about the moral-behaviour of boy-children are shown in Table 4. 6. Most 53.3% (16) of the respondents indicated that hostility is not often common among the boy-child from single mothers but 20% (6) of the teachers indicates that hostility is often common among these children. Also, most 43.3% (13) of the teachers indicated that boy-children from single mother parents sometimes have low self-esteem. Again, it was true that most of the children sometimes (43.3%; 13) or not-often (36.7%; 11) perceived justice on right and wrong. Moreover, there were diverse answers obtained whether the children were rebellious to rules. However, it was obvious from the respondents that the children sometimes (26.7%; 8) or not-often (53.3%; 16) engage in drug abuse. Similarly, in some instances (not often or sometimes) most boy-children from single mother parenting becomes school drop-outs. The results indicate that single parenting homes have diverse moral influences on boy-children.

Table 4.6: Moral behaviour of boy-child with single mothers parenting in school

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Hostility is common	Never	0	0
	Sometimes	8	26.7
	Not Often	16	53.3
	Often	6	20.0
Low esteem	Never	8	26.7
	Sometimes	13	43.3
	Not Often	7	23.3
	Often	2	6.7
Justice on right and wrong	Never	4	13.3
	Sometimes	13	43.3
	Not Often	11	36.7
	Often	2	6.7
Rebellious to rules	Never	10	33.3
	Sometimes	11	36.3
	Not Often	6	20.0
	Often	3	10.0
Engage in drug abuse	Never	2	6.7
	Sometimes	8	26.7
	Not Often	16	53.3
	Often	4	13.3
School drop-out	Never	3	10.0
	Sometimes	11	36.7
	Not Often	13	43.3
	Often	3	10.0

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

The results indicate that single parenting homes have diverse moral influences on boy-children. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in raising such children; which will definitely impact positively on the children during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some

rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years (Azuka-Obieke, 2013). Quality time is not spent by single parents on their children. Single parents do perform tasks such as listening to the concern of the boy-child, understanding the emotional and psychological needs of the boy-child among other factors. They are unable to perform these tasks because of their busy schedules of managing different parental roles as well as financial or economic reasons (Ali & Soomar, 2019).

Azuka-Obieke (2013) found that children from intact-homes are often better socialized than those from single parenting homes. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in raising such children; which will definitely impact positively on the moral life of boy-children during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years.

Some western studies have noted greater problem behaviours in boy-children from families with unmarried mothers (Ackerman *et al*, 2001). Karst (2000) attributes this greater prevalence to limited supervision, strained financial resources, social isolation, fewer coping supplies compared with children in traditional two-parent families. Being raised in such homes double the risk for children to develop emotional behaviour problems. Both such children as well as their parents showed lower self-esteem, less empathy, greater aggression, fighting and vandalism, less tolerance for negative behaviour and more likelihood to display non age-appropriate behaviours (Hollist & Mcbroom, 2006; Knoester & Hayne, 2005). These problems are linked to

future adult crimes, drug and alcohol miss-use, unemployment, poor physical health and mental disorders as found in this study.

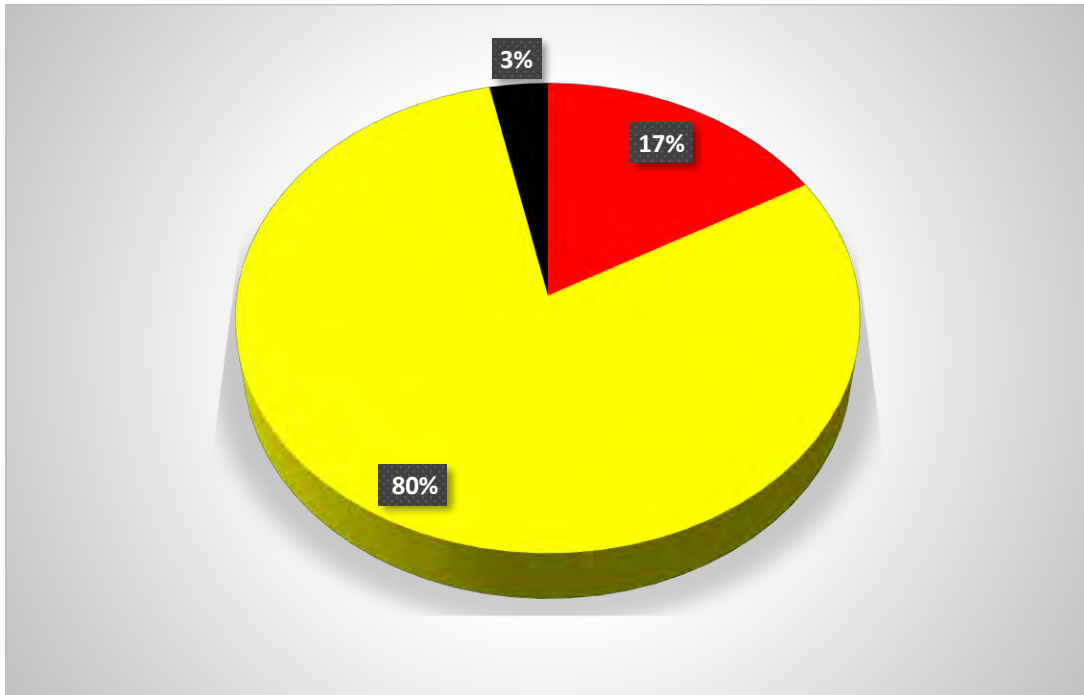


Figure 4.4: Moral behaviours of boy-children from single mother parents

Figure 4 indicate that overall, the majority of boy-children from single mother parenting is neither good nor bad in terms of moral behaviours. About 3% can be termed good and 17% termed as bad. That is to say that 80% children (boys) from single mother parent have good behaviours in some regards and are worst off in some instances. For example, in all sections of the moral behaviour questionnaire, the teachers were definite as most answers “sometimes” or “not often”.

These findings can be attributed to the inability of single parents to support their families financially, ineffective parenting practices, low income status and in cases of divorce and separation parental conflict before and after the divorce or separation (Nkyi, 2013). In most cases, parents and children in single parent families are caught up in difficult socio-economic situations such that they find it relatively difficult to

make ends meet, the inadequate finances and other life sustaining things makes it difficult for them to live a decent life, as a result the boy child is most likely to engage in inappropriate behavior sometimes to make a living. Similarly, Dearing, McCartney and Taylor (2006), averred that economic hardship causes emotional distress in single parents resulting in the hampered ability of the single parent to be supportive, sensitive and consistent in their relationship with their children. According to Azuka-Obieke (2013), single parent homes are more likely to show low-economic status. Such children are exposed to challenges such as lower educational level, lower economic achievement, depression and isolation.

The finding can be explained on the basis that socio-economic status to a large extent determines the income and purchasing power of an individual. Parents with high socio-economic status are most likely to be economically empowered to provide the needs of their children. Children whose needs and wants are adequately provided by their parents are amenable to parental instruction and this reduces the difficulties associated with the upbringing of the boy child. In situations where the single parent has low socio-economic status, provision of basic needs for the child becomes a challenge. Children whose parents have low socio-economic status are sometimes compelled to fend for themselves and provide for themselves the basic necessities of life. Such children mostly have little or no regard for their single parents. The upbringing of such children obviously becomes a very difficult task for the single parent.

4.3.2 Academic life of boy-child with single mother parents

Table 4.7 shows the summary of responses of teachers about the academic life of children (boys) from single mother parents. The results show that 50.0% (15) of the teachers indicated that mothers do not often delay in paying the fees of their children. Also, sometimes (30.0%) or not-often (36.7%) there are delays in getting all needed books for the boy-child. Again, sometimes (46.7%) or not-often (26.7%), the respondents indicated that the children are not supervised in the house concerning their academic work. The consequence of these was obvious from their responses that the children in sometimes or not-often performs averagely academically. Again, mothers sometimes or not-often, place their jobs ahead of their children welfare, do not attend PTA meetings or visits the children as and when needed.



Table 4.7: Academic Life of Boy-Child with Single Mother Parents

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mother delays in paying child fees	Never	1	3.3
	Sometimes	10	33.3
	Not Often	15	50.0
	Often	4	13.3
Mother delays in getting all needed books	Never	5	16.7
	Sometimes	9	30.0
	Not Often	11	36.7
	Often	5	16.7
Children are not supervised to study at home	Never	4	13.3
	Sometimes	14	46.7
	Not Often	8	26.7
	Often	4	13.3
Children perform averagely in academics	Never	2	6.7
	Sometimes	9	30.0
	Not Often	16	53.3
	Often	3	10.0
Mothers do not have time for the child's welfare	Never	1	3.3
	Sometimes	12	40.0
	Not Often	12	40.0
	Often	5	16.7
Mothers do not attend PTA meetings	Never	4	13.3
	Sometimes	14	46.7
	Not Often	9	30.0
	Often	3	10.0
Mothers do not visit as and when needed	Never	7	23.3
	Sometimes	8	26.7
	Not Often	12	40.0
	Often	3	10.0

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

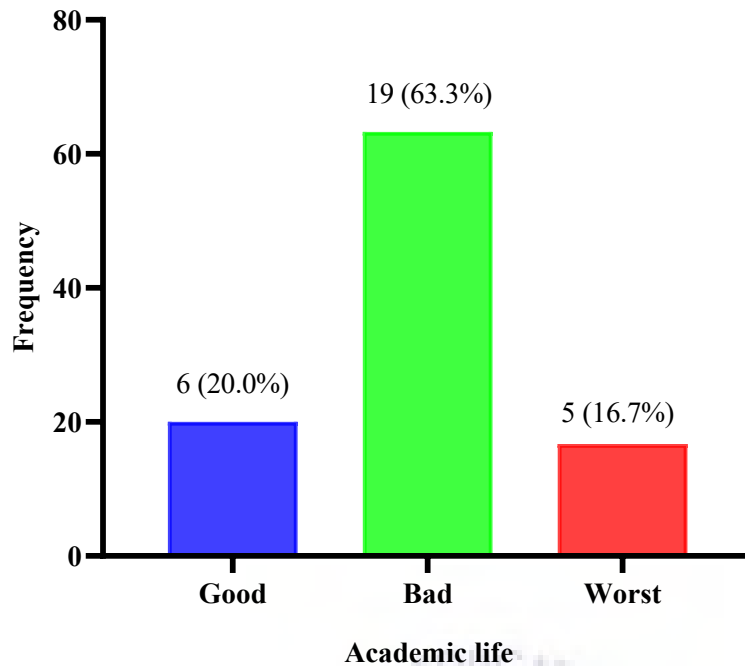


Figure 4.5: Academic life of boy-children from single mother parents

According to the teacher respondents (as shown in Figure 4.5) above, it is obvious that 63.3% of boy-child (children) from single mothers have poor academic life. Only 20% could be rated as having good academic life and 16.7% as worst academic life.

Primarily parents are responsible for the educational and career development of their children (Salami & Alawode, 2000). Academic performance among children in this study suggests that children's academic performance improve when both parents are actively in their education (Nyarko, 2007; Nyarko & Vorgelegt, 2007). Married parents are more likely to be involved in their children's education than single parents (Nyarko, 2011, and Chowa *et al.*, 2012). As parents engage in the academic activities of their children, it is most likely to have a positive influence on their academic performance. In a related way, Donkor (2010) indicates that the poor performance of children from single mother families emanates from lack of proper supervision of children's homework. Salami and Alawode (2000) in particular pointed out that both

parents have roles to play in the child's education. The father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement while the mother is to supplement the father's effort in this regard. When the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as supervise the academic performance of the child, he/she (the child) will be backward or withdrawn. Because single parents are the primary and frequently the sole source of financial support for the family, they have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement.

4.3.3 Features of the home and education of boy-child from a single mother parent

The boy-child from single mother was asked about their home learning and supervision. The results are shown in table 4.8 below. Majority of the respondents indicated that they are either being supervised by siblings (47.4%) or themselves (31.6%) in the house. Also, most (36.8%) of the boy-children only revise their notes when they have homework. Only 21.1% (8) of them revise their notes every day. The majority 78.9 % (30) of the children indicated that their mothers cannot read and write. In terms of learning supervision from the mother, most children (57.9%) never get that opportunity.

Table 4.8: Home learning and supervision

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Who normally supervises learning at home	Friends	2	5.3
	Mother	6	15.8
	Self	12	31.6
	Siblings	18	47.4
Number of times in a week child revises his notes	As and when I feel	6	15.8
	During Exams	6	15.8
	Everyday	8	21.1
	Twice a week	4	10.5
	When I have homework	14	36.8
Can your mother read and write?	Yes	8	21.1
	No	30	78.9
How often does your mother supervise your studies at home	Often	2	5.3
	Not often	6	15.8
	Sometimes	8	21.1
	Never	22	57.9
How often does your mother always remind you to study	Often	8	21.1
	Not often	4	10.5
	Sometimes	22	57.9
	Never	4	10.5
Do you get any support with homework at home?	Often	8	21.1
	Not often	14	36.8
	Sometimes	14	36.8
	Never	2	5.3

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

The children were asked about their educational support they receive. As shown in Table 4.8, most of the children had mothers that are traders (63.2%). Also, when children were asked if their mothers are the caretakers of the house, the majority of them (84.2%; 32) stated 'yes', however, only 26.3% (10) of them gets constant financial support from their single mothers. About 32% never receives alternative financial support whereas 63.2% (24) sometimes receives alternative financial support for their education. Most of the children also only sometimes get their fees paid (42.1%) and buy their needed books (56.2%) on time.

Table 4.9: Educational support for boy-child with single mother

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mothers occupation	Cook	4	10.5
	Farming	4	10.5
	Seamstress	2	5.3
	Shop keeper	2	5.3
	Trader	24	63.2
	Unemployed	2	5.3
Is your mum the caretaker of the house?	Yes	32	84.2
	No	6	15.8
Constant financial support for education from mother	Always	10	26.3
	Most times	14	36.8
	Sometimes	14	36.8
Alternative sources of financial support for education	Always	2	5.3
	Sometimes true	24	63.2
	Never	12	31.6
My fees are often paid on time	Often	6	15.8
	Not often	10	26.3
	Sometimes	16	42.1
	Never	6	15.8
All books I need are provided on time	Often	4	10.5
	Not often	12	31.6
	Sometimes	20	52.6
	Never	2	5.3

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

Table 4.9 shows the impact of financial difficulties on boy-child education. The results showed that 11% (4) of the respondents indicated that they always feel ashamed because of poor status of their single mother that affects their studies. Also, 36.8% (14) and 31.6% (12) sometimes or most times feel ashamed of their performances as a result of financial difficulties. As a result of the need to sell by the roadside, 21.1% of the children always hardly get time to study. In the same way, 52.6% (20) of them sometimes and 10.5% (4) in most times hardly get the time to study. Also, the majority sometimes (73.7%; 28) or in most times (15.8%; 6) sleep a lot in class as a result of deprived rest in the house. The results further indicate that 57.9% (22) of the boy-children sometimes do not understand what is taught in class while only 5.3% (2) of the indicated that they understand what is being taught in

class. Furthermore, greater number of the boy-children (47.4%; 18) indicates that they sometimes lose interest in going to school and felt their academic performances have gone down while 31.6% (12) has never lost interest in school.

Table 4.10: Impact of financial constraint on boy-child education

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Feeling ashamed because of financial difficulties resulting in poor performance	Always	4	10.5
	Most times	12	31.6
	Sometimes true	14	36.8
	Never	8	21.1
Hardly gets time to study at home because I need to sell by the roadside	Always	8	21.1
	Most times	4	10.5
	Sometimes true	20	52.6
Sleeping a lot in class because not enough time to rest in the house	Always	0	0.0
	Most times	6	15.8
	Sometimes true	28	73.7
	Never	4	10.5
I do not understand what is being taught in class	Always	2	5.3
	Most times	12	31.6
	Sometimes true	22	57.9
	Never	2	5.3
I lose interest in going to school	Always	6	15.8
	Most times	2	5.3
	Sometimes true	18	47.4
	Never	12	31.6
My academic performance has gone down of late	Often	12	31.6
	Not often	8	21.1
	Sometimes	14	36.8
	Never	4	10.5

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

To gain more evidences, the researcher went further to elicit some verbal information from the single mothers on the extent to which single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child. The ensued results from the single mothers were in line with that of the quantitative data. In this regard, one of the single mothers had this to share with me.....

“My dear, I believe that most single-parent households like me are run by mothers, and the absence of a father coupled with lower household income can increase the risk of children performing poorly in school. The lack of financial support from a father often

results in single mothers working more, which can in turn affect children because they receive less attention and guidance with their homework” (SM-05).

Similar to the above, one of the single mothers had this story to share....

“yes, I strongly believe and agree that single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child. Single mother parenting can also be in the same way tormenting for the children as they depend on bonding and response to their needs in order to develop cognitively and socially. In a two-parent family, it is easier for one parent to respond to the child’s needs in the absence of the other, but in a single-parent home, it can make bonding harder. Without a lot of interaction elsewhere, this could hinder a child’s social development, educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child... sometimes I am not happy with their situations and this could affect their performance” (SM-07).

The interview results support several claims from the literature. There is research proof concluding that the effects on children’s psychological wellbeing are massive when their parents divorce or separate. Amsalu and Wagtaff (2006) offered several hypotheses as to which aspects of divorce had the greatest impact on children’s sense of well-being. Notably, the amount of time children spent with the non-custodial parent and the emotional environment provided by the custodial parent were hypothesized as being contributory factors.

4.4 Research Question Three: What are the challenges facing boy-child from single mothers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality?

The boy-children brought up by a single mother faces varying degrees of challenges including home monitoring for studies, verbal abuse, social isolation, receipt of essential educational materials. The results showed that most 42.1% (16) of the boy-children indicated that sometimes their parents do not monitor them while only 31.6% (12) of them indicated that their single mothers often monitor them. The majority of them (47.4%; 18) indicated that sometimes they are verbally abused, 10.5% (4) of

them are often abused verbally while only 15.8% (6) of them are never abused verbally by their mothers. The results further indicate that 36.8% (14) of them boy-children feel their mothers prioritizes work over their welfare while 68.4% (26) of them indicated that their single mothers are unable to provide their school needs on time. Concerning their social life, 15.8% (6) often feel shy socializing with peers. Also, 31.6% (12) and 36.8% (14) not often or sometimes feel shy socializing with peers.

Table 4.11: Challenges facing boy-child brought up by a single mother

Statement	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
My mother does not monitor me	Often	12	31.6
	Not often	10	26.3
	Sometimes	16	42.1
	Never	0	0.0
My mother abuses me verbally most of the time	Often	4	10.5
	Not often	10	26.3
	Sometimes	18	47.4
	Never	6	15.8
My mother is more concerned with her job than me	Often	14	36.8
	Not often	8	21.1
	Sometimes	16	42.1
	Never	0	0.0
I feel shy to socialize with my peers	Often	6	15.8
	Not often	12	31.6
	Sometimes	14	36.8
	Never	6	15.8
I will be happier if I were living with both parents	Often	32	84.2
	Not often	6	15.8
	Sometimes	0	0.0
	Never	0	0.0
My mother is unable to provide all my school needs on time	Often	2	5.3
	Not often	10	26.3
	Sometimes	26	68.4
	Never	0	0.0

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

To gain sound response from the respondents, the selected boy-child were interrogated to further the challenges facing boy child from single mothers. These responses are synthesized and transcribed as below. Quoting verbatim, one of the boy-child shared this me with.....

“As a boy-child living under single mother parenting, I face a lot of challenge. For example, I face financial and career challenges. Not all of us receive financial contributions from ex-partners or elsewhere. Some single parents have no difficulty raising their children on one income, but others find it challenging. Some single parents have to make career sacrifices because of their parenting responsibilities” (BC-01).

In another related results, one of the boy-child had this information to tell me...

“My sister.....hmmmmmmmm.....a number of us living the number of children reared in single-parent households continues to rise Wassa Amenfi East Municipality. We the children with two parents in the home earning two incomes tend to have better financial and educational advantages. The effects of a single-parent home on a child’s behaviour can be far-reaching and impact several areas of life, including academic achievement and social behaviours” (BC-04).

In another connected results, one of the boy-child had this information to tell me...

“We children from single-parent families may be more likely to experience less healthy lives, on the average, than children from intact families. For instance, children growing up with only one parent are more likely to drop out of school, bear children out of wedlock, and have trouble keeping jobs as young adults. One factor that may be responsible for this variation between the lives of children from intact families and those from single parent families is income. Lack of income has been identified as the single most important factor in accounting for the differences in children from various family forms” (BC-03).

4.5 Research Objective Four: What are the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work

This research objective sought to find out the strategies adopted by boy-children from single mother homes in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality to cope with their academic work. The following are the results from the questionnaire and the interviews conducted.

Table 4.12: Coping strategies adopted by boy-children from single mother homes

S/N	Statement	YES <i>f</i> (%)	NO <i>f</i> (%)
1	Do you run way from school sometimes?	22 (57.9)	16 (42.1)
2	Do you play computer games regularly?	12 (31.6)	26(68.4)
3	Do you use social media such as Facebook and whatsapp regularly	9(23.7)	29 (76.3)
4	Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend who supports you financially?	13 (34.2)	25(65.8)
5	Do you sometimes use drug and other substances?	4 (10.5)	34(89.5)
6	Do you engage in sports such as playing football?	18 (47.4)	20 (52.6)
7	Do you spend time reading books and studying?	24 (63.2)	14(36.8)
8	Do you get involved in church organizations?	21(55.3)	17 (44.7)
9	Do you have time to do your homework?	26 (68.4)	12(31.6)
10	Do you engage in petty trading?	14 (36.8)	24 (63.2)
11	Do you sell after school hours?	8 (21.1)	30(78.9)
12	Do you sometimes seek physical support from friends and other relatives?	31 (81.6)	7 (18.4)

N.B: Percentage of responses on parenthesis (N =38)

(Source: Field Data, 2020)

The results show that 47.4% (18) of the boys from single mother homes engage in sporting activities in order to cope with the challenges they face in their academic work. Also, 81.6% (31) of the boys from single mother homes seek physical support from friends and other relatives in their attempt to cope with their academic work. Furthermore, 63.2% (24) and 68.4% (26) of them adopts reading their books and

doing their homework as means of coping with their academic work while 55.3%(21) of them admit that they engage in church activities as a means of coping with their academic work and the difficulties their background pose to them. The results show that greater number of the boy-children from single mother homes adopts positive coping strategies to cope with their academic work.

However, 34.2% (13) of them admit that they depend on girlfriends to get financial support to cope with their academic work. Also, 31.6 % (12) of them resort to playing computer games regularly in order to cope with their academic work. Furthermore, 57.9%(22) and 10.5%(4) of them have sometimes run away from school and engage in substance abuse respectively as their coping strategies. This shows that quite a number of boy-children from single mother homes in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality engage in negative social vices as means of coping with their academic work.

The results further show that some of the boys (36.8%; 14) engage in petty trading while 21.1% (8) of them engage in selling after school hours to make money to cope with their academic work. The results show that most boys from single mother homes endanger their lives in an attempt to stay in school by engaging in these economic activities. Barku (2016) found that most students from single parent homes are much concerned with how to make money for their upkeep and so engage in activities that will help them make the needed money.

In furtherance to the above, to ascertain the strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work, I interviewed some selected boy-child and the below are some of the responses in accrued from the boy-child.

“I think that apart from the parental roles, school authorities and community leaders should work together to organize seminars and workshops for parents to enable them know that their supervision of their children’s learning is vital to the academic work of their children. With this, I mean that school authorities and community leaders should work together to organize seminars and workshops for parents to enable them know that their supervision of their children’s learning is vital to the academic work of their children. This, I believe that it will help boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work, one of the boy-child (BC-02).

In another strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work, one of the boy-child had this to share with me....

“Government agencies and NGOs should provide some form of assistance to pupils from single parent homes to enable them cope with the financial burden that comes with single parenting so that they can get the needed books and materials for academic work” (BC-06).

Similarly, one of the boy-child from single mothers had this to tell me.....

“Teachers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality should be encouraged to pay attention to single parented pupils so as to help them adjust better and successfully pursue their academic work (BC-05).

4.6 Interrogative Analysis

The general findings of this study can be summarized into three overarching themes. That is, the absence of a father influences the behaviour and academic life of the boy-child. Therefore, by this, there is a relationship between the single mother parental influence and the behaviour of the boy child. Single mother parenting for the boy-child impacts poor supervision/monitoring and financial difficulties on the mother and the boy child. In consequence, there is poor academic life and moral behaviour of the boy child. Additionally, these challenges affect the mother socially, emotionally and psychologically

There was a consensus in the responses concerning the moral behaviours of boy-children from single mother parenting. The Overarching theme was that these children are neither too morally upright nor morally wrong. For example, in as much as mothers find it difficult to raise their boy child, most teachers indicated that not all boy children are often engaged in socially unacceptable behaviours. True to this study, the subjects of the study have a poor academic lifestyle although, as evident by the responses given by the teachers.

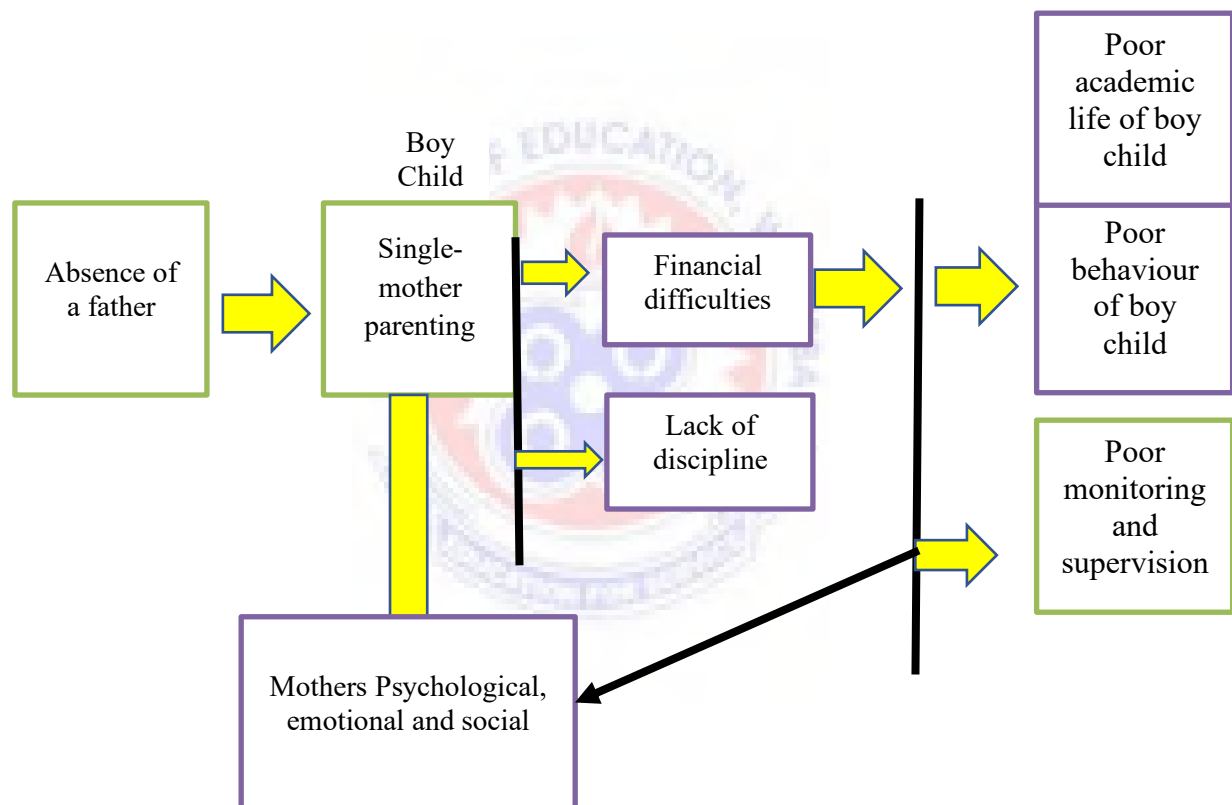


Figure 4.6: Interrelationship between single mother parenting of boy-child and lifestyle behaviours

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter summarises the study and report major findings. It highlights the conclusions of the study and implications for practice. The implications were based on the major findings identified in the study. It further outlines some recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The aim of the study was to ascertain the effects of single mother parenting on the boy child in the Wassa Akropong within the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana. The study also ascertained the various challenges facing single mothers in the upbringing of the boy child, explored the extent to which single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child as well as the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work. Boys from single mother parenting homes have contrasting experiences at school. Fathers are distinctly successful in the discipline of the boy child, because boys are mostly responsive only to discipline by a man (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). The single mother is therefore unable to successfully execute the distinctive roles reserved for the father. This suggest that the boy child raised by a single mother parent will be denied the discipline, good behaviour and manners, emotional and other psychosocial benefits the presence of the father brings. In order to understand how single mothers in the Wassa Akropong within the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana nurture their male children without the assistance of the fathers and how that affects their academic work, the following questions were considered:

1. What are the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child?
2. how does single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child?
3. What are the challenges facing boy-child from single mothers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality?
4. What are the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work?

Thirty teachers, twenty-one single mothers and thirty-eight male pupils were involved in the study. Through interviews and questionnaires, data were collected on teachers, single mothers and pupils' socio-economic background, challenges facing single mothers, the effects of single mother parenting on the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child, challenges facing boy-child from single mothers as well as coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work

5.2 Key Findings

5.2.1 Research Question 1: What are the various forms of challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child?

The challenges identified are economic challenges, psychological challenges, social challenges and behavioural challenges.

It was found that most of the women (61.9%) earn between 100-500 Ghana cedis monthly while only 9.5% earn between 1001-1500 Ghana cedis. This means that greater number of single mothers receive less than Ghs500 monthly. Considering the

economic situation in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality, it is obvious that most of the people might live below the poverty line of \$1 a day and would find it difficult to provide the basic needs of their wards. This was indicated from the responses of the single parents interviewed when they intimated that they are faced with financial challenges to provide for their boy children as single parents.

In terms of financial characteristics of single mothers involved in the study, it was found that most of them (90.5%) indicated that they do not receive any additional financial support while, all of them indicates that they have challenges in paying utility bills. Similarly, 95.2% of them have challenges in providing the overall needs of the family. The results show that greater number of single mothers have financial and economic challenges.

It was also found that greater number of single mothers' experience negative changes in their health conditions as a result of their role as single mothers. For example, 90.5% of the single mothers' report that they suffer issues with depression/stress. The outcomes from the interview data were not different as most of the respondents shared comparable views on challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in the upbringing of the boy child.

5.2.2 Research Question 2: How does single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child?

It was found that single parenting homes have diverse moral influences on boy-children. Diverse Responses were obtained from teachers as to whether the children were rebellious to rules or not. While some teachers indicated that some students show rebellious behaviours towards authority and school rules, others contended that a good number of boys from single parenting homes exhibit higher moral values and

are very respectful to rules and authority. It also came to light that majority of the boys engage in drug abuse but not often while some of them drop out of school.

The results further indicate that majority of boy-children from single mother parents have good behaviours in most instances but sometimes gear off the road and exhibit certain unwholesome behaviours. These findings can be attributed to the inability of single parents to support their families financially, ineffective parenting practices, low income status and in cases of divorce and separation parental conflict before and after the divorce or separation.

It was also found that sometimes there are delays in getting all needed books for the boy-child. Again, sometimes the children are not supervised in the house concerning their academic work. The consequence of these was obvious from their responses that the children often performs poorly academically. Again, mothers place their jobs ahead of their children welfare, do not attend PTA meetings or visits the children as and when needed. It was found that 63.3% of boy-child from single mothers have poor academic life. Only 20% could be rated as having good academic life and 16.7% as worst academic life in terms of their performance in school. The results from the interview were not different as most of the respondents shared similar views.

5.2.3 Research Question 3: What are the challenges facing boy-child from single mothers in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality?

The results showed that boy-child brought up by a single mother faces varying degrees of challenges including inadequate home monitoring for studies, verbal abuse, social isolation and inadequate receipt of essential educational materials. The ensued interview results support the claims and give gives strong evidence to the quantitative data.

5.2.4 Research Question 4: What are the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work?

The results show that most boys from single mother homes adopts varying coping strategies to cope with their academic work including endangering their lives in an attempt to stay in school by engaging in these economic activities. For instance, 81.6% of the boys from single mother homes seek physical support from friends and other relatives in their attempt to cope with their academic work. Furthermore, 63.2% of them adopts reading their books as means of coping with their academic work while 55.3% of them admit that they engage in church activities as a means of coping with their academic work and the difficulties their background pose to them.

However, 34.2% (13) of them admitted that they depend on girlfriends to get financial support to cope with their academic work while 31.6% of them resort to playing computer games regularly in order to cope with their academic work. Furthermore, in an attempt to take care of their basic necessities of life, some of the pupils indicate that they sometimes run away from school to do other things. The accrued interview results support the claims of the quantitative data.

5.3 Conclusions

From the various findings stated above, I can conclude that, the study used both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the various challenges facing single mothers in the upbringing of the boy child, explored the extent to which single mother parenting affect the educational, emotional and socio-cultural development of the boy child and to provide clear understanding of the coping strategies adopted by boy-child from single mothers to cope with their academic work.

The study raises pertinent issues related to the social and academic life of boy-child in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana.

The study provides evidence to suggest that:

1. Majority of the single mothers earn below the minimum wage and face economic, financial, psychological challenges, social challenges and health challenges. This makes it difficult for them to provide adequate care and basic necessities for their boy-child. This situation negatively affects the academic work of the boy-child.
2. Single parenting homes have diverse influences on the boy-child. Some of the boys engage in drug abuse, some drop out of school, some exhibit bad morality.
3. Some of the boys are not able to get all the needed books for their academic work. There is also inadequate parental supervision in term of their academic work. The consequence of these was obvious from their responses that the children often performs poorly academically. These findings can be attributed to the inability of single parents to support their families financially, ineffective parenting practices, and low-income status and in cases of divorce and separation parental conflict before and after the divorce or separation.
4. Although the boys employ both positive and negative coping strategies to cope with their academic work, these coping activities puts unnecessary strain on students who are supposed to have a free mind to study. Thus, though majority of the students do their possible best to remain in school, some of them eventually give up and drop out from school while the academic work of others are negatively affected.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Counselling and social support centres should be established in all the Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts offices to offer counselling and social support services to single mothers and the boy child.
2. The counselling units of the schools should be strengthened with experienced counsellors to provide adequate guidance and counselling services to boy-child to help them overcome their challenges.
3. School counsellors in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana should engage in occasional talks with pupils from single parent homes to be able to identify any social or behavioural issues they might be battling with and in so doing provide the necessary counselling assistance since single parented pupils might not spend much time with the single parent.
4. School counsellors in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana should organise study skills seminars or workshops for pupils to help pupils from single parent homes to study effectively without the supervision of the parent.
5. School counsellors in Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana can also work together with the class teachers so that if class teachers identify any issues that single parented pupils are battling with, the class teachers can refer the pupils to the school counsellors.
6. Economic interventions akin to the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program should be designed and implemented to support single mothers with low economic status.

7. Churches and other religious organizations should pay attention to issues regarding families and marriages in order to protect and safe guard marriages from breaking up.
8. Heads of schools, teachers and other stakeholders should take particular interest in the life and activities of the boy child from a single mother home.
9. Schools in Wassa Akropong should ensure conducive environment for boy child to feel happy at school and also support them academically. This is based on the fact that most of the boy-child expressed in the interviews that they are not happy with their situations and this could affect their performance.
10. Schools should provide social, emotional and academic support to boy child from single mother homes. This will help them cope effectively with their studies.

5.5 Contributions to Knowledge

The study has provided insights into the forms of challenges affecting single mothers in the upbringing of the boy child within the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana. Additionally, the study has revealed the effects of single mother parenting on the academic and moral life of the boy child nurtured by a single mother in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality of the Western Region of Ghana.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

The findings of this study, the following are recommended for further research:

I suggest that a similar study should be conducted in other districts in the Western Region and other regions in Ghana to ascertain the effects of single mother parenting on the academic performance of boy child.

Further, I recommend that studies should examine the effects of differences in parental gender and style of parenting on aspects of the development of the boy child such as moral development, academic performance and moral behaviour.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Teachers

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

This questionnaire aims at soliciting information from you as a teacher in order to enable the Researcher identify the challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in raising the boy child. Your opinion is sought purely for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your name will not be required and therefore your responses cannot be traced to you.

SECTION A: Demographic Information of Respondents (Plases tick () where appropriate)

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age in years (in years)
3. Educational Level
Certificate A [] Diploma (DBE) [] Degree (Bed/B. A) [] MPhil []
MA/MSc [] Others []
If others, (please specify)
4. Working experience (in years)

SECTION B: Single mother parenting and the moral development of the boy child

5. Do children from single mother families excel in their studies? Yes [] No []
6. Do these children associate themselves with other class members when in class? Yes [] No []

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on behaviour shown by children from single mother families by ticking {√} the appropriate responses

No	Statement	Often	Not Often	Sometimes	Never
10	Hostility is common				
11	Have low self esteem				
12	Justice on right and wrong				
13	Rebellious to rules				
14	Children from single mother families engage in drug abuse				
15	Many boys who drop-out from school are from single mother families.				

Section C: Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the effects of single mother parenting on academic performance of the **boy** child by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Often =4, Not often = 3, sometimes= 2 Never= 1

No	Statement	Often	Not Often	Sometimes	Never
16	Single mothers pay their children school fee on time				
17	Single mothers provide all the books their children need on time				
18	Single mothers normally supervise studies of their children at home				
19	Pupils from single mother homes perform averagely academically				
20	Single mothers do not have time for their children's welfare				
21	Single mothers do not get time to supervise their children's homework				
22	Single mothers do not normally attend PTA Meetings				
23	Single mothers do not visit the school when they are needed				

Section D: Challenges of pupils (boys) from single mother homes

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the Challenges of pupils from single mother homes by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Often =4, Sometimes= 3, Sometimes= 2 Never = 1.

No	Statement	Often	Not Often	Sometimes	Never
10	Single mothers check on their children in school				
11	Single mothers honour invitation by the school				
12	Pupils from single mother families feel shy to socialize with their peers				
13	Single mothers are unable to provide the school needs of their children on time				



APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Single Mothers

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

This interview aims at soliciting information from you in order to enable the Researcher identify the challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality in raising the boy child. Your opinion is sought purely for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your name will not be required and therefore your responses cannot be traced to you.

Background Information on Respondents

1. What is your age (in years)?
2. What is your level of education?
3. What is your religious affiliation?
 - I. Do they organize talk on parenting?
 - II. Do they organize teachings on single parenting?
4. How many children do you have?
5. How many of them are boys?
6. What are their ages?
7. What is the cause of your single parenthood?
 - I. How often do you check the time your child sleep?
 - II. Do you question your child when he brings female friends home?
 - III. Do you instruct your child to perform household chores?
8. What is the cause of your single parenthood?

Economic Challenges

9. What is your occupation?
10. What is your income?
(GH¢100 - GH¢500)
(GH¢500 - GH¢1000)
(Above GH¢ 1000)/
11. Do you get additional financial support?
12. Are you able to save?
13. Do you have difficulty in maintain or keeping the home?
14. Do you have difficulty in paying bills and utilities?
15. Do you have difficulty paying the school fees and other educational needs of your boy?
16. Do you borrow or frequently contract loans?
17. Do you have difficulty providing for the overall needs of your family?

Psychological/Emotional and Health Challenges

- 18. Has your health condition change since you became your single mother?
- 19. Has single mother parenting affected your health? in what way(s)
- 20. Do you face depression or stress?
- 21. Do you frequently think of your single mother status?
- 22. Do you fall sick frequently? If yes (can that linked to your single mother status?)
- 23. Has your appetite or eating pattern changed due to your situation?

Social Challenges

- 24. Are you comfortable of your single mother status?
.....
.....
- 25. Do you have problems with your neighbours because your child does not relate well with them?
.....
.....
- 26. Has your single mother status affected your relationship with your neighbours?
.....
.....
- 27. Do you have adequate time for your family?
.....
.....

Behavioural Challenges

- 28. Do you have difficulty raising your boy child?
.....
.....
- 29. Is your boy child truant in school?
.....
.....
- 30. Does your boy child show aggressive behaviour?
.....
.....
- 30. Does your boy child respect and obey your instructions?
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire for Boy Child

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

This questionnaire aims at soliciting information from you in order to enable the Researcher identify the challenges facing single mothers in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipal District in raising the boy child. Your opinion is sought purely for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your name will not be required and therefore your responses cannot be traced to you.

ID NO.....Date.....20/102020.....

SECTION A (Plases tick () where appropriate)

Please answer the questions below with a tick

1. Age (years).....
2. Reasons why you are staying with only your mother. Divorce [] Death [] Separation [] other [].If other (please specify):
3. How many sibling(s) do you have?.....
4. How many of your siblings are in school?.....

SECTION B

6. Who normally supervises your learning at home? Mother [] Siblings [] other []
If other (please specify):

1. Twice in a week [] as and when I feel like [] When I have homework []
During exams []

8. Can your mother read and write? Yes [] No []
9. Is your mother the one who takes care of the home Yes [] No []
10. What is the occupation of your mother?.....
trading.....
11. Does your mother always support your education financially? Always [] Most times [] Sometimes true [] Never []

12. Do you get financial support for your education from other sources? Always []
Most times [] Sometimes true [] Never []

13. Do you feel ashamed about yourself because of the financial difficulties you go through at school which affect your academic work? Always [] Most times []
Sometimes true [] Never []

14. I hardly get time to study at home because I sell at the road side?

Always [] Most times [] Sometimes true []

+ - Never []

15. I sleep in class a lot during tutoring time because I do not get enough time to rest at home

Always [] Most times [] Sometimes true [] Never []

16. Do you understand what is being taught in class?

Always [] Most times [] Sometimes true [] Never []

17. I lose interest in going to school. Always [] Most times [] Sometimes true []
Never []

Section C: Effects of Single Parenting on Academic Performance

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the effects of single mother parenting on your academic performance by ticking $\{\sqrt{\}$ the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Often = 4, Not Often = 3, Sometimes = 2 Never = 1.

No	Statement	Often	Not Often	Sometimes	Never
18	My school fee is often paid on time				
19	My mother provides all the books I need to me on time				
20	My mother normally supervises my studies at home				
21	My academic performance has gone down of late				
22	My academic performance has improved over time				
23	My mother always reminds me to study				
24	I do not get anybody to support me with homework				

Section D: Challenges facing the boy child brought by the single mother

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to each of the statements on the challenges you face by ticking {√} the appropriate responses. The scale is presented as Strongly Often =4, Not Often= 3, Sometimes= 2 Never = 1.

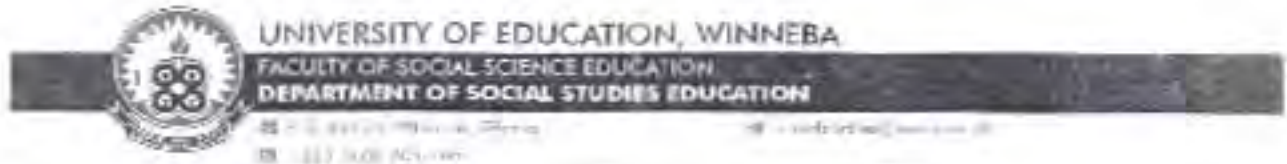
No	Statement	Often	Not Often	Sometimes	Never
26	My mother does not monitor me				
27	My mother abuses me verbally most of the time				
28	My mother is more concerned with her job than me				
29	I feel shy to socialize with my peers				
30	I will be happier if I were living with both parents				
31	My mother is unable to provide all my school needs on time				

Section E: Coping Strategies adopted by the Boy-Children from single mother homes

31	Do you run way from school sometimes?	Yes	No
32	Do you play computer games regularly?		
33	Do you use social media such as facebook and whatsapp regularly		
34	Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend who supports you financially		
35	Do you sometimes use drug and other substances?		
36	Do you engage in sports such as playing football?		
37	Do you spend time reading books and studying?		
38	Do you get involved in church organizations?		
39	Do you have time to do your homework?		
40	Do you engage in petty trading?		
41	Do you sell after school hours?		
42	Do you sometimes seek physical support from friends and other relatives?		

APPENDIX D

Introductory Letter



17th February, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madame,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MISS BETTY AMPOFOWAAR OSEI

We write to introduce Miss Betty Ampofowaa Osei to your office. She is an M. Phil Social Studies student with registration number 8,80140013 from the above-named Department.

As part of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy in Social Studies, she is undertaking a research on *"The effects of single parenting on the boy child in Wassan Akropong Municipality"*.

We wish to assure you that any information provided would be treated confidential.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucy Flihi Ahiom".

Lucy Flihi Ahiom (Ph.D.)
Ag. Head of Department