UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING ON ACADEMIC SUPPORT OF PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS IN EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY

SHIRLEY SOKA ADJIDO

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SHIRLEY SOKA ADJIDO
(202122625)

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Shirley Soka Adjido, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: …………………………...........................

Date: ……..……………………………………………

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

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

Principal Supervisor: Prof. Robert Andrews Ghanney

Signature: …………………………...........................

Date: ……..……………………………………………

Co-Supervisor: Mr. Kweku Esia-Donkor

Signature: …………………………...........................

Date: ……..……………………………………………

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DEDICATION

To my dear and loving child.

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I owe allegiance to God Almighty for the source of strength and wisdom given me in the preparation of this work. I duly render to Him from the depth of my heart all praises and thanks.

I acknowledge with appreciation, the unflagging effort of my supervisor, Professor Robert Andrews Ghanney and Mr. Kweku Esia-Donkor, co supervisor for the patience and time they had in examining and making valuable suggestions and corrections which made this work to meet the required standard. God richly bless you all.

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To all friends and love ones who have in diverse ways contributed to this work. I say God bless you for your tremendous contribution
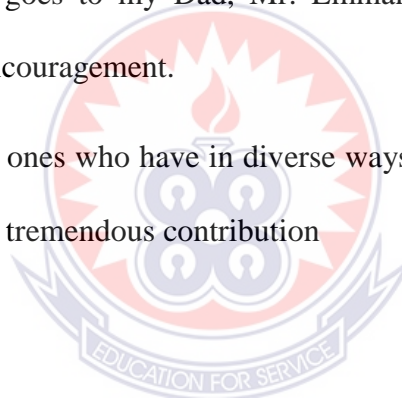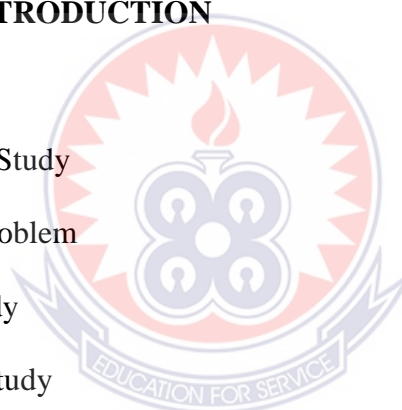
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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of single parenting on the academic support of Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. The study was grounded in the Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement in school. The cross-setional survey design was used and was aligned with positivist paradigm where 175 public junior high school pupils were chosen as a sample through the stratified random sampling technique. A Cronbach Alpha of not less than 0.70 was realized for all the various constructs. The data gathered through questionnaire were analysed using both descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential (t-test) statistics with the aid of Version 22 of the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS). The study revealed that the nature of single parenthood was mother dominated in-spite of their economic challenges. It was again, discovered that the factors affecting single parents' ability to support pupils' academic work had to do with limited parental formal education, limited income and financial resource and difficulty in speaking the official language of the school. Furthermore, the study showed that the main effects of single parents on academic support of pupils featured in parental difficulty in assisting with supervision and monitoring of homework and therefore fell largely on siblings for assistance. Others included poor participation in PTA and SMC meetings/activities. Besides, it was established that there is no statistically significant difference in the implications of single parenting on academic support of male and female. Therefore, it was recommended among others that the Effutu Municipal Education Directorate should collaborate with school authorities and community leaders to organize seminars and workshops for single parents to enable them monitor and supervise their children's learning. Teachers should be encouraged to pay attention to single parented pupils to help them adjust successfully to their academic work.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and hypothesis, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and finally outline of the organization of the entire study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Parenting is the regulation of behavior and development of children, with the intention that they will be able to live a socially desirable life, adapt their environment, and pursue their goals (Kosterelioglu, 2018). Parenting is a psychological structure that represents standard strategies parents use in child rearing and includes parental attitudes and behaviors (Yap & Baharudin, 2016). Parents play an essential role in the growth of their children. Parenting and high standard quality education are vital in developing the right human resources to take part in the development endeavors in order to help alleviate the problems that the nation is grappled with. Research has shown that parents are the most accurate predictors as far as student's performance in school is concerned (Kosterelioglu, 2018). The extent to which a student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning and effective communication plays very important role in education (Hill & Craft, 2003).

According to Sanders (2016), on average, children do best when raised by their two married, biological parents who have low-conflict relationships. This implies that when parents live a life free from conflict, it helps in the proper upbringing of the

child (Parke, 2003). In supporting this view, Kerby (2015) asserted that parents play a very critical role in every facet of child development and even more, parents are responsible for guiding and nurturing all facets of children's development, including their social, emotional, thinking and educational development. The care and attention a child receive at home, to a large extent influences the academic performance of the child either negatively or positively (Sanders, 2016). According to Nyarko (2007), children with parental experience of separation, divorce or death do not perform well or achieve academically. When both parents are present, it implies that the child would obtain most care.

Single-parenting is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. The study conducted by Bashagh (2015) on relationship between parental involvement in learning process and students' academic performance revealed that low income, teachers' attitude towards parents, parents' ignorance and low level of education, parents' attitudes towards teachers, personal commitments on work and poor communication between teachers and parents were factors hindering parents' involvement in learning process and students' academic performance. Harris and Chrispeels (2016) asserted that, there are beliefs that parental involvements in their children's education make a significant difference in the outcome of young people and that parents have a key role to play in raising educational standards.

Some studies have shown that children from homes without the father graduate from high school and attend college at a lower rate (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004), perform worse on standardized tests and are more likely to use drugs (Mandara& Murry, 2016) than children from homes where the father is present. Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan, (2004) as well as Mandara and Murry (2016) further opined that

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

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

Poor academic performance of pupils in Ghanaian education system has been attributed to many factors by educationists, politicians and the government. Sometimes, teachers are the first to be accused when there is a fall in academic standard while very little is said about other factors such as single parenting, perceived parental involvement and the child's own academic motivation. In Ghana, the government has put in place useful strategies to encourage enrolment, daily attendance and retention of pupils in basic schools across the country in an attempt to realize the objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy as well as the provision of Education for All (EFA) agenda. These strategies include the provision of teaching and learning materials, school uniforms, the school feeding programme and the introduction of the capitation grant per child enrolled. The government has also instituted best teacher awards and other teacher career development programmes as motivation to teachers to ensure the delivery of quality of education to its children (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports [MOESS], 2007).

In spite of all these laudable performance by the government, the education sector continues to face many challenges. According to ISSER (2008), the performance of many children is failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies. According to Nyarko (2011), a child who lacks parents to watch over their academics and also supervising their work tend not to perform well in academics. Addo Adeku, Opare and Banini (2013) confirmed that single parenting is caused by divorce or death of one partner which later on leaves everything in the hands of a single parent and subsequently affecting a child's academic performance.

In the landscape of single-parent households, understanding the nuanced dynamics of academic support becomes imperative, especially when considering the potential gender-specific implications. Extant research, as highlighted by Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) and Mandara and Murry (2016), underscores the presence of divergent outcomes for boys and girls within single-parent family structures. These findings underscore the necessity of delving deeper into how the provision of academic support by single parents may differ based on the gender of the child.

The gender-specific lens through which academic support is examined holds significant implications for addressing potential disparities and crafting tailored interventions. Boys and girls may experience distinct challenges and opportunities within single-parent households, shaped by various factors such as societal norms, parental roles, and individual needs. By elucidating how academic support varies across genders within single-parent families, the study aims to provide critical insights into the mechanisms underlying educational outcomes and opportunities for intervention.

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Understanding the differential experiences of boys and girls in receiving academic support from single parents holds promise for informing targeted interventions aimed at mitigating disparities and fostering equitable educational opportunities. By uncovering gender-specific patterns in academic support provision within single-parent households, the study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of family dynamics and educational outcomes. Ultimately, these insights may serve as a foundation for the development of strategies and policies geared towards supporting the diverse needs of children growing up in single-parent families, thereby fostering their academic success and overall well-being. It is against this background that this research sought to find out the implications of single parenting on the academic support of public Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sanders (2016) posited that majority of research concerning single parenthood have revealed a number of disadvantages faced by children raised in the absence of their father or mother and poor academic performance of such children has been discovered as one of the major disadvantages. According to the Effutu Municipal Education Directorate (2018), the academic performance of most of the pupils are failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies at the basic level of education. Again, empirical evidence in the Effutu Municipality also indicates that there has been a remarkable low academic performance of basic school pupils over the past five years and this attest to the BECE Results Analysis (Effutu Municipal Education Office, 2015-2020). Alhassan (2001) posited that children's learning experiences differ as a result of variables such as single parenting, parental academic support, emotional status and motivation. Single-parenting is not a myth in

Ghana. Studies by several authors such as Abudu and Fuseini (2013), and Chowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012) give evidence of the fact that single-parenting is a major cause of poor academic performance among pupils in Ghana. Abudu and Fuseini (2013) revealed that the sample from two parent homes have most of their parents helping them in their academic work as compared to those from single parent families. In a similar vein, the findings of Cheova-Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012) revealed that married parents in Ghana are more likely to engage in their children's education than single parents.

While it is promising to see that several previous studies have demonstrated the implication of single parenting on the academic performance of pupils, a reading of the literature available indicate that many of these studies were not centered on the influence of single parenthood on pupils' academic support. The available literature indicated that similar studies were conducted by (Nyarko & Vorgelegt (2007); Amoakohene (2013) ; Ziol-Guest, Duncan & Kalil (2015) on school children. Ziol-Guest, Duncan & Kalil (2015), for example, conducted a study on one-parent students leave school earlier: educational attainment gap widens. The findings of these studies available pointed that implication of single parents on the academic support of their pupils is devastating yet no such studies were conducted on public Junior High School pupils from single parenting families in the Effutu Municipality. Additionally, it appears all these studies looked at implications of single parenthood on pupils' academic performance as opposed to academic support. This is a significant gap considering its implications in terms of practice and policy which this study hopes to fill.

In the Effutu Municipality, cursory interaction from teachers in the schools showed that a good number of the children come from single parented homes. Much as the situation described here raises concern, it is not yet known in the Effutu community why most of their pupils fail to meet the academic standard expected of them. Also, family structures have evolved, with single-parent households becoming increasingly prevalent worldwide. Within this context, understanding the dynamics of academic support provided by single parents and its gender-specific implications is of paramount importance. Existing research, such as studies conducted by Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2004) and Mandara and Murry (2016), has underscored the differential outcomes experienced by boys and girls raised in single-parent households. These studies suggest that gender plays a significant role in shaping the educational trajectories of children within such family structures. Given the complexity of these gender-specific dynamics, delving into how academic support varies for boys and girls within single-parent households is essential. It is, therefore, imperative that diagnostic study is carried out to identify the implications of Single parenthood on academic support of their pupils in public Junior High School in the Effutu Municipality.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to examine the influence of single parenting on the academic support of Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. determine the nature of single parenting of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

2. investigate the factors that affect single parenting in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

3. examine how single parenting affect academic support of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

4. examine how the sex of pupils affect the level of academic support given by single parent in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of single parenting of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

2. What factors affect single parenting in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

3. In what ways do single parenting affect academic support of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

4. In what ways do the sex affect the level of academic support given by single parent in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in academic support received between male and female pupils in public Junior High School in Effutu Municipality.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would provide information on implication of single parenting on the academic support of pupils in selected public Junior High schools in Effutu Municipality. Also, it would enable policy makers to find ways to implement all kinds of laws relating to the rights of children especially those who are single

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parented pupils. Again, the findings of the study would supplement the knowledge base of guidance and counselling personnel in public basic schools. It would also be used to educate stakeholders in education such as school authorities, teachers, parents, social workers and religious leaders to be well informed on the implications of single parenting on pupils to enable them plan programmes to deal with challenges associated with single parenthood on pupils.

1.8 Delimitations

The study focused on single parenting and its influence on academic support of public Junior High School pupils in Effutu Municipality. Specifically, the study focused on the nature of single parenthood, factors that affect single parenthood, how single parenthood affect academic support of pupils, and how academic support by single parents affect the sex of pupils in public Junior High Schools in Effutu Municipality. Geographically, this study was limited to public Junior High School pupils in Effutu Municipality only.

1.9 Limitations

Despite the study's findings and implications, this study does contain some limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the analysis can only provide the associative relationships between the stated constructs. Secondly, the context of the study may have constrained generalization with respect to cultural context and may not reflect factors in developed countries. The study's reliance on a single instrument for data gathering restricts the scope of data collection and may not capture the full complexity of the phenomena under investigation. Relying on a single data source limits the ability to triangulate findings, which is crucial for enhancing the validity and reliability of the research.

1.10 Definition of Term

Academic support: Academic support in this study is operationalized as single parents' support in the following ways: supervision and monitoring of pupils' homework/assignment, participation in PTA and SMC activities including decision-making.

Nature of Single Parenthood: Nature of Single Parenthood refers to variables such as sex of single parents, who single parenting pupils stay with, source of single parenting pupils' academic support.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. The Chapter One focused on the introduction of the study. This involves the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses. The significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, definition of terms and the organization of the study make up the rest of chapter one. Chapter Two of the study involves the review of literature related to the study. Also, the chapter presents the theoretical, empirical reviews and conceptual framework for the study. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology for the study. It describes the research philosophy, research approach, research design, the population, the sample and sampling procedures used as well as the instruments and procedures involved in the collection and the analysis of data as well as the research ethics. The presentation and discussion of the results of the study are reported in Chapter Four. The data is interpreted and discussed in relation with the reviewed literature. Finally, the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study are discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews a record of related literature. A Review of literature helps to identify existing knowledge gaps as per the objective and justification for carrying out research on the implications of single parenting on pupils' academic support. The literature review is segmented into theoretical review, empirical review and conceptual framework.

2.1 Theoretical Review/ Framework

The theoretical framework defines the key concepts in research, proposes relations between them, and discusses relevant theories based on a literature review. A strong theoretical framework gives research direction, allowing researchers to convincingly interpret, explain and generalize from their findings. A theoretical framework consists of concepts, together with their definitions, and existing theory/theories that are used for a particular study. It demonstrates an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of this study and that relate to the broader fields of knowledge. The Family socialization perspective model, Economic deprivation theory, and Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement.

2.1.4 Family Socialization Perspective Model

The Family Socialization Perspective model by Bowen (1971) as cited in Amoakohene (2013) proposes that the absence of a parent is probably associated with a decrease in total parental involvement, which is in turn related to poorer school outcomes. It has been revealed by Berns (2007) that girls who live with fathers and boys who live with mothers tend to be less well-adjusted than those who live with the

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same sex parents. In explaining further, boys who live with fathers tend to be less demanding, more mature, independent, sociable, and have self-esteem than girls in the fathers' custody situation. Likewise, girls who live with mothers tend to be less demanding, more mature, independent, and sociable and have higher self-esteem than boys in mothers' custody situation. When children live with their parents of the same sex, they are able to freely ask questions pertaining to their sexuality. Female children might not feel comfortable to ask their fathers questions related to their sexuality as they could do when they were living with their mothers. In this same line of understanding, boys will not feel comfortable talking to their mothers about their sexuality.

In terms of being more specific, it is often claimed that the absence of fathers has particularly negative socialization influences, which may be especially detrimental for boys. It is very practical for children to be curious on the things that they watch on television and hear from friends. As a result, Mandara (2016) admonished that there is a great need for parents to teach clear values regarding sexuality because the society is teaching its own values. This therefore behooves on parents to make issues more understandable for them so that they can take the necessary precautions. Children need the ideas of both parents; therefore, single parenting has a great impact on them. This theory is more relevant to the study as it seeks to explain the consequences related to absence of total parental involvement in academic support of their children.

2.1.6 Economic Deprivation Theory

The economic deprivation theory suggests that economic hardship in single-parent families is likely to require adolescents to work long hours and to take greater responsibility for younger brothers and/or sisters. As a result, these time-consuming activities are likely to be related to lower school achievement. In the view of

McDevitt and Ormord (2013), family disruption can be a factor to young people's behaviour. They argue that young people who are from female headed households where the spouse is absent will more likely feel at a disadvantage than their peers and engage in more violence. McDevitt and Ormord (2013) opined those interventions for youths who face economic deprivation should not be focused solely on economic deprivation indicators. They made use of an ecological approach to examine the precursors of violence and direct attention to risk and protective factors at the individual, parent, family, and neighbourhood levels.

Wajim (2020) argues that preventative interventions for young people particularly those in poverty should be implemented in childhood. The interventions should also promote positive options for young people and help to develop life and employment skills. From this point of view, it can be argued that when there is only one parent in the home, children are likely to be affected because there will be a deprivation of resources and thus affecting their behaviour and academic work.

This theory is more applicable to the study as it seeks to explain a major factor that affects single parents' capacity to adequately engage in academic support of their children in school.

2.1.7 Epstein's Six Typologies of Parental Involvement

There are researchers who have focused on parent involvement and its positive effects to education for many years. The model enhances partnership between educators to the identified parents in the chosen community. The theory states that parental involvement should go beyond school and home, inviting a partnership between homes, school and community (Wright, 2009). The six types of parental involvement framework identified by Epstein (2002) are as follows:

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Epstein's model is explained according to the six types of involvement, which are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making and collaborating with community. This allows teachers to create a wide range of programs of involving parents in learning, since their attitudes affect teaching and learning.

Moreover, the most successful learning happens when schools work together with parents in a mutual initiative (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). Each type of involvement is important in helping teachers to understand that their attitudes have impact to parental involvement. From this theory, teachers can improve their attitudes towards the involvement of parents in learning, and the manner in which they provide information to parents. Brennan (2011) has emphasized that teachers require clear directives from building level support and from central administration regarding parent involvement best practices.

Parenting

The extent and excellence of parent-teacher communication is indicated to be affected by school influences such as its culture, size and more (Seginer, 2006). Evidently, parents are assisted by the teachers with parenting skills to assist them understand their children's school work. This has been noted by Kimu (2012) that parents are assisted with parenting skills, family support, understanding child progress and positioning home circumstances in supporting different levels of learning. Parents are allowed to support and assist their children when they are home. Addi-Raccah & Ainhoren (2009, p. 806) found that "when teachers felt empowered enough, they could establish better relations with parents and believed that they can work well with them." This is perhaps why teachers also are being assisted in understanding the ways of involving parents to their children's learning. Many governments now have

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deliberately included regulations confirming more emphasis on parental involvement in children's learning (Naidoo, 2005).

The Ghana Education Service recognize the role of parents in the education of children in the country. As a result, the Service encourages the formation of Parents Teachers Association. However, this association has only been active in the area of infrastructure and less attention is paid on the teaching and learning process of the children.

Communicating

According to Kimu (2012), schools should communicate with parents to actively involve them in school-based events. In addition, "schools encourage parental involvement by inviting parents to participate in activities at school and facilitating parent-teacher communication" Sethusha (2014, p. 472). When parents are requested by teachers to support their children with homework in an explicit way, targeted and thoughtful, parental support in their children's learning at home becomes more fruitful (Hoover-Dempsey, (2004). Communication is an essential condition for effective collaboration and support for parents to assist their children learn. Teachers are required to enlighten parents in what manner they can support their children's learning. "It is assumed that teachers' tendency to interact with parents and attitudes toward parental involvement can be ascribed to the organizational characteristics of the school in which they work" Addi-Raccah & Ainhoren (2009, p. 806).

Mestry & Grobler (2007) conducted the study demonstrating that parents who are actively involved in their children's study schedules, promote their effective working in school. Teachers provide information to parents through formal communication which occurs through school newsletters and notices. Informal communication also

occurs through communication book that needs to be checked regularly or daily. Face to face conversations also happen as informal communication. Significant improvement in learner progress is noted where there is effective communications to support children from teachers and parents (Harris & Goodall, 2007). Parents and teachers communicate in discussing learner performance. Schools promote the facilitation of parent-teacher communication by welcoming parents to participate in school activities. Although some of the parents are less able to work with their children, it is important to keep them continually informed about their children' learning (Jones & Jones, 2010). Regular communications bring direction and progress to all stakeholders involved.

Volunteering

Lemmer (2000) reported that learners whose parents volunteered at school had lower instances of absenteeism and unpunctuality. They also had considerably higher class if their parents attend school events. Wright (2009, p. 17) has mention that "volunteering in schools is of good help for parents to gain a measure of ownership in the school" (Epstein, et al., 2002). Moreover, it is also enriching to parents in different aspects to offer support in their children's learning environment. They take responsibility in assisting children doing homework. Parents are trained by teachers, and provided with work schedules that involve them as volunteers.

Improving recruiting and training to involve parents enable them an effort as volunteers to assist the school and children in learning. Parents need to volunteer time to teach learners, assist teachers by copying materials or share their knowledge on distinct issues with learners (Jones & Jones, 2010). Teachers share fruitful information for parents to support children doing their schoolwork, and to work together with the school in any activities. According to Jones & Jones (2010), when

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parents are well informed on school procedures, they likely to volunteer in supporting children.

The ways in which the parents are involved is governed by the attempts that the school makes to involve parents and by eagerness of parents to embrace prospects to get involved (Kimu, 2012). Teachers need to propose open guidance to parents to facilitate them volunteering in school activities.

Learning at home

McDermott & Rothenberge (2000) have examined teachers' attitude about parental involvement and discovered negativities from most teachers' attitudes to the involvement of parents. They noted that parents themselves held negative attitudes.

Nevertheless, involved parents in schools are well prepared to support their children with school-related performances and influences academic outcomes (Hill & Talylor, 2014). Teachers involve parents with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum related activities. Teachers provide knowledge to parents in order to assist their children with school work and what is expected from their children by providing them with classroom policies (Sethusha, 2014). Schools are tasked with implementing various strategies to parental involvement in learning (Kimu, 2012).

Decision making

According to Kimu (2012, p. 60) "parents are able to take part in goal setting, development and implementation of program activities, assessment, personal decision and fund allocations for school programmes." Teachers' positive attitudes towards parent involvement are considered as dominant to parents' decision making in their involvement to children's learning (Abdullah et al. 2011). Parents are included in

decisions made in school. According to Sethushe (2014), the establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGB) is the part of decision-making process.

For effective decision making, relationship among families and the school should be constructive, to ensure parents are involved in making choices that influence learning of the child (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Moreover, for a powerful parent-teacher relationship, teachers should be concerned to involved parents in learning and foster positive attitudes towards involving them. Involving parents in the decision-making activity is very important, especially when there is a new program or practice that will impact their children directly (Dodd & Konzal, 2002).

Collaborating with the community

Epstein (2002) has referred collaboration to "where parents and teachers discover the resources in their community to build stronger programs in the school, family practices and children's learning" Sethusha (2014, p. 473). Community resources are used to strengthen school, home and children's learning. Meaningful collaboration depends on open and supportive relationship among teachers and parents who communicate for a mutual aspiration of helping children become successful in school and in life (Dodd & Konzal, 2002). Further, Bauer & Shea (2003) have explained collaboration with parents as involvement of supervision, notifying and partaking. Teachers must be aware of their professional obligations when collaborating with the community. These collaborations offer a worthwhile framework where the behaviour of involving parents is structured and apprehended by teachers and parents (Barnard, 2004; Jordan, et al, 2002). Again, Epstein (2001) refers to collaboration as where parents and teachers discover the resources meant to assist in building stronger programs in children's learning. In this study, single parents' academic support is

operationalised as assistance in the areas of helping in homework, involvement in decision-making and at PTA and SMC meetings which this theory broadly entails.

2.2 The Concept of Family

Generally, family can be seen as a group of people who have biological, emotional or legal ties to each other (Mariani, Ozcan, & Goisis, 2017). In different cultures, the term "family" may mean different things and a wide variation in families, usually people of two generations and two genders are involved (Dickerson, 2016). In the 1990s the sociological literature defined family as a unit in which at least one adult and a child lived together (Amorfa, 2016). The concept of family has changed from the large extended families to smaller units, the nuclear family, and nowadays to even smaller single-parent families. Family systems evolve rules, roles and power structures as well as the various forms of communication, conflict resolutions and problem solving that enable the performance of numerous tasks and the achievement of their objectives.

But a family, unlike other systems, is an emotional system characterized by affection, loyalty and durability of memberships that organize itself in ways that may be either stated or unstated and whose meanings and broad effects may not be fully understood by the family members or at least may be difficult for them to isolate and articulate (Dickerson, 2016). A family is a complex natural social system complete with its own properties and processes. As in any system no part stands alone and no process operates without influencing to a degree, every other process and every component of the system. In this vain, the home environment or family is therefore important on students' academic performance. It has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic status. The family lays the psychological, moral and spiritual foundations in the overall development of the child.

Structurally, the family was earlier seen as an institution, but nowadays, the family is based on the intimate relationship between at least two adults (male and females) involved. If the relationship is not working, the family will probably be broken (Usakli, 2013).

2.3 The Concept of Parenting

Parenting can be simply defined as the process or the state of being a parent (Zion-Guest, Duncan & Kalil, 2015). Everyone is involved in the process of parenting, once he/she has a child. However, it is not that simple and Wajim (2020) defined parenting as the process of developing and utilizing the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to, rearing and/or providing care for offspring. This definition implies that parenting starts when there is a plan for it and it involves not just bringing up the children but also providing care for them. Parenting has been seen as a 'task' that includes the dimensions of sensitivity to a child's needs, social communication and emotional expressiveness and disciplinary control (Kenny, 2018). Parenting is also viewed as being situated within a relationship which is affected by a wide variety of factors. The interaction of these 'determining factors' in increasing risk or acting as compensatory 'buffers' is crucial to an understanding of the parenting process (Berger & Bzostek, 2014). Further, Browne (2012) viewed parenting in this sense "parents create people; is the entrusted and abiding task of parents to prepare their offspring for the physical, psychological and economic conditions in which they will eventually fare, and it is hoped, flourish; parents are the final common pathway to children's development and stature, adjustment and success.

The purpose of parenting is to facilitate the child's optimal development within a safe environment (Kenny, 2018). It is important to recognise that the qualities a family is expected to encourage and develop in a child are culturally determined and thus will

differ. For example, in the view of Harkness (2016), self-reliance and independence are seen as important for parents of children in western cultures to foster, whereas reliance on others and community interdependence can be viewed as important in other cultures. It is generally accepted that the role of parents is to ensure the successful socialization of children.

Based on a comprehensive review of the research on parenting competence, Harkness (2016) noted general areas of agreement in the empirical literature about strategies that assist in the successful socialization of children. They include:

One, parental warmth, sensitivity, and acceptance of children's basic needs are core features of parenting associated with positive outcomes in children, irrespective of their developmental stage.

Also, harsh, coercive parenting is regarded to be detrimental to children, although the extent of negative impact depends on the age and temperament of the child.

Furthermore, parental involvement appears to be better than no involvement at all, although involvement by itself is not a good indicator of parenting competence.

In addition, parental control in the context of high parental warmth and sensitivity produces better adjusted children than circumstances in which parental control is not accompanied by warmth.

Last but not least, most successful disciplinary strategies enable children to internalize the message behind the discipline attempt. Excessive control can raise a child's arousal to the point where greater attention is paid to the parent's emotion than the message he or she is wishing to convey.

Some core elements of parenting have been enlisted by (Kenny, 2018) are care, control and developemt.

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While, care involves meeting the child's needs for physical, emotional and social well-being and protecting the child from avoidable illness, harm, accident or abuse,

Control involves setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and

Development: This involves realizing the child's potential in various domains.

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

Knowledge: Involves knowledge of how the child's care needs can best be met, the child's developmental potential, how to interpret the child's cues and sources of harm.

Motivation: Having the motivation to protect, to sacrifice personal needs.

Resources: Includes both material and personal resource.

Opportunity: The right time and space (Kenny, 2018).

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

2.3.1 Single Parent Family

Single-parent family is a social phenomenon which has become more common over the past few decades (Donkor, 2010). A single parent is the parent who has the day-to-day duty in the raising of his or her children alone without the help of the wife or husband. It has been indicated by Tenijbanije (2019) that single parent families' results from issues such as divorce, loss of one parent, never married, and separation. Berger & Bzostek, (2014) viewed single-parent family unit as threats to a child's development. This they argue is so because single-parent families are unable to fulfill the appropriate responsibilities towards the child. They also indicated that single parents struggle with most family demands. Lachowicz, Preacher & Kelly (2018) report that even though single parents suffer from the highest rates of time-strain

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based conflicts, they are not more likely to report spending insufficient time with their children.

2.3.2 The Concept of Single Parenting

Single-parenting can be defined as a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is being responsible for the upbringing of the child (Lachowicz, Preacher and Kelly (2018)). Single-parenthood may also arise when either the male or the female decides to produce and raise a child or children outside wedlock (Wajim, 2018). This implies that the other partner is possibly alive but has neglected his or her responsibilities to the child. Single parent families are either headed by mothers, fathers, and/or grandparents raising up grandchildren.

The Chambers English Dictionary (2007) also define single-parenting as a mother or father bringing up children alone. The definition however ignores those who legally adopt children as parent. Therefore, single-parenting in this study refers to a situation where one of the two individuals who brought a child to the world or legally adopted a child is dead or alive but does not perform any responsibility in the nurturing and upbringing of the child.

Single-parenting is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. According to Abudu & Fuseini (2013), parenting in a single or sole parent household is different in many ways from parenting in a two-parent household. Some people choose single parenting; others have it thrust upon them. Abudu & Fuseini (2013), went ahead to say that, there are those who choose to raise a child alone, those who decide to leave a two-parent relationship and to become a sole parent and those who are left behind with the children. Each path has its own issues to deal with.

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The increase of the proportion of children living only with one parent especially their mothers is accounted for mainly by a rise in the proportion of children living with the divorced mother, although there has also been a dramatic rise in the proportion of children born to never-married mothers.

According to Abudu & Fuseini (2013), in some regions alone, there are four single parents to every ten parents and there are two single parents for every ten (10) adults. Since the parents jointly take the decision of single parenting, one voice is mostly ignored and it is that of the child. It was reliably gathered that single parenting has major consequence on the child's mental, social, emotional, behavioral, financial and psychological outcomes (Huerta & Adema, 2013). In fact, single parenting faces many challenges which have significant effects to a student as it has been identified in this paragraph. The direct effect of being raised by a single parent is especially visible in child's thinking and mental mindset. Tests and observations have consistently concluded and found that single parenting makes schoolchildren more aggressive and rebellious. Hence, these are transferred on their educational needs for survival in the society.

In similar veins, the research conducted by Usakli (2013), on Comparison of children with single and Two Parents in terms of Behavioral Tendencies in Turkey", found out that, the children with single parents are less assertive and more aggressive and submissive in schools which lead to poor academic performance than children with two parents. As a matter of fact, Families, teachers, school administrators and school counselors should be aware of the behavioral tendencies of single parent children. Therefore, families, teachers, school administrators and school counselors should be aware of the behavioral tendencies of single parent children. As a result of the impact of single parenting, Sanders (2016) argues that, in two parent homes, both parents

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should play roles in child education. With regards to this, the father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement, while the mother is supposed to supplement the father's efforts 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 supervised the academic performance of the child, the child will be backward or withdrawn. Where both parents exist due care and socialization with children should be exercised in the best way possible (Kenny, 2018). This is because the process of socialization that starts from the family depends on the effort of both parents playing a complimenting role in the child's upbringing. Such a child is likely to achieve self-actualization while the other from a single parent suffers deprivation and denial of some rights and opportunities. This customarily affects the way the student socializes in school and seat with those who will help such child learn. This implies that most of children from two parents achieve self-actualization as the result they tend to do well in the studies.

On the part of helping the affected students to socialize and be provided with social rights and opportunities, the school and the society would not be exempted through the assistance they should offer as a form of support to the custodian parents. When they team up with them, the students would thus become a better person in life and succeed academically (Okyerefo, Fiaveh, & Lamptey, 2011). The family structure, ideally, provides a sense of security and stability that is necessary for children. When there is a breakdown in the family structure, children and their ability to function ordinarily or achieve academically drop. In some situations, the child no longer has two parents to depend on (Donkor, 2010). They have to rely on one parent to meet most, if not all their needs. With limited finances, time and availability parents are less likely to provide the adequate support a child needs to perform to the best of their

ability (Harkness, 2016). Indeed, Parent has vital roles to play in the life of a child as well as in their academic achievement.

The involvement of a parent on a child determines the future of such child. Parenting involvement is a catch-all term for many different activities including at 'home,' good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, through to taking part in school governance. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in schools but also throughout life" (Kenny, 2018). Unfortunately, the problem arises when one parent is suddenly absent and sometimes not there at all in taking over his/her family anymore. "The absence of one parent adds the burden of taking care/parenting to the one who remain with the family". The lack of potentiality of the absent parent affects so much not only the academic performance of the child but also the future of the child (Nyarko, 2011).

However, growing up in a single-parent family is frequently viewed as a risk factor in a child and it has negative impact in his/her academic journey, Single parent families are now a common phenomenon within our community due to dearth, divorce and other factors. It would be not be prudent to conclude however, that such negative outcomes were the direct consequence of the parents in the home or, as has been suggested on occasion, the absence of a father figure in a child's life (Goisis, Ozcan, & Osborne, 2017). Instead, children are adversely affected by circumstances that concur with single-parent family configurations (such as economic disadvantage, residential instability, and inter-parental conflict) or the consequence of such configurations (such as disrupted parenting). Such circumstances are not uniformly present in the lives of all single-parent families. Consequently, children from different types of single-parent families are at differential risk for adverse outcomes associated

with their living arrangements. A greater percentage of single parent families (57.4% in 1999) than two-parent families (6.3%) live below the poverty line (Donkor, 2010). Therefore, the percentage of single-parent families below the poverty line is highest for single mothers and lowest for widowed mothers.

In addition, a higher percentage of single mothers than single fathers live below the poverty line. Economic disadvantage is linked with lower academic achievement and increased behavioral problems among children. Fewer economic resources are also linked with residential instability, which further contributes to children's academic and behavioral difficulties. Differences in well-being for children from single parent families versus two-parent families typically disappear when differences in economic circumstances are taken into account (Millar & Ridge, 2001). Therefore, single parented students' education performances are poor as it has been associated with poor attendance, drop out of school, and engaging in bad behaviors.

Families that attain their single-parent status through marital dissolution are disproportionately more likely to experience both residential instability and higher rates of inter-parental conflict (both prior and subsequent to marital disruption) due to change in circumstances and relationships (Nyarko, 2011). Children who are exposed to inter-parental conflict are more likely to have trouble with regard to psychological and behavioral adjustment and academic achievement. Again, once levels of inter-parental conflict are taken into account, differences in well-being for children from single parent families versus two-parent families are reduced (Donkor, 2010). Finally, children from all family types are at risk when they experience parenting that is inadequate in terms of warmth, control, or monitoring.

Goisis, Ozcan, and Osborne (2017) state that, less than optimal parenting is more likely to be observed in families that are experiencing economic stress and among adolescent mothers (although a large part of this association may be explained by the greater likelihood that adolescent single mothers will experience economic disadvantage). Psychologist Mavis Hetherington has found that the parenting skills of mothers tend to diminish in the years immediately following divorce, and children who are exposed to such disruptions in parenting experience concurrent psychological, behavioral, and academic difficulties (Fomby & Osborne, 2017). It shows that challenges that single parented students face in attaining secondary education are not only multiple but also complex.

As mothers adjust to their new single-parent status, however, their parenting improves, as does their children's well-being. However, some research suggests that the factor that has the greatest impact on student achievement is not family structure but income (Salami and Alawode (2000). Relying on the data above, single parenting has increased dramatically of late and this trend has the possibility of depriving many schoolchildren the opportunity to make academic excellence now and in the future (Mariani, Ozcan & Goisis, 2017). Studies that consider the influence of both family configuration and income find that there is little difference in the academic performance of children from two-parent and single-parent homes when family income is equal (Holmes & Kiernan, 2013). Ghana statistical Data (2012) showed that, about 35% of Ghanaian children live in single parenting homes. Therefore, children from single parent families face many challenges throughout their development.

2.3.3 Causes of Single–Parenthood

The 21st century has witnessed an increase in single parent families which is deemed to have emerged from circumstances such as divorce, separation, hospitalization, imprisonment, desertions, out of-state employment, and so on. Ambert (2009) revealed that one of the causes of single parenting is divorce. Other factors responsible include the loss of one partner through death separation of partners and imprisonment of a partner (Burke, McIntosh, & Gridley, 2009). These same factors have been reported by Salami and Alawode (2000) who asserted that single parenting results from factors such as divorce, separation, having children out of wedlock and death of one spouse.

According to Holakooi, Gotbi and Jazayeri (2004) the reasons for divorce could be lack of mutual understanding between couples, addiction, interference from extended family, financial problems, demographic factors and parental psychopathology which leads to an unstable relationship between the family. Further, Amato (2007) pointed out that single parent families were historically as a result of parental death, as it was shown that about one-fourth of children born around the turn of the nineteenth century experienced death of a parent before they reached the age of fifteen. In developing countries like Ghana, it has been found by Okyerefo, Fiaveh,., & Lamptey (2011) that divorce is not common compared to desertion, death, and imprisonment in producing single-parent families, mainly under the care of women. Several factors that are responsible for single parenting were identified in the review, such as divorce, separation, death, imprisonment etc. Comparatively, however, single parenting in developing countries may be less caused by divorce as in the developed countries. This may be due to the fact in places like Ghana, there is much cultural relevance to staying married and as such seeking official divorce can be seen as shameful.

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The increase of single parenthood is not a phenomenon isolated to the western world. Even in Ghana and other developing countries, there have been a high percentage of single parents within the population caused by one factor or the other or combination of more than one. As in any country, single parenthood arises because of the following major causes:

Divorce: The trend of increasing divorce rates has virtually continued for more than 100years. According to Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2006), divorce is the legal ending of a marriage between a man and a woman in a law-court by their counsels. According to Mostafa and Wiggins (2015), the current level of divorce is high and it is assumable that the majority of recent first marriages will not last a life time, although a stable marriage remains the ideal.

According to Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2006), divorce is the legal ending of a marriage between a man and a woman in a law-court by their counsels. The dramatic increase in the number of divorces since the 1950s seems now to have leveled off starting at the beginning of 1980 in the United States (Goldstein, 1999). In any event, the current level of divorce is high and it is assumable that the majority of recent first marriages will not last a life time, although a stable marriage remains the ideal (Jallinogo, 2000). Different social circumstances, personal attributes and even genetic aspects may contribute to the risk of divorce. McGue and Lykken (1992) found in their twin family study a significantly higher concordance for divorce among monozygotic twins compared to dizygotic twins. Based on this notion, they concluded that there exists a strong genetic component in the etiology of divorce, at least in the familial transmission of divorce.

The researcher hypothesized that this genetic influence is mediated largely by inherited personality characteristics, such as impulsivity and moral conviction. The study further suggested that cultural factors influence the threshold for divorce while within given culture, variations in underlying aggregate risk are strongly influenced by genetic factors. The problem with divorce is that it is not only the marriage that disintegrates but also the children who are separated from one or both of the parents creating an imbalance in their educational pursuit.

Death or estrangement of a spouse: Losing a partner is very stressful for the parent. The psychological well-being of single parents in Ghana has been very poor primarily because of the reason on why the partner was lost. According to Goisis, Ozcan, & Osborne, (2017) this is often worsening by the positions of the lost one in the family and the society. The problem is compounded where properties of the deceased are involved resulting in the exclusion of the woman and the children to their fate. This being the case, had forced many children out-of-school or resulted to poor academic performance in the latter years.

Teenage Pregnancy: In the developed countries, data supporting teenage pregnancy as a social issue include lower educational levels, higher rates of poverty and other poorer "life outcomes" in children of teenage mothers. Within these societies, pregnancy is usually outside of marriage and carries a social stigma in its cultures. The situation of teenage pregnancy is slightly different in developing countries as they are usually within a marriage and does not involve a social stigma (Locoh, 2000). Wikipedia (2010) had described early motherhood to have effect on psychosocial Development of the child. The occurrence of developmental disabilities and behavioral issues are increased in children born to teen mothers. Poor academic

performance in the children of teenage mothers has also been noted, with many of the being more likely than average to fail at the secondary schools (Donkor, 2010).

Ghana like other countries in the world, is currently faced with social fragmentation as women continue to suffer a high rate of teenage pregnancy. Over the years, the situation particularly among teenagers had become unabated even to the researcher owing to her years of experience as a teacher trainer. Women single parents feel the stigma of being poor and unmarried, widowed or divorced and are under extreme pressure from the society. Single mothers as central to this, look for ways to support their children and are very much willing to take huge risks to put some bread on the table are very vulnerable to prostitution and trafficking.

Artificial insemination (AI): It was identified as another cause of single parenthood especially in relation to the women. It was a technique developed for livestock which have been adapted for use in humans. This is the process by which sperm is placed into the reproductive organ of a female for the purpose of impregnating the female by using other means other than sexual intercourse. Among the humans, artificial insemination was originally developed as a means of helping couples to conceive where there were male factor problems of a physical or psychological nature affecting the male partner which prevented or impeded conception. In the opinion of the researcher, this has caused more harm than good for women in the later years when the children start schooling.

Polygamy and Multiple Unions: Polygamy is recognized traditionally as a legal institution. Polygamous men in positions of influence and relative wealth often contract second and third marriages with women who are much younger than they are. In Islam, a man may marry up-to four (4) wives, on the basis that he must be able to

cater for them all and maintain equality between them. Social norms and legal systems that encourage or do not censure men's multiple sexual partner are likely to leave many of the women who become mothers through such unions economically vulnerable especially when the man dies and the women become single parent. Few men have sufficient wealth to adequately support multiple families and invest equally in each mate and her offspring, yet men continue to father children with multiple partners, often late into their lives. The products of such unions are left at the mercy of people outside the family to cater for them (Fomby & Osborne, 2017).

Rural-Urban Migration: Labour migration may lead to de-facto single parenthood for a mother whose migrant husband is absent for extended periods. Cases where migration flows are increasing due to transfer, unemployment, or other reasons, single parenthood may be common. While some of the best supported single mothers (Common in this part of the world) are those with migrant husbands or male kin who send back remittances on a frequent or steady basis, for many mothers and children, the benefits of male migration are illusory. Men (and women) may initially leave home to earn wages for the family's benefit, but their commitment to sending help (in the form of money) home, or the practical possibility of doing so, sometimes fades. This cause affects not only the family but the educational activities of their wards. With repeated day or week-long absences, it weakens mothers' and children's claim to the fatherly earnings or responsibility (Amorfa, 2016).

Non – Marital Childbearing: As myriad of activities or issues surround the world, within the universe of mother-supported families, those that spring from early unplanned child-bearing are arguably the most socially and educationally marginalized. Unprotected early sexual activity often robs a teenage girl of her childhood, impoverishes her adulthood and compromised the future of her children,

even with the absence of a male partner. Adolescent and unmarried mothers are likely to have less education, low (if any) income, their prospects are often grim. Typical examples where unwanted pregnancy leads to marriage, the union is less stable, controversial and not lasting.

2.3.4 Challenges faced by Single Parented Pupils

Several studies have been carried out into the challenges that pupils face in a single parent home. White (2012) is of the view that adolescents from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic supports. There is a likelihood of the child becoming a misfit in the society when the remaining parent cannot cope with the problem of single parenthood. This finding substantiates the findings of other researchers such as Mostafa and Wiggins (2015) who found that children from single-parent homes have low self-esteem, low achievement motivation and low tolerance for delay of gratification than those from intact families where father and mother are present. Further, in single-parent families, most of the affected people are confronted with several stressors and changes which prevent them from enjoying a healthy lifestyle (Marziyeh & Khaidzir, 2009). Characteristically, McLanahan et al. (2001) revealed that single parent families can have limited human capital and financial resources.

Again, it has been identified by Kenny (2018) that non-custodial fathers which include fathers of children born out of wedlock and divorced fathers result in decreased involvement with their children as time progress. Farrell (2011) suggested that children who lived with their fathers had a greater sense of well-being than those who lived with their mothers. This finding is in support with the findings of Hilton and Devall (2014) that there are challenges in well-being when it comes to living in single parent homes. McLanahan and Sandefur (2013) claimed that divorce leads to

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the loss of social and economic resources that cause such drastic changes occurring in the life of a child produce social stress.

They attributed loss of resources to a loss in the household income, residential movement and meeting with the non-custodial parent. In this sense, children who are raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parents (Autor, et al. 2016). They further states that children from intact families show less anxiety about their academic activities because they are emotionally more stable with less emotional problems. In comparison to the view of Autor, et al. (2016), Wajim, (2020) revealed that higher levels of emotional, social and academic problems are recorded among children from uneven households than from intact households.

The review suggests that it has been proven by several researchers that single parent homes breed more problems for young people compared to two-parent or intact homes. The view of Kenny (2018) that higher levels of emotional risks and failures are commonly observed among learners from separated families and all forms of single parenthood sums it up. However, Johnson believes that there could be some exceptions to such a claim since there are still some learners that are gifted and so no matter the conditions surrounding their home background, they fight hard and become successful. Several challenges can be identified on the bases of the previous studies reviewed, behavioural challenges, financial and economic challenges, and of course academic challenges such as provision of books (textbooks and exercise books), supervision of students at home, feeding, parental motivation, parental interest in academic work.

2.4 Single Parenthood and Academic Support

Much of the literature on the nature of parental involvement in the developed countries focuses on the role of parents both at school and at home in directly supporting their children's academic development (Holloway et al., 2008). Numerous studies have shown that parents in the developed countries are much more involved in their children's education at home rather than at school (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Research has also demonstrated that is a positive relationship between parental involvement at home and a range of school related outcomes, including academic achievement, school engagement and socio-emotional adjustment (Izzo et at., 1999). For example, parental involvement in activities at home such as checking homework, communicating about school, and reading with children have been shown to be related to positive outcomes amongst minority students in the United States of Amewrica (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Jeynes, 2003).

Conversely, a significant proportion of the literature on parental involvement in developing countries focuses on engagement in issues related to school-based management and administration (school governance issues). In Africa, specifically, the literature places greater emphasis on parental involvement in the child's learning per se (Tao et. Al., 2008). This raises concerns about the facilitation of the various forms of responsibilities and relationship.

Research has shown that children living with single parents and step- parents during adolescence receive less encouragement and less help with school work than those who reside with both biological parents (Amato, 2000; Harris, 1998). A study conducted by The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF, 1990) revealed that many single- parents in Ghana are women. The study found out that 24.8 percent of

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households in Accra, 33.9 percent in other urban areas and 26.3 percent in rural areas are headed by women who are single- parents. According to the report, poverty and economic hardships deny many single- parents the requisite resources to educate their children to the highest levels.

Gyan (2007); Quartey (1996) revealed that most women especially single parents particularly those in the formal sector (because of their rigid and regulated work-time schedules) experienced greater conflicts and strains. The stress, conflicts, problems that are associated with divorce put divorced parents in a position of relative disadvantage as compared to non-divorced parents as regards the involvement in the educational activities of their children.

2.4.1 Gender of Pupils and Academic Support

These days' parents support their children in their education but they more support boys than girls (Wood and Repetti, 2004). Although they support girls too, but in some cases, they ignore them like outdoor group studies, tours, financial matters etc. Research suggests that both, sex of parent and sex of child may affect parental effects. For example, a consistent finding is that fathers in two-parent families are more likely to be involved in the care of boys than girls whereas mothers do not seem to differentiate their involvement between boys and girls. Wood and Repetti (2004) further corroborated this distinction with the finding that fathers, but not mothers, engage in more interactions with boys over time. As their boys get older, fathers engage in more play, companionship, and school-related activities with them. A study by Pomerantz (2004) revealed that fathers' parenting was more closely associated with girls' school adjustment than boys. In turn, maternal interpersonal involvement was more allied with sons' enjoyment of school than daughters. However, Barges & Kristjansson (2009) revealed that parental monitoring has similar effect on academic

achievement among boys and girls. Agreeing to Barges & Kristjansson (2009), Hasan (2019) posited that there is no significant difference found between the academic achievements of high parental support groups of male and female secondary school students, greeing to the assertion of Hasan (2019),

Parental involvement promotes children motivation to learn because they adopt their parents' positive attitudes towards school and learning regardless of children's gender and age (OECD, 2012). Family policies can also be used as entry points for promoting school attendance and learning at all stages of childhood, but these needs strengthening to have an impact on promoting equitable learning outcomes for both boys and girls (Richardson et al., 2020).

2.5 Parental Supervision and Monitoring of Homework/Assignment

The importance of parents helping with homework is invaluable. Helping with homework is an important responsibility as a parent and directly supports the learning process. According to Kiser (2020), one of the best predictors of success in school is learning at home and being involved in children's education. Parental involvement with homework helps develop self-confidence and motivation in the classroom. Parents helping students with homework has a multitude of benefits including spending individual time with children, enlightening strengths and weaknesses, making learning more meaningful, and having higher aspirations.

Teachers involve parents with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum related activities. Teachers provide knowledge to parents in order to assist their children with school work and what is expected from their children by providing them with classroom policies (Sethusha, 2014). Schools are tasked with implementing various strategies to parental involvement in learning

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(Kimu, 2012). Parental involvement with homework impacts students in a positive way. One of the most important reasons for parental involvement is that it helps alleviate stress and anxiety if the students are facing challenges with specific skills or topics. Parents have experience and expertise with a variety of subject matter and life experiences to help increase relevance. Parents help their children understand content and make it more meaningful, while also helping them understand things more clearly.

Parents helping with homework allows more time to expand upon subjects or skills since learning can be accelerated in the classroom. This is especially true in today's classrooms because curricula in many classrooms is enhanced and requires teaching a lot of content in a small amount of time. Homework is when parents and children can spend extra time on skills and subject matter (Castro et al., 2015). Parents provide relatable reasons for learning skills, and children retain information in greater depth.

Parental involvement increases creativity and induces critical-thinking skills in children. This creates a positive learning environment at home and transfers into the classroom setting. Parents have perspective on their children, and this allows them to support their weaknesses while expanding upon their strengths. The time together enlightens parents as to exactly what their child's strengths and weaknesses are. Virtual learning is now utilized nationwide, and parents are directly involved with their child's school work and homework. Their involvement is more vital now than ever. Fostering a positive homework environment is critical in virtual learning and assists children with technological and academic material.

Article 25 of the 1992 Constitution in providing for right to education states that: functional literacy shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible. The Ghana Education Service (2001) makes it mandatory for all teachers to give children

homework and ensure that parents monitor and supervise it by way of signing to that effect. The review revealed that majority of parents especially in the rural areas cannot read and write by themselves (GLSS, 2008). In the face of this, how do parents assist their children in their homework? As revealed by Parsons and Bynner (2007), parents with low literacy levels are less likely to help their children with reading and writing and again are less likely to have children with lower cognitive and language development levels.

2.5.1 Strategies for Including Parents in Homework

An essential strategy for including parents in homework is sharing a responsibility to help children meet educational goals. Parents' commitment to prioritizing their child's educational goals, and participating in homework supports a larger objective. Teachers and parents are specific about the goals and work directly with the child with classwork and homework. Teachers and parents collaboratively working together on children's goals have larger and more long-lasting success. This also allows parents to be strategic with homework assistance (Kiser, 2020).

A few other great examples of how to involve parents in homework are conducting experiments, assignments, or project-based learning activities that parents play an active role in (Kiser, 2020). Interviewing parents is a fantastic way to be directly involved in homework and allows the project to be enjoyable. According to Kiser (2020), parents are honored to be interviewed, and these activities create a bond between parents and children making children to remember these assignments for the rest of their lives.

Project-based learning activities examples are family tree projects, leaf collections, research papers, and a myriad of other hands-on learning assignments. According to (Richardson et al., 2020), children love working with their parents on these assignments as they are enjoyable and fun. This type of learning and engagement also fosters other interests. Conducting research is another way parents directly impact their child's homework. This can be a subject the child is interested in or something they are unfamiliar with. Children and parents look forward to these types of homework activities. Parents helping students with homework has a multitude of benefits. Parental involvement and engagement have lifelong benefits and creates a pathway for success, provide autonomy and support, while modeling successful homework study habits (Castro et al., 2015).

Parents (or caregivers) are the first educators of their children and the support they provide affects children's development, learning, and subsequent educational outcomes. This includes direct support to learning before and during formal education, as well as indirect facilitating of factors such as nutrition, health, and hygiene. Support tasks range from school and home communication, assistance in learning activities at home, participation in school events, and participation in school-decision-making bodies (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). Support may vary according to the age of the child, ranging from preschool support in the home to direct support once the child has transitioned to school, including assistance with homework and volunteering in classrooms and with school functions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of parental support, as parents have had to join the front-line teaching and learning process (Winthrop et al., 2020). Parents' lack of education and ability to provide support for homework may crucially affect child learning outcomes, especially during school closures

(Brossard et al., 2020). Family policies can also be used as entry points for promoting school attendance and learning at all stages of childhood, but these needs strengthening to have an impact on promoting equitable learning outcomes. (Richardson et al., 2020).

2.6 Parental Participation in SMC/PTA Activities

Many countries have established educational laws and policies to include parents in the governance of schools (Sliwka and Instance, 2006; Hill and Taylor, 2014). In developing countries, PTA's have been found to provide financial (e.g PTA subscriptions) or in-kind contributions such as materials and labour to build or maintain school buildings rather than any meaningful engagement in the education decision-making process (Chikoko, 2007, p.36).

In Ghana, two important fora that emerge as particularly important for parental engagement with school communities are the SMC and PTA. The establishment of SMC is a national requirement in all public basic schools. The committee unlike the PTA is composed of the immediate stakeholders of the school in the community. The SMC aims at fostering effective community involvement and mobilization for effective education provision and delivery (Addae-Boahene and Arkorful, 1999). The PTA is a voluntary organization of the parents or guardians of children at the school level. (Ghana Education Service, SMC/PTA Handbook, 2001, pp 6-11).

Akukwe (2003) discovered that school improvements were made possible by dynamic leadership supported by strong community member involvement in planning proceures and efficient communication. However, there was a lack of progress made toward the goals of accountability and transparency in both high-and low-performing regions. It was discovered that PTAs and SMCs' customary passive parental

involvement was substantially to blame for this. The survey also found that many SMCs felt unable to comprehend the guidelines for implementing those predetermined tactics because they lacked the necessary capacity.

The SMC is a committee designated under the Ghana Education Service Act of 1994. It is a community-based organization aimed at strengthening community participation and mobilization for delivering education. The committee is made up of the District Director of Education or his/her representative and members appointed by the District Assembly, the PTA, the Unit/Village Development committee, the Chief, the Education Unit, two teachers and one other representative.

The SMC is assigned duties that include to;

- Ensure that the premises of the school are clean and in a structurally safe state of repair.

- Control the general policy of the school, but cannot encroach upon the authority and responsibility of the head teachers.

- submit termly reports and other information as required to the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service through the District Director of Education.

- develop an annual education action plan for the improvement of teaching and learning in collaboration with the head teacher.

- advise the head teachers on emerging issues, and make proposals for the review and design of general school policy.

- ensure that all children are enrolled and remain in school, see to it that qualified teachers are assigned to the school, ensure that all children have supplies, monitor attendance of teachers and pupils, conduct other activities in

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support of the school, and may raise funds for needed infrastructure (Ghana Education Service, SMC/PTA Handbook, 2001, pp 6-11).

The PTA is an association of parents and teachers in a particular school or a cluster of schools. The members are parents, guardians and teachers who are interested in their children's education. Their domain is to forge links between the home, the school, and the community in order to strengthen the school and to assist in fund-raising to provide the basic needs for the school. Members' contributions, Non-Governmental Organizations and the community fund the PTA. They assist the SMC to increase school enrolment by encouraging parents to send children to school. They also assist teachers in solving problems, and providing a forum in which parents and teachers can discuss any misunderstandings between them ((Ghana Education Service, SMC/PTA Handbook, 2001, pp 6-11).

2.7 Parental Involvement in Decision making

Parents participate in school decision making when they become part of school governance committees or join organizations, such as the parent/teacher's association. Other decision-making activities include taking on leadership roles that involve disseminating information to other parents. Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation, independent advocacy groups to lobby for school reform and improvements, networks to link all families with parent representatives. The stimulation of parental involvement in school management enables the design on a daily basis the activities which are happen in the school. This stimulation contributes to the submission of parents' proposals and claims, to the expression of their opposition and to the lobbying and control, in order to improve the educational process. It should be noted that global level there is a tendency to strengthen the role of parents in the

exercise of administration of schools at all levels, aiming to create a sense of ownership towards of school (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

According to Kimu (2012, p. 60) "parents are able to take part in goal setting, development and implementation of programme activities, assessment, personal decision and fund allocations for school programmes." Teachers' positive attitudes towards parent involvement are considered as dominant to parents' decision making in their involvement to children's learning (Abdullah *et al*. 2011). Parents are included in decisions made in school. According to Sethushe (2014), the establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGB) is the part of decision-making process.

For effective decision making, relationship among families and the school should be constructive, to ensure parents are involved in making choices that influence learning of the child (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Moreover, for a powerful parent-teacher relationship, teachers should be concerned to involved parents in learning and foster positive attitudes towards involving them. Involving parents in the decision-making activity is very important, especially when there is a new program or practice that will impact their children directly (Dodd & Konzal, 2002).

2.8 Factors affecting Single Parenthood

2.8.1 Occupation of Parents

Donkor, (2010) identified that, the type of parental occupation has significant influence on student's achievement in the school, because the type of engagement of the parent will determine the amount of quality time, they can give attention to the student at home and the level of their involvement in their ward's educational programmes. A very busy parent who leaves home before daybreak and returns when

the child is already asleep can offer very minimum attention and input to his or her child's education needs at home and in school.

According to Gonzalez, (2004), occupational status is highly correlated with children's educational choices and attainment; this implies that the higher the parental educational qualification, the higher the occupational status of such a parent; and vice versa. Further, Gonzalez reported that, children from parents having low occupational status face many barriers in transiting from one stage of education to the next; revealing that low parental occupational status has negative influence and effect on student's school achievement. Parents of different occupation classes often have different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining their children and different ways of reacting to their children. These differences do not express themselves consistently as expected in the case of every family; rather they influence the average tendencies of families for different occupational classes (Mclanahan, Tash & Schneider, 2013). Actually, Parent's occupation for students from single parent family influences the average tendencies of the students as they are involved in income activities.

According to Akinsanya et al., (2011), concerning parental occupation, a child from a well-educated parent with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a student from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. He or she is likely to be sent to good schools where well-seasoned teachers handle his or her subjects. Farooq (2011) identified that, the type of parental occupation also has significant influence on student's achievement in the school, because the type of engagement of the parent will determine the amount of quality

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time they can give attention to the student at home and the level of their involvement in their ward's educational programmes. A very busy parent who leaves home before daybreak and returns when the child is already asleep can offer very minimum attention and input to his or her child's education needs at home and in school.
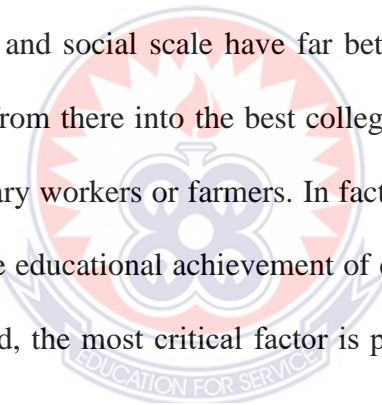
2.8.2 Parental Level of Education

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

Other studies have also observed that parents are the most immediate relation of a child and that educated parents better understand the educational needs and their children's aptitude. They, thus help their children in their early education which affects their proficiency in their relative area of knowledge. Parents' education or academic background definitely contributes immensely toward the academic life of children. According to Grissmer (2013), parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic support. Taiwo (1993) submits that parents' educational background influences the academic achievement of students. This, according to him, is because the parents would be in a good position to act as

second teachers to their children; and even guide and counsel them on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by them.

Musgrave (2000) argues that children who come from an educated home would like to follow the steps of their family and by this, works actively in their studies. Jeynes (2002) also avers that a child from a well -educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This he suggests apparently because children from an educated family are seen to have lots of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. Eamon (2005) again claims that virtually in all nations, children of parents high on the educational, occupation and social scale have far better chance of getting into good secondary schools and from there into the best colleges and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. In fact, the most important factor said to be associated with the educational achievement of children is not race, ethnicity or immigrant status; instead, the most critical factor is parents' education (Considine & Zappala, 2002).

On the whole, traditionally, family status variables such as parental level of education have been regarded as predictors of child's academic achievement. Increasingly, research has suggested that, rather than having a direct association with children's academic achievement, parents' level of education is part of a larger constellation of psychological and sociological variables influencing children's school outcomes. Thus, the influence of parent's level of education on student performance might best be represented as a relationship mediated by interactions among status and process variables. The literature also suggests that level of education influences parents'

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knowledge, beliefs, values and goals of childrearing, so that a variety of parental behaviour are indirectly related to children's school performance.

Another important socio-economic variable that prompts parents to get involved in the schooling of their children is the educational status of the parents. The amount of schooling that parents received has an effect on how they structure their home environment and how they interact with their children to promote academic achievement. Again, research has shown that parental involvement is influenced by maternal level of education (Eccles and Harold, 1996). These researchers revealed that educated mothers were abreast with their children's school performance, had more contacts with their teachers, and were more likely to supervise their educational success.

Research in Northern Ghana has suggested that the likelihood of children's school enrolment is based around the educational level of parents, particularly mothers (Hashim, 2005:17). Other studies confirm the benefits of parental education to schooling access for children (Donkor, 2010; Gyan,2007). Overall, these studies suggest that parental education, particularly the mother's education has a big influence on children's schooling (i.e. attendance and achievement). In their study in a village community in Ghana, Pryor and Ampiah (2003) disclosed that the category of parents who were involved in school activities of their children were the literates. In line with the above evidence, therefore, it is assumed that highly educated parents in Ghana would be more involved in the education of their children than lowly educated or illiterate parents (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003).

2.8.3 Parental Financial Resources and Income

Kvist, Nielsen and Simonsen (2013) gave an extensive description of the three types of resources (i.e., financial, parental, and social) that are important in explaining the impact of living with a single parent on children's chances of future success. First, they underline the importance of financial resources and the loss of income that generally goes together with family disruption. In short, this is due to the fact that after a divorce two households need to be supported instead of only one and thus a lot of household expenses cannot be shared any longer, which is also called a loss of economies of scale. The most direct effect of this loss of income on educational performance of children is the fact that the quality of the school they attend generally is lower (Kvist, Nielsen & Simonsen, 2013).

The higher the income of parents, the more possibilities they have to live in neighborhoods with good public schools or to send their children to a school of their preference. Income can also affect school outcomes through enabling a child to participate in extracurricular activities, like lessons after school, special trips, or summer camps. Such activities improve children's skills directly, but also indirectly via general intellectual stimulation, which affects subsequent learning (Kenny, 2018).

In addition to a loss of financial resources, a loss of parental involvement is generally associated with a divorce or separation. Parental involvement is supposed to positively affect children's educational outcomes (Kenny, 2018). Children raised in single-parent homes suffer more severe health problems when the custodial parent is unable to provide them with proper nutrition and health insurance. In such a situation, a single-parent is in one way or another obliged to play two roles in raising the child and many cases it becomes a problem to the children.

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Furthermore, children of single parents are at a greater risk for involvement in dangerous behaviors, such as drugs, alcohol, criminal activity or self-injury due to the lack of adequate adult supervision (Fitzsimons & Villadsen, 2019). To overcome the impact of limited finances, single parents should seek out community resources to supplement the needs of their families, including agencies that can help them collect overdue child support. Take advantage of state-funded childcare programs, and medical and dental insurance plans to ease some of the financial strain on your family.

Alterations in spending and lifestyle may need to be changed if their budget is in a deficit. To better manage their money, a single parent may cut back on how much they are spending, try to conserve energy, thus saving money on bills, and/or partake in economical entertainment for the family and for themselves (Harkness, 2016). Therefore, managing time can be a huge challenge for single parents, especially those who are also working. To help simplify your life and save valuable time, consider the following tips: Make lists and prioritize the tasks in order of importance. Simplify tasks for example, purchase food that is easy to prepare, combine errands into one trip, and set aside a block of time to do tasks (e.g., returning telephone calls, paying bills).

According to Kvist et al. (2013), the poor education of the children of the lower class is due to inequality of resources between the rich and poor. This led him to conclude that no amount of compulsory education can overcome the educational disabilities imposed upon the poor students coming from the lower classes. Ziol-Guest, Duncan and Kalil (2015) reported that poor single parental families in addition to lacking money for adequate food and medical care, frequently lack the hope that they can do better in life and can communicate the message to the children.

A single parent is therefore a huge task as combined responsibilities is often handled by either the father or the mother as far as the child's education is concerned irrespective of the parental status or income. Large families, besides drawing the family to near poverty, can also limit the ability to afford facilities such as books, textbooks for homework and studies. The acquisition of some facilities like the television, radio, newspapers also help to provide a means to educational progress for children. The provision of these facilities is a reflection of parental attitude towards the education of their children. The essence of a good supporting home environment for academic progress lies on the attitude of the parents. Research findings have proved that there is a significant relationship between parental attitude and improvement of students' academic achievement. Many upper- and middle-class parents continually push their children to aspire far more than they themselves had achieved in life. Parents from these families try all they can by pushing their children to achieve success in school and education. He added that it is quite common for these parents to seek additional help to give extra lessons for their children. They value high marks and a good report on their children's performance.

The economic deprivation of single –parent family life, in combination with other sources of strain and stress, is a major source of the problems experienced by both parents and children. Raising a child in a single parent home puts stress on finances, stress accumulated for the parent who is trying to manage a work like and a home life, and also for the child who may suffer from the lack of financial support for daily necessities and an absentee parent.

In Ghana, there is supposed to be free education through capitation grant at the basic school level but there are still cost incurred by parents which make it difficult for their active engagement in their children (Acheapong et al, 2007; Yoshioka, 2010). In rural

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Ghana, research has shown that financial costs weighted heavily on the decision-making process by parents (Avotri, 2000; Oduro, 2000). The opportunity cost of schooling does influence household schooling. In rural communities where the major economic activity is subsistence agriculture, the opportunity cost of schooling to households would relate to lost earning from child's labour in agriculture or in home productive activities (Blunch &Verner, 2000). This type of cost increases with age and gender of the child. Older siblings are more likely to be made to work to support younger siblings, while girls are more likely to be made to take care of younger siblings or support parents in household chores than boys and so have lower opportunity costs.

In farming communities in particular, parents expressly requested that teachers allow them to take their children out of school to take care of their younger siblings so that the adults could work on the farm for family sustenance. Such practices are driven by economic need as well as a culture of intergenerational obligation, support and reciprocity (Keiland and Toro, 2006). Indeed, there is a sense of obligation that a child should support economic need (Keiland &Toro, 2006). This implies that for some parents, the benefits of education are not gauged in terms of the merits to the child alone, but also with regard to the well-being of the whole households (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Besides, understanding the nature of children's time, not just its value, but also the alternative use of their time is significant to their schooling decisions – particularly when school activities clash with major economic activity that is important to the household survival. For example, in the fishing and farming rural communities in Africa, it is not uncommon for children to absent themselves from school due to bumper fish harvest or during the planting and harvesting seasons (Brown, 2005). Pryor and Ampiah (2003) in a study of education in a Ghanaian

village noted that children attended school infrequently because they felt the returns were low.

Children are important family resources, at harvesting times in rural areas, for example, children are often needed to work and when exams coincide with labour demands they can have detrimental effects on pupil performance. The need for children to work is often seasonal and fluctuating, depending not only on agricultural season, but also on family crises or illness, when older siblings and girls in particular are withdrawn from school to look after other family members (Hashim, 2005). Depending on the nature of work, child labour can increase pressure to provide financial support for the child's schooling and/or that of siblings, and many children both work and attend school.

Cost of equipping children to go to school affect households' decision to enrol a child. In Tanzania, Ngorosho (2009) found that the majority of parents in the research community had no regular income, depending mainly on small scale agriculture, trading, and fishing activities, and were thus unable to afford basic learning materials for children in school. Researchers such as Shultz (1988) and Mcloyd (1990) have observed that economic hardship, which is more prevalent in lone-parent families reduces opportunities for involvement in education. In the context of Ghana, in households that are headed by lone parents, economic problems prevent them from participating in school activities even if they are interested (Gyan, 2007; Quartey, 2007). Additionally, in a study on the Changing role of the family in the Ghanaian economy, Quartey (2007, p.73) found that most women particularly single-mothers experienced greater economic difficulties. It may be concluded that the inability of parents to involve themselves in their children's schooling can be attributed in part to straitened economic circumstances (Lemmer &Van Wyk, 2004).

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Workers in Ghana can broadly be divided into groups. The formal and informal sector workers .For the sector which includes public and private sector workers, the average income is equivalent to $170 USD (GHC800) per month.

The government is the largest employer in the formal sector. For those in the informal sector, average income varies according to the type of occupation for example, trading, farming, fishing etc. This is estimated to be GHC300 to GHC500 per month. (GSS,2021).

2.8.4 Parental Literacy

Williams and Rask (2003) suggest that in developed countries, stimulation in the home has influences on children's literacy development. Their research set out to identify factors that enable children to improve their literacy by looking at the family environment and the way it functions. Their findings reveal the significance of the influence of the pre-school environments on the beginnings of literacy. Providing learning materials such as books and toys in the home is a critical factor in terms of the child's cognitive development in that they not only support learning but also enhance language development (Williams and Rask, 2003). However, in developing countries, the frequent lack of libraries and reading materials in the home makes learning much more difficult for children (Magara, 2005). An important way in which parents can help their children achieve academic success is by assisting with homework. Evidence in rural Ghana reveals that most parents cannot read and write by themselves (Donkor, 2010).

However, it has been found that while many children in rural contexts do receive such help, it is often from siblings, relatives or other literate community members rather than a parent, and sometimes provided in return for some kind of payment (Hashim,

2005). This highlights the importance of the extended family and community networks as well as interconnectedness in parental involvement in children's home learning in Ghana.

2.8.5 Use of English Language in School

Although parents are not obliged to communicate in English at most official fora, that is the preferred medium. As a result, many who are unable to read, speak or write in English are compelled to be mere spectators at most official gatherings (Donkor, 2010). A similar situation pertains in the Parliament of Ghana where some representatives are described as 'mute MPS' because they hardly contribute to debates on the floor of Parliament. This is in-spite of the fact that the Country's 1992 Constitution does not insist on English as the sole medium of communication. In Ghana, teachers working in rural areas may be migrants and may not share the language of the parents. This accounts for the insistence on the use of English only but often this serves as a disincentive to parents to attend school events (Mankoe, 2002). This suggests that only the few literate parents took centre stage in deliberations and discussions at PTA meetings as they appeared more fluent in English language.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used for the study was designed by the researcher. In the current model, the independent variable is single parenthood and the occupation of parent, education level of parent, parental income and financial resources, parental Literacy and use of English language in school) is considered as an institution that can influence academic support (dependent variable).
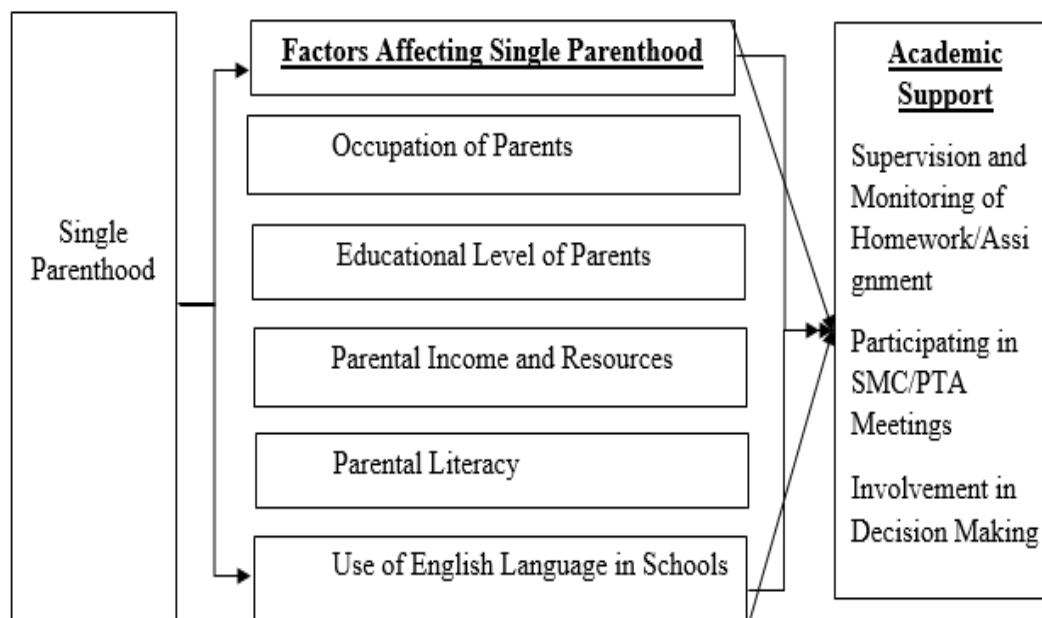
Figure 2.1: Self-Designed Conceptual Framework

2.10 Empirical Review

Nature of Single Parenthood of Pupils

Single parenthood, a family structure wherein one parent is responsible for raising a child or children, has become increasingly common globally. In the context of pupils, the nature of single parenthood encompasses several dimensions, influencing various aspects of a child's life and development.

Empirical studies, such as those by Amato (2000), revealed that single parenthood is prevalent across various socio-demographic backgrounds. However, it is more common among low-income and minority groups. Amato's research, which analyzed data from over 10,000 households, showed that families led by single parents often face significant financial constraints. These financial limitations can impact the resources available for the child's education, such as access to private tutoring, educational materials, and extracurricular activities. This lack of resources can, in turn, affect the academic performance of pupils from single-parent families, highlighting the intersection between socio-economic status and educational outcomes.

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Research by Mclanahan and Sandefur (1994) indicated that single parents often have to juggle multiple roles, including those of breadwinner and primary caregiver. This dual responsibility can significantly affect the amount of time and energy single parents can devote to their children's academic support. Mclanahan and Sandefur's longitudinal study, which followed 1,500 single-parent families over a decade, found that the time constraints faced by single parents often result in less supervision and engagement in their children's academic activities. This lack of parental involvement can lead to lower academic achievement and decreased motivation among pupils from single-parent households.

The dynamics within single-parent families can be complex and multifaceted. Hetherington and Kelly (2002) conducted an extensive study involving over 2,000 children from single-parent families, examining the emotional and social challenges these children face. Their findings indicate that children in single-parent families might experience emotional and social difficulties due to the absence of one parent. These challenges can manifest as behavioral issues, difficulties in forming peer relationships, and lower self-esteem. Such emotional and social difficulties can influence academic performance and social interactions at school, often resulting in a need for additional support from educators and peers.

The nature of single parenthood among pupils involves various dimensions, including socio-demographic backgrounds, parental roles, and emotional and social dynamics. Studies by Amato (2000) highlight the financial constraints faced by many single-parent families, particularly among low-income and minority groups, which can impact educational resources and outcomes. Mclanahan and Sandefur (1994) emphasize the time management challenges single parents encounter, affecting their ability to provide academic support. Hetherington and Kelly (2002) underscore the

emotional and social complexities that children in single-parent families may experience, influencing their academic and social performance. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems to help pupils from single-parent families achieve their full potential.

Factors that Affect Single Parenthood

Economic instability is a major factor leading to single parenthood. Financial difficulties can place significant strain on marriages, often resulting in higher divorce rates and consequently, single-parent households.

Cancian and Meyer (1998) conducted a comprehensive study examining the relationship between economic instability and marital dissolution. The study, which analyzed data from over 1,200 divorced families, found that financial stress was a significant predictor of divorce. Couples experiencing persistent economic challenges were more likely to separate, leading to an increase in single-parent families. This research highlights the critical role that economic stability plays in maintaining marital relationships and the implications of financial difficulties for family structures.

Cultural norms and the social acceptance of divorce and out-of-wedlock births also contribute to the prevalence of single parenthood. Cherlin (2009) explored the societal attitudes towards single parenthood across different cultures and found that in societies where single parenthood is more socially accepted, its prevalence is notably higher. The study involved a cross-cultural analysis of over 2,000 families from various countries, examining the correlation between social acceptance and single parenthood rates. In cultures that view divorce and non-marital births more favorably, individuals are less constrained by societal pressures to remain in unsatisfactory

marriages or to avoid single parenthood. This acceptance can lead to higher rates of single-parent households as social stigma diminishes.

Higher educational attainment among women is another factor associated with increased rates of single parenthood. Educated women are often more financially independent and capable of supporting a child on their own. Goldstein and Kenney (2001) investigated the link between women's education levels and single parenthood, utilizing data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which included over 4,000 women. The findings indicated that women with higher education levels were more likely to experience single parenthood, as their financial independence afforded them the ability to raise children without relying on a partner. This research underscores the impact of educational attainment on family dynamics and the decision-making processes regarding parenthood.

Policies regarding child support, welfare, and family leave significantly influence the prevalence of single parenthood. Smeeding, Garfinkel, and Mincy (2011) analyzed the effects of various social policies on single-parent families across different countries. The study reviewed policies such as child support enforcement, welfare provisions, and family leave benefits, comparing their impacts on single parenthood rates. The research found that countries with robust support systems for single parents, including generous welfare benefits and comprehensive family leave policies, exhibited higher rates of single parenthood. These policies can make single parenthood a more viable and sustainable option by providing necessary financial and social support.

The factors contributing to single parenthood are multifaceted and interrelated, encompassing economic instability, cultural norms, educational attainment, and

policy influences. Cancian and Meyer (1998) highlighted how economic instability can strain marriages, leading to higher divorce rates and single-parent households. Cherlin (2009) emphasized the role of cultural norms and social acceptance in shaping the prevalence of single parenthood. Goldstein and Kenney (2001) illustrated the correlation between higher educational attainment among women and increased rates of single parenthood due to financial independence. Lastly, Smeeding, Garfinkel, and Mincy (2011) demonstrated how supportive policies can influence the viability of single parenthood. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing interventions and policies aimed at supporting single-parent families and addressing the challenges they face.

Effect of Single Parenthood on Academic Support

The academic support provided by single parents is often influenced by several factors, which in turn impact pupils' academic performance:

Single parents often face significant challenges in balancing work and household responsibilities, which can impact their ability to support their children's education effectively. Research conducted by Guttman and Eccles (1999) highlighted that single parents frequently have less time to spend on their children's education compared to two-parent households. The study involved a sample of 300 single-parent households and 500 two-parent households, assessing the time spent on educational activities, such as helping with homework and attending school events. The findings indicated that time constraints significantly limited single parents' ability to assist with homework, participate in school activities, and engage in academic discussions with their children. This reduced involvement can hinder the academic performance of pupils in single-parent families, as consistent parental engagement is crucial for educational success.

Financial constraints are another major factor influencing the academic support provided by single parents. Reardon (2011) conducted a comprehensive study examining the impact of socio-economic status on children's educational outcomes, with a specific focus on single-parent households. The research included data from over 1,000 single-parent families across various socio-economic backgrounds. The study revealed that children from single-parent households often have limited access to educational resources, such as private tutoring, educational materials, and extracurricular activities, due to financial limitations. These resources are vital for enhancing academic performance, and their absence can place children at a disadvantage. Reardon's findings emphasize the need for additional financial support and resources for single-parent families to bridge this gap and improve educational outcomes.

Despite the challenges of time and financial constraints, many single parents demonstrate a high level of commitment to their children's education. Keith and Finlay (1988) investigated the relationship between parental involvement and children's academic outcomes in single-parent families. The study sampled 600 single-parent families, evaluating the extent of parental involvement in educational activities and its correlation with academic performance. The findings showed that high parental involvement, characterized by frequent communication with teachers, active participation in school events, and regular homework assistance, was associated with better academic outcomes for children, regardless of the single-parent status. This study underscores the importance of parental engagement in promoting educational success and highlights that even in the face of significant challenges, single parents can positively influence their children's academic achievements through dedicated involvement.

The academic support provided by single parents is shaped by various factors, including time constraints, financial limitations, and the level of parental involvement. Guttman and Eccles (1999) illustrated how limited time due to work and household responsibilities can restrict single parents' ability to support their children's education. Reardon (2011) highlighted the impact of financial constraints on access to educational resources, which is crucial for academic success. Nonetheless, Keith and Finlay (1988) demonstrated that high parental involvement, even in single-parent households, is strongly associated with better academic outcomes for children. These findings collectively emphasize the need for comprehensive support systems that address the unique challenges faced by single parents, enabling them to provide effective academic support to their children.

The impact of academic support provided by single parents can vary based on the sex of the pupils:

Studies suggest that single parents may provide different types and levels of support to sons and daughters.

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) conducted a study to investigate how single mothers engage with their children academically and behaviorally based on the child's gender. The research involved a substantial sample of single-parent households from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ensuring the findings were representative. The study discovered that single mothers were more likely to engage in academic discussions with their daughters compared to their sons. Conversely, mothers focused more on behavioral issues with their sons, potentially due to perceived or actual differences in needs between genders. This gender-based differential engagement suggested that daughters received more academic encouragement and support, while sons received more guidance on behavioral aspects.

Gender Differences in Academic Performance

Jacobs (1991) explored the academic performance of boys and girls in single-parent families, with a focus on the consistency and type of academic support provided. The sample included single-parent families from urban and suburban areas, encompassing a mix of socio-economic statuses, with a sample size of approximately 500 families. The study found that girls in single-parent families often received more consistent academic support than boys. This support included help with homework, discussions about schoolwork, and encouragement to pursue academic excellence. Consequently, girls generally performed better academically than boys. Jacobs concluded that the differential support could be attributed to mothers' tendencies to prioritize academic success more for daughters than sons.

Crosnoe and Elder (2004) aimed to investigate how the social and emotional needs of boys and girls in single-parent families influenced the type of academic support they received. Their study included a diverse sample of single-parent families from various regions, ensuring a mix of socio-economic statuses, races, and educational backgrounds, with over 1,000 families participating. The findings revealed significant differences in how single parents supported their children based on gender-specific social and emotional needs. Girls benefited more from emotional support, which included parental involvement in their emotional well-being and encouragement, leading to better academic outcomes. Boys, on the other hand, required more structured academic assistance, such as help with specific subjects and organized study routines. The study suggested that understanding and addressing these gender-specific needs could improve academic support and outcomes for both boys and girls in single-parent households.

These studies collectively underscore the importance of understanding gender-specific needs and parental engagement patterns in single-parent households. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) emphasized the differential academic and behavioral focus for daughters and sons. Jacobs (1991) highlighted the link between consistent academic support and better performance for girls. Crosnoe and Elder (2004) pointed out the varying social and emotional needs of boys and girls and how these influence the type and effectiveness of academic support. Together, these findings suggest that tailored support strategies considering gender differences can enhance the educational experiences and outcomes for children in single-parent families.

2.11 Summary

The review of related literature was done in three main sections. The first section was the theoretical framework, the second section was the empirical studies and the last section was the conceptual framework. The theoretical framework of this study reviewed theories such as the Family Deficit Model, Risk and Protective Factor Model, and The Social Exchange Theory and Epstein's six topologies of parental involvement theory. The study reviewed major factors such as gender of parents, occupation of parents, educational background of parents, parental literacy, parental income and use of English language in schools as affecting academic support by single parents. Single parenting was again identified to be more common in this era even though it has existed for a long period of time. Behavioural challenges, financial and economic challenges and academic challenges were some of the challenges that were identified to be associated with single parented pupils. Differences were also identified between the academic support of male and female students who live in single parent homes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter contains information about methodology. Specifically, it covers the philosophical underpinnings or paradigm, research approach, research design, study area, study population, the sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability, ethical consideration, procedures for data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinning

This study was supported by the positivist philosophy. Positivism believes in the scientific method of investigation used in the natural world (Scotland, 2012). Positivists believe that different researchers will generate a similar result using the same statistical tools and following the same research process while investigating large samples paving a path for context-independent universal generalization (Wahyuni, 2012). Thus, it advocates the use of quantitative research methods (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Positivist believes that there exists only one true reality which is apprehendable, identifiable and measurable (Ponterotto, 2015).

Positivists prefer quantitative methods such as social surveys, structured questionnaires and official statistics because these have good reliability and representativeness. The positivist tradition stresses the importance of doing quantitative research such as large-scale surveys in order to get an overview of society as a whole and to uncover social trends, such as the relationship between educational performance and social class. This type of sociology is more interested in trends and patterns rather than individuals

Epistemology of positivist is that of objectivism. Here the researcher and subjects are independent of each other and the conscience of the researcher is not important as the meaning lies with the subjects (Babbie, 2015). Positivism interacts with the world impartially (objectivism) and discover the absolute knowledge about objective reality. In this study, positivism was the guiding research philosophy because of its scientific nature. Positivism relies on four aspects of science, namely, that science is deterministic, mechanistic, methodical, and empiricist.

The positivist tradition stresses the importance of doing quantitative research such as large-scale surveys in order to get an overview of society as a whole and to uncover social trends, such as the relationship between educational achievement and social class. This type of sociology is more interested in trends and patterns rather than individuals. Positivists prefer quantitative methods such as social surveys, structured questionnaires and official statistics because these have good reliability and representativeness. Positivists see society as shaping the individual and believe that 'social facts' shape individual action. Positivists also believe that sociology can and should use the same methods and approaches to study the social world that "natural" sciences such as biology and physics use to investigate the physical world. By adopting "scientific" techniques sociologists should be able, eventually, to uncover the laws that govern societies just as scientists have discovered the laws that govern the physical world.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed quantitative approach. Babbie (2015) defines quantitative research as a strategy that focuses on quantification of data in terms of their collection and analysis. According to Yilmaz (2013), quantitative research can be defined as a phenomenon based on numerical data that are analyzed statistically. Quantitative

research is formal, objective, rigorous, deductive approach, and systematic strategies for generating and refining knowledge to problem solving (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Its designs are either experimental or non-experimental and seek to obtain accurate and reliable measurements (Rahman, 2017). It consists of systematic observation and description of the characteristics or properties of objects or events for the purpose of discovering relationships between an independent (predictor) variable and a dependent (outcome) variable within a population.

The word "quantitative" means quantity or amounts (how many) information collected in the course of the study and is in a quantified or numeric form (White & Millar, 2014). Quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting numerical unchanging detailed data that are analyzed using mathematical based methods, in particular statistics that pose questions of who, what, when, where, how much, how many, and how. It deals in numbers, logic, and an objective stance. It is original research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow question, collects quantifiable data from participants, analyze these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner (Creswell, 2014). It considers interpersonal relationships, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, and feelings with human beings. It manipulates variables and control natural phenomena.

Quantitative approach was driven by investigators with the need to quantify data. Since then, quantitative research has dominated both local and western cultural as the research method to create new knowledge. This method was originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena (Joppe, 2016). In quantitative research, a variable is a factor that can be controlled or changed in an experiment (Wong, 2014). It deals with quantifying and analyzing variables in order to get results.

It is strictly positivistic, objective, scientific, and experimental. It should be used when a highly structured research design is needed and can be naturally imposed on the experiment being conducted. According to (Creswell 2014), the researcher needs to be totally objective; is not part of what he(s) observes, and does not bring his/her own interests, values, or biases to the research, and although the phenomena being captured may be complex, they can be broken down and assigned some type of numerical value.

Quantitative research methods deal with numbers and anything measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their relationships. It is used to answer questions on relationships within measurable variables with an intention to explain, predict and control a phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). In quantitative research researchers decide what to study, asks specific and narrow questions, collects quantifiable data from participants, analyzes these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased and objective manner. At present two-thirds research articles are published by the use of quantitative data, which are highly valid and provide high level of research quality. The analysis of information from large samples almost inevitably requires quantitative methods (Yilmaz, 2013). According to Babbie (2015), statistical, mathematical or computational techniques are applied to obtain accurate results in quantitative research. Recently this type of research is widely used in business studies, natural sciences, mathematical sciences and social sciences. The quantitative research data are collected through closed-ended questionnaires. The type of data is in numerical form, such as statistics, percentages, graphs, etc. The data are used to develop and employ models based on the form of mathematical models, theories, and hypotheses to obtain the desired result. According to Kumar (2019), a research hypothesis is an empirically testable statement that is

generated from a proposition, which is clearly stated relation between independent and dependent variables.

In the quantitative methodology, researchers use the scientific method that starts with the specific theory and hypotheses for research procedures and also attempt to achieve rich, real, deep, and valid data (Nwankwo, 2013). She observed the world as objective and seek measurable relationships among variables to test and verify their study hypotheses. Creswell (2014) posited that the findings from quantitative research can be predictive, explanatory, and confirming. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and use mathematical models, theories and hypotheses/proposition as pertaining to phenomena.

3.3 Research Design

This study is descriptive research incorporating a cross-sectional study in order to specifically describe a subject matter pertaining to a specific environment. With the descriptive research, Creswell (2017) explain that a researcher tries to describe the characteristics of certain groups, to estimate the frequency or proportion of subjects in a specified population, to analyse relationships between variables, or to make specific predictions. According to Creswell (2014), survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population. The descriptive study design as said by Burns and Grove (2005) presents the current picture of the situation being studied in its natural form as it happens. Descriptive study is normally used to study a phenomenon at a specific time when time or resources for more extended research is limited (Creswell, 2017). Descriptive design has the potential of providing or giving information from quite a large number of individuals. It is practical and applicable in that it identifies a

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present condition and points to present needs. It is believed that descriptive survey is basic for all types of research in assessing the situation as a pre-requisite for conclusions and generalizations.

Cross-sectional survey is best form of descriptive survey suited to studies aimed at finding out the prevalence of a phenomenon, situation, problem, attitude or issue, by taking a cross-section of the population (Creswell, 2014). They are useful in obtaining an overall 'picture' as it stands at the time of the study. They are designed to study some phenomenon by taking a cross-section of it at one time (Creswell, 2014). Such studies are cross-sectional with regard to both the study population and the time of investigation. A cross-sectional design has the advantage of measuring current attitudes or practices. It also provides information in a short amount of time, such as the time required for administering the survey and collecting the information. For these reasons, the researcher concentrated on the use of questionnaire alone to solicit for the necessary information needed for the study.

As in any study, no design is perfect since it has limitations that must be properly identified. There is also a need to develop good research practice to communicate these limitations to other researchers, thus facilitating the understanding and replication of our study (Creswell, 2014). The cross-sectional studies with mainly analytical objectives are usually studies that provide preliminary evidence in relation to the investigation of the existence of associations between variables, considering them as the first step in the hierarchy of evidence in the group of analytical observational studies. The main limitation, which is also the main characteristic of this type of study, is the impossibility of determining a clear time sequence between the dependent variable and the independent variable(s) or covariates (Mason, 2002). This is due to the fact that the measurement of both types of variables is

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simultaneously done. These studies are considered relatively simple and low cost, with easy and fast execution allowing to have a preliminary approach that can be useful for fast decision making. Another strength is that they are useful for measuring prevalence.

The choice of the research design was influenced by the view of Robson (1993) that the choice of any research design for any study and strategy used must be appropriate for answering the research questions formulated. Furthermore, the reason for the choice of this design rested on Mason's (2002) suggestion that as a researcher, the design used should help to identify data sources and methods of generating the data; the feasibility of the information, and whether the chosen method could assist in answering the research questions posed in a logical manner. Since the study intends to find out single parenting and its implications academic performance of pupils, cross-sectional survey design is seen as the most appropriate and adequate research design in describing and documenting the effects of single parenting on academic performance.

Settings

The study was conducted in the Effutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. Effutu Municipal District is one of the twenty-two districts in Central Region, Ghana. Originally it was formerly part of the then-larger Awutu/Effutu/Senya District in 1988, until the southwest part of the district was split off by a decree of President John Agyekum Kufuor on 29 February 2008 to create Awutu Senya District; thus, the remaining part was elevated to municipal district assembly status to become Effutu Municipal District on that same year. The municipality is in the southeast part of Central Region and has Winneba as its capital town.

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According to the 2010 population and housing census, more than three quarters (80.7%) of the population aged 11 years and older in the Municipality are literate. Of the literate population, majority (63.6%) are literate in English and Ghanaian language. Close to 30 percent (29.2%) of the literate population are literate in English language only. Males have a higher proportion (87.5%) of literate persons than females (74.8%). About third (33.8%) of the population currently in school are in primary school with 13.3 percent at the junior high school (JHS) level. Less than one tenth (6.9%) of the population currently in school are senior high school (SHS). Close to 28 (27.8%) are at the tertiary level. The high proportion recorded for tertiary level could be due to the location of the University of Education in the Municipality. Apart from the tertiary level where the proportion of males is higher than that of females, at each of the subsequent levels, the proportion of females is higher than that of males. A higher proportion of females (36.3%) than males (31.6%) are enrolled at the primary level. Similar patterns are observed for females who constitute 13 percent and males 12.9 percent at the junior high and senior high school (SHS) levels.

In terms of occupation of the employed population, majority (31.4%) are engaged in craft and related trades, followed by service and sales (24.9%). About 27 percent of the male population are into agriculture, with a higher percentage of females (37.3%) in service and sales than males (9.0%). Manufacturing is the predominant industry (21.6%) in the Municipality, followed by retail services (19.9%) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (16.1%). A higher percentage of females (28.2%) are engaged in manufacturing than males (13.0%). Close to 13 percent (12.7%) of households in the Municipality are engage in agriculture. A higher proportion of urban households in the municipality are engaged in livestock rearing (59.7%) while 49.4 percent grow crops.

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3.4 Population

Population refers to a set of elements, objects, people of which the researcher is interested in investigating in a given geographical area (Yelkpieri & Tamanja, 2019).

According to Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (2011), population is the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events with common observable features for which a researcher is interested in studying. It is also regarded as the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. A population is also defined as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested (Blanche, 1999). Kusi (2012, p. 80) also defines population as "a group of individuals that the researcher generalizes his/her findings".

The population of the study consisted of all Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality. According to Amedahe (2002), the target population in research is the aggregate of cases about which the researcher would like to make generalization. For the purpose of this study, the target population consisted all single parenting public Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality. The total population of single parenting pupils in public Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality was 1,205 (GSS, 2010). This is made up of 578 girls and 627 boys.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of a study refers to any portion of a population selected for the study and on whom information needed for the study is obtained (Akinade & Owolabi, 2009). A sample can be defined as a group of relatively smaller number of people selected from a population for investigation purpose (Alvi, 2016, p.12). In this study, 175 public Junior High School pupils from single parenting families were randomly selected to constitute the sample of the study. Sampling means a process of selecting a given

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number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population such that any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population (Orodho, 2009). The study focused on Junior High School (JHS) pupils to gain insights into how single parenting affects academic performance and support during a critical stage of educational development. JHS represents a crucial period in students' educational journey, where foundational skills are built upon and preparation for higher education begins. This age group is typically more aware of their educational environment and can provide reliable responses, enhancing the validity of the data collected.

The study employed stratified sampling to group the pupils from single parenting families into three strata (East, West and Central Circuit). A school in each circuit was randomly selected using the simple random sampling technique and 175 single parenting pupils from three selected schools formed the sample for the study. Each of the schools selected represents a stratum. From each stratum, one school was randomly selected using simple random sampling, ensuring equal chance of selection and reducing bias. Within these selected schools, 175 pupils were randomly chosen to form the study sample. This method ensured that all geographic areas were proportionally represented, increasing the precision and reliability of the findings. By using stratified sampling, the study was able to provide a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the impact of single parenting on JHS pupils across different regions of the Effutu Municipality. The sample was made up of 84 girls 91 boys from single parenting families. The sample size represents 14.5% of the target population. According to Owusu-Ansah (2017), a sample size of at least 10-20% or more is adequate for a descriptive study.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

The data was collected from the single parented pupils and teachers using a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was presented to the respondents to answer (self-administered). According to Kumar (2019), a questionnaire is a research instrument used in a survey made of carefully constructed questions to obtain self-reported answers about general and personal issues. Questionnaires consisted of well formulated questions to probe and obtain responses from respondents. Amedahe (2003) adds that the list of questions or statement should be related to the objectives of the study, the hypotheses and research questions to be verified and answered. This can be categorized into two main groups: close ended or pre-coded and open-ended questions. Close ended questionnaire provides predetermined closed-ended answers for respondents to choose from. In open-ended questionnaires, open-ended questions are used and respondents are at liberty to give any answers (Twumasi, 2001).

Four-point Likert scale closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire contained four sections. Section A covered the background or demographic data of respondents. The Section B solicited information from the respondents on the nature of parenthood of single parenting pupils. Section C collected data on the factors that affect single parents in academic support of pupils. The Section D solicited information on how single parenthood affect academic support of the pupils. The section C and D of the questionnaire was a four-point Likert-type scale with the grading; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Questionnaires present several advantages. They are cost-effective and time-efficient, allowing researchers to collect data from numerous respondents simultaneously (Bird, 2009). This method ensures standardization in data collection, enhancing the

reliability and comparability of responses (Brace, 2018). Furthermore, respondents often feel more comfortable providing honest answers due to the anonymity questionnaires offer, particularly in sensitive topics where social desirability bias might otherwise be a concern (Singer, 2017). Questionnaires also enable researchers to reach a wide and diverse audience geographically, making them particularly suitable for large-scale studies (Krosnick, 2018). Additionally, the data collected through questionnaires is usually quantifiable, facilitating straightforward analysis and the identification of patterns and trends (Fink, 2019).

However, questionnaires also come with several disadvantages. Firstly, they often yield limited depth of responses compared to other methods like interviews, which might restrict the richness and nuance of the data collected (Patten, 2016). There's also the risk of response bias, where respondents may provide socially desirable answers or misunderstand questions, leading to inaccurate data (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, questionnaires frequently suffer from low response rates, particularly when administered online, which can bias results and affect the representativeness of the sample (Nulty, 2008). Additionally, once a questionnaire is distributed, it's challenging to modify or clarify questions based on respondents' feedback, limiting the flexibility of this method (Bryman, 2016). Finally, there's a potential for misinterpretation of questions due to ambiguous wording or lack of context, which can further compromise the accuracy of responses (DeVellis, 2016).

3.7 Pre-Testing of Instrument

To find out if the instrument would obtain the required responses and devoid of ambiguity, a pre-test was conducted on single parenting pupils in one of the schools in Winneba, Effutu West Circuit in Effutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. Including the pre-tested area in Winneba, Effutu West District, as part of the study's

strata ensured the sample was representative of the entire Effutu Municipality, reflecting similar socio-economic and cultural characteristics. This inclusion allowed the researchers to use refined data collection instruments, enhancing validity and reliability. It also maintained the integrity of the stratified sampling strategy by ensuring comprehensive geographic and demographic coverage. Using the pre-tested area demonstrated methodological rigor, validating the instruments in a relevant context and reinforcing the credibility of the study's findings (Creswell, 2014) on the impact of single parenting on JHS pupils.

3.8 Validity

Joppe (2016) emphasizes the critical role of validity in research, which determines the extent to which a study accurately measures what it intends to measure or the truthfulness of its findings. In the context of questionnaire design, ensuring validity is essential to guarantee that the instrument effectively captures the intended constructs or variables. Content validity, a crucial aspect of validation, involves assessing whether the questions in the questionnaire adequately cover the relevant content domain and represent the concepts being studied. In the case mentioned, the validation process involved the researcher's supervisor reviewing the questionnaire to ensure its content validity. This likely entailed examining each question to verify its relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness in addressing the research objectives and the underlying constructs. By validating the questionnaire through content review, the researcher aimed to enhance the trustworthiness and accuracy of the data collected, thereby strengthening the overall validity of the research findings. This approach aligns with best practices in questionnaire development, which emphasize the importance of rigorous validation procedures to uphold the credibility and reliability of survey instruments in research endeavors.

3.9 Reliability

Again, Joppe (2016) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. The reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) was obtained by calculating the Cronbach coefficient after the pilot test. The reliability coefficient for the questionnaire for the study was 0.78. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) a Cronbach alpha coefficient of at least 0.70 is indicative of reliability.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

In order to successfully collect data for the study, an introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Basic Education introducing the researcher and the purpose of the research to the authorities in the selected schools in the Effutu Municipality. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher made preliminary enquires in the yet to be selected schools to obtain permission from head teachers and teachers to conduct the study. In each school, the selected pupils were grouped together and the purpose of the study was made known to them. The respondents were guided as to how to answer the questionnaire. In order not skip some of the responses, respondents were encouraged to read the questionnaire before selecting the appropriate responses. Respondents were given the opportunity to ask any question that baffles them in order to complete the questionnaire.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedure

The data was checked for accuracy and then entered into the computer and transformed. Statistical Product for Services Solution (SPSS) version 20 was used to describe the basic features of the data. Simple tables, figures, percentages and

frequencies, were used to organize, present, analysed and answer research questions 1, 2 and 3. Inferential statistics such as the independent sample t-test was used to answer research question 4. The statistics provided simple summaries about the samples and the measures.

3.12 Assumptions for the Use of Parametric Statistics

The use of parametric statistics like the One-way between groups ANOVA and the independent samples t-test requires that some assumptions that underpin the choice of parametric tests are fulfilled. These assumptions include normality of data, and homogeneity of variance. Normal is used to describe a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve, which has the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, with smaller frequencies towards the extremes (Pallant, 2009). Research scholars such as Lund and Lund (2012) suggest that there are two main ways of measuring normality of data: graphically, and numerically. In this study, normality of data was checked through the use of the histogram and the Normal Q-Q plot.

Homogeneity of variance, also known as equality of variance, requires that the variability of scores for each of the groups is similar, and Levene's test is used to assess this assumption (Pallant, 2009). Levene's test looks at whether there are any significant differences between group variances (Pallant, 2009). The author adds that this assumption is determined when the Levene statistic is greater than 0.05. Assessment of the Levene's statistic which accompanies the t-test outputs revealed that this assumption was satisfied.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

The adoption of ethical considerations in this study was paramount to safeguarding the well-being of participants and upholding the integrity of the research process. As

emphasized by Creswell (2014), research ethics are essential for maintaining trust and ensuring the validity of study outcomes. To address ethical concerns, several measures were implemented.

Firstly, prior to data collection, an introductory letter from the Department of Basic Education was obtained, introducing the researcher to school authorities. This letter served to establish rapport and transparency with the participating institutions. Moreover, to protect the privacy and anonymity of participants, the study refrained from disclosing the names of pupils and schools involved. This precautionary step mitigated the risk of potential harm or stigma associated with participation.

Informed consent was diligently sought from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the research objectives, expectations, and potential benefits. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions, thereby promoting voluntary participation and autonomy. Additionally, to mitigate any disruption to participants' regular activities, the researcher explained the significance of the study and assured participants of confidentiality regarding their responses. Questions were carefully formulated to avoid causing offense or distress, further safeguarding participants' psychological well-being. Furthermore, measures were implemented to prevent data falsification and plagiarism, thereby ensuring the reliability and integrity of study findings. All references used in the research were duly acknowledged to uphold academic honesty and integrity.

Overall, the adoption of these ethical considerations not only protected the rights and well-being of participants but also enhanced the credibility and validity of the research outcomes. By adhering to ethical principles, the study upheld ethical standards and promoted trustworthiness in the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the data analysis and discusses the findings of the study. The results are presented, interpreted and discussed in relation with relevant literature. The study sought to examine the implication of single parenthood on the academic performance of public Junior High School pupils in Effutu Municipality. The results are presented and analyzed in two sections namely section A and section B. Section A deals with the demographic data while the section B concerns the main data.

4.1 Section A: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

This section shows the socio-demographic data on respondents' gender, age and parent they stayed with. Table 4. 1 summarizes the socio-demographic data of the pupils.

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	84	48.0
Male	91	52.0
Age		
9-11 years	8	4.6
12-20 years	167	95.4
Above 20 years	0	0.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

From the data in Table 4.1, it is seen that 84 (48%) of the respondents were females while 91(52%) were males. Again, it can be observed that 8 (4.6%) of the respondents were within the age range of 9 to 11 years, 167(95.4%) were within the age range of 12 to 20 years while the respondents above 20 years represents 0(0%). This implies that majority of single parented pupils were within the ages of 12- 20 years.

4.1.1 Occupation of Pupils' Parents

The respondents (pupils) were asked to indicate the occupation of their parents. The responses are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Occupation of Parents

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teaching	10	5.7
Farming	7	4.0
Fishing	27	15.4
Trading	120	68.6
Others	11	6.3
Total	175	100.0

 Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in Table 4.2 show the occupation of the pupils' parents. It is observed that 10 (5.7%) of the single parents were teachers, 7 (4.0%) were farmers, 27 (15.4%) of them were engaged in fishing, 120 (68.6%) were in trading and the remaining 11 (6.3%) were in other occupations like banking, driving, and nursing. The data suggest that majority of single parents were involved in trading as a source of livelihood. Several empirical research consistently has found associations between a host of socio-demographic factors (e.g., economic circumstances) (Schmitt & Kleine, 2010).

It is an indisputable fact that the occupation of single parents determines to a large extent their nature and level of involvement in their children's academic work.

4.1.2 Parental Literacy

The pupils were asked to indicate whether their parents can read and write. The responses are summarized in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3- Literacy of Parents

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	31.4
No	120	68.6
Total	175	100.0

 Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in Table 4.3 show that 55 (31.4%) of the respondents' parents are literates (they could read and write) while 120 (68.6%) of them indicated their parents are illiterate (cannot read and write). The responses of the pupils imply that majority of the pupils appeared not supervised by their parents to study and do their homework. This revelation confirms the previous response of pupils to the question of who usually supervises pupils' studies at home which reveals that it is their siblings. In Table 3, it is realised that 47 (26.9%) of the respondents are supervised by their mothers. Again, 6 (3.4%) of the respondents are supervised by their fathers. Siblings are also found to supervise the learning of 101 (57.7%) of the respondents while 21 (12.0%) of the respondents are supervised by other people such as their aunts and guardians. This could stem from the fact that most of the pupil's parents are traders as indicated by pupils and as such they appear busy and do not have enough time to supervise the studies of their children at home. The findings of the current study are in line with the

findings of Owusu-Ansah (2017) that majority of single parents cannot read and write hence they might not be able to meet up children's academic demands. As such supervising the studies of their children would be difficult to do for majority of single parents.

4.2 Section B: Analysis of Main Data

This section presents the results for the analysis of the main data. The results of the main data have been presented according to the research questions formulated for the study. Again, the responses for each research question were presented in this section.

Research Question 1: What is the nature of single parenting of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

The respondents (pupils) were asked some questions to indicate the nature of single parenthood under three (3) different sections. These sections are; sex of single parents, who they stay with and who provide the academic support. The result of sex of single parents is presented in Tables 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 Sex of Single Parents

Sex of Parent	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Mothers	120	68.6
Fathers	55	31.4

Source: Field work, (2022)

The data in Table 4.4 suggest that 120 (68.6 %) of single parents being mothers as against 55 (31.4 %) as fathers. It implies there are more single mothers than fathers in the selected schools in the Effutu Municipality.

According to Millar and Ridge (2001), a higher percentage of single mothers than single fathers live below the poverty line. Economic disadvantage is linked with lower

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academic achievement and increased behavioral problems among children. Fewer economic resources are also linked with residential instability, which further contributes to children's academic and behavioral difficulties. According to Millar and Ridge (2001), differences in well-being for children from single parent families especially single mothers typically disappear when differences in economic circumstances are considered.

4.1.1 Who Pupils stay with

Respondents were asked to indicate who they stay with. The result is indicated in Table 4.5

Table 4:5 Who Pupils stay with

Who do you stay with?	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Mother	114	65.1
Father	10	5.7
Grandparents	42	24.0
Other	9	5.1

Source: Field work, (2022)

It is shown in Table 4.5 that 114 (65.1%) of the respondents stayed with their mothers, 10(5.7%) stayed with their fathers, 42 (24%) stayed with their grandparents while 9 (5.1%) of the respondents stayed with other people such as their siblings, relatives (aunts) and guardians. This also means majority of the respondents stayed with their mothers, an indication of single parents (mothers). According to Mostafa and Wiggins (2015) children from single-parent homes have low self-esteem, low achievement motivation and low tolerance for delay of gratification than those from intact families where father and mother are present. Further, in single-parent families, most of the affected people are confronted with several stressors and changes which

prevent them from enjoying a healthy lifestyle (Marziyeh & Khaidzir, 2009). Characteristically, McLanahan et al. (2001) revealed that single parent families can have limited human capital and financial resources.

4.1.2 Source of Parental Academic Support to Pupils

Respondents were asked to indicate their source of parental academic support. The results are indicated in Table 4.6

Table 4.6: Source of Parental Academic Support

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mother	112	64.0
Father	10	5.7
Grandparents	40	22.9
Other	13	7.4

Source: Field work, (2022)

The data in Table 4.6 reveal that 112 (64.0%) of pupils receive academic support from their mothers. Academic support contribution by fathers stood at 5.7 % and that of grandparents stood at 22.9%. This implies the majority of pupils earn their academic support from their single mothers.

Goisis, Ozcan, and Osborne (2017) state that, less than optimal parenting is more likely to be observed in families that are experiencing economic stress and among adolescent mothers (although a large part of this association may be explained by the greater likelihood that adolescent single mothers will experience economic disadvantage). Psychologist Mavis Hetherington has found that the parenting skills of

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mothers tend to diminish and children who are exposed to such disruptions in parenting experience concurrent psychological, behavioral, and academic difficulties (Fomby & Osborne, 2017).

Research Question 2: What factors affect single parenting in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

4.2 Factors affecting Single Parents in Academic Support

This research question sought to investigate factors affecting single parents in selected public Junior High Schools in Effutu Municipality. In answering this question, some statements were provided which respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. For clarity, responses for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) were put together as Agree while responses for Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were put together as Disagree. The data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The results are presented in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Factors affecting single parents in academic support of pupils

Statement	SA +A		D +SD	
	F	%	F	%
My parent's occupation does not adequately support academic work	99	56.0	76	44.0
My parent receives an average income of Ghc 200 per month	82	46.9	93	53.1
My parent can read and write	65	37.1	110	62.9
My parent had no formal education	96	54.9	79	45.1
My parent cannot speak the language used in school	94	53.7	81	46.3
My parent does not show any interest in my Academic work	123	70.3	52	29.7

Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in the Table 4.7 show the factors affecting single parents in academic support of pupils as reported by the pupils. It shows that 99 (56.0%) of respondents agreed that their parent's occupation does not adequately support their academic work while 76 (44.0%) disagreed. In response to the statement 'My parent receives an average income of Ghc 200 per month', 82 (46.9%) of the pupils agreed while 93 (53.1%) of the respondents disagreed. Also, the results show minority of pupils, 110 (62.9%) agreed to the statement 'My parent can read and write", 65(37.1%) disagreed. Furthermore, the results show that more than half of the respondents 96 (54.9%) agreed while 79(45.1%) disagreed that their parent had no formal education. This was confirmed when majority, 94 (53.7%) of the pupils agreed that their parent cannot speak the language used in the school.

The responses from the pupils imply that the main factor affecting single parents' ability to support pupils' academic work had to do with single parents not showing greater interest in their wards' academic work. This may be due to lack of gainful employment, poor income level, illiteracy and poor educational background. Though the results show that parents were involved in teaching, farming, fishing, trading and with trading being the highest occupation. It implies from the pupils that the occupation mentioned does not adequately support their academic work.

The results revealed that majority of the respondents (pupils) said their parents cannot read and write and for that matter unable to support their pupils' academic work. This supports the view of Donkor (2010) that parents with limited formal education might have the will to assist children with their learning, but are constrained by their own limited formal education. According to Chowa et al. (2012) a comparison of parents' educational level and involvement in their children's education shows parents are more engaged when their own educational level exceeds their children's current level

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of education. However, parents less educated than their children are more engaged within their children's school environment than parents who have a level of education equivalent to or greater than their children. Additionally, Browne (2012) intimates that parental education may be both direct insights into the production function that generates child quality and may indirectly frustrate a higher quantity of other inputs through the effect educational levels on parental income. This implies that single parents might not have the capacity to support pupil academic work, as majority of them are not formally educated in the context of this study.

The results also reveal that majority of the parents cannot speak the language (English) officially used in the school. This supports the view of Donkor (2010) that even though parents are not urged to communicate in English at most official fora that is the preferred medium. The consequences according to him is that they are unable to speak their mind and therefore become rubberstamps to decisions passed in school meetings. English is the official language and universal medium of communication in basic schools. It is officially supplemented by five local languages, namely Twi, Fante, Ewe, Ga, and Moshi/ Dagomba (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). Adam (2005) in a study on community participation in school development in the Nanumba District of Ghana found that parents who are illiterate in the country official language, English which is often also that of tuition, feel that no one will listen to or understand their contribution at meetings. Such a limitation affects involvement in school governance. Teaching in the local language can bring communities closer to school (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009) and maximise the likelihood of parental involvement in school (Benson, 2000). This suggests that parents might not have the desire to visit or attend school meetings as the language used might not be in his/her favor. The low literacy levels limit the active parental involvement in school governance (Adam, 2005;

Donkor, 2010). English language is an issue in terms of home learning and it is the language used in the formal structures and therefore alien to many parents (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009) some of whom are also not literate in their own language. This is problematic if we are to promote single parental involvement in these structures as communication and information flow are important factors in terms of the success of parental involvement in school governance. The finding confirms the literature that low level proficiency is another barrier to parental involvement in school (Adam, 2005; Opoku-Amankwa, 2005)

The findings of the study reveal that majority of the parents had limited income to be able to support their pupils. The study found that single parenthood was a key economic constraint due to limited income. Single parents appeared more unlikely to provide education materials or otherwise facilitate their children's schooling as they faced economic challenges that made it difficult to meet the educational needs of their children. The finding suggests that, confronted with diminished income, single mothers had to constantly strike a balance between feeding the children with limited formal education. This supports the view by Ziol-Guest, Duncun and Kalil (2015) that single parental families with limited income lack money for adequate food and medical care let alone assisting children with their academic work. It suggests that such pupils might not have television, books, textbooks for homework and studies which can affect their academic work.

Research Question 3: In what ways do single parenting affect academic support of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

4.3 Academic Support of Parents

4.3.1 Supervision of Pupils' Learning at Home

The pupils were asked to indicate who supervises their learning at home. The responses are summarized in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Parental Supervision of Pupils' Learning at Home

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mother	47	26.9
Father	6	3.4
Siblings	101	57.7
Others	21	12.0
Total	175	100

Source: Fieldwork, Adjido (2022)

Data in Table 4.8 show the persons who normally supervise the learning of pupils at home. It is shown that 47 (26.9%) of the respondents are supervised by their mothers. Again, 6 (3.4%) of the respondents are supervised by their fathers. Siblings are also found to supervise the learning of the shown by 101 (57.7%) of the respondents while 21 (12.0%) of the respondents are supervised by other people such as their aunts and guardians. Single parents who expressed concerns about their inability to help with their children's homework said they tended to rely on family members (siblings, aunts, etc.) for support with homework. This might be due to limited educational background of the single parents in addition to their inability to speak the official language used in the school. This suggests that a child belongs to the extended family, not his/her biological parent so everyone does what they can to help in the child's

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education. The finding also underscores the importance of the extended family system and how it links to the child's education in the school. It also exemplifies interconnectedness in terms of parental involvement even though the subject is single parenthood. The finding also shows that mothers have a key role in their children's education.

The data suggests that majority of the pupils' learning was under the supervision of their siblings. This is understandable since siblings might have more time than the single parent (mothers) who might be doing several jobs to take care of the home. However, data gathered in the comparison of fathers and mothers, in the current study found that mothers were more involved in the supervision of learning at home than fathers.

This result confirms the findings of Cheowa, Ansong and Osei-Akoto (2012) which found slightly higher involvement at home among mothers than fathers in the academic work of their children. The finding suggests that mothers, though interested in their children receiving formal education are unable to do that themselves due to their low literacy and limited formal education.

4.3.2 How often pupils learn at home in a week

The respondents were asked to indicate how often they learn in a week. The responses are summarized in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: How often single parenting pupils learn at home

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Twice in a week	19	10.9
As and when I feel like	86	49.1
When I have homework	28	16.0
During examinations	9	5.1
Total	**175**	**100.0**

Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in Table 4.9 show how often or the various periods of time pupils learn in a week. It is seen in the data that 33 (18.9%) of the respondents learnt every day, 19 (10.9%) learnt twice in a week, 86 (49.1%) of the respondents learnt as and when they feel like, 28 (16.0%) learnt as and when they have homework and the remaining 9 (5.1%) learn during examinations.

The findings have revealed that most pupils in a single parent home usually learn as and when they feel like 86 (49.1%). Learning as and when they feel like but not every day confirms several studies about poor learning and reading study habits of single-parented pupils (Owusu-Ansah, 2017). The finding suggests that single mothers, though interested in their children receiving formal education due to perceived benefits are less likely to assist in homework due to their low literacy and limited formal education as indicated earlier.

4.4 Parental Involvement in PTA Meetings/Activities

Involvement in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) opens spaces for parental involvement in school (Nkansah and Chapman, 2006). PTA is voluntary organization of parents or guardians of children at the school level (Ghana Education Service, SMC/PTA Handbook, 2001, pp.9-11).

The national education policy, jointly authored by GES, PTA/SMC (2001), states that membership of the PTA comprises parents, guardians (with children in the school) and teachers all of whom are assumed to have interest in the children's education. The executive committee of a PTA consists of between six to nine members selected at a general meeting, among whom there shall be a chairman, vice chairman, secretary (teacher), financial secretary (parent), treasurer (parent), 1st committee member (parent), 2nd committee member (parent), 3rd committee member (head teacher) and school welfare officer (Ex-officio member). As much as possible at least one-third of the committee shall be women. All executive members are eligible for two terms of two years each.

In Ghana, the main mandate of the PTA is to assist in school maintenance and infrastructural repair, teacher and children welfare provision, fund-raising activities and the upkeep of pupil performance standards. PTAs achieve these through maintenance of discipline, as well as provision of school textbooks, teacher accommodation, and teaching/learning materials (GES, PTA/SMC, 2001; Nkansah and Chapman, 2006; Kamba, 2010). It is expected that school can hold a general meeting at least once a term although an emergency meeting may be requested by the chairperson or head teacher (GES, PTA/SMC, 2001).

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The PTA in Ghana though not part of the official governance structure is very important because of its role in fundraising and given the nature of the school communities under study. The major forum for building parental/community/school relations and networks is the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) unlike the SMC which is mandated to exercise general oversight supervision In Ghana, the main mandate of the PTA is to assist in school maintenance and infrastructural repair, teacher and children welfare provision, fund-raising activities and the upkeep of pupil performance standards. PTAs achieve these through maintenance of discipline, as well as provision of school textbooks, teacher accommodation, and teaching/learning materials (GES, PTA/SMC, 2001; Nkansah and Chapman, 2006; Kamba, 2010).

The results of single parents' involvement in PTA meetings/activities are disclosed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10- Parental Involvement in PTA/meetings/Activities

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	31.4
No	120	68.6
Total	**55**	**100.0**

Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in Table 4.10 show results of parental involvement in PTA meetings or activities. The results show that 55 (31.4%) respondents said their single parents are involved in

PTA meetings or activities while 120 (68.6%) are not involved. The result implies that majority of single parents are not involved in PTA meetings in the Effutu Municipality. This sounds bad news because parental participation in PTA meetings has implications on academic support of their children. The data implies that most single parents do not find time to be actively involved in PTA meetings.

Meanwhile, PTA funding comes from member contributions (usually dues), special levies and voluntary donations from stakeholders such as NGOs and the community (GES PTA/ SMC, 2001). PTA involvement is mainly in developmental projects. PTAs also motivate pupils and teachers through awards/prizes etc; they also purchase teaching and learning materials; renovate or repair buildings; sponsor recreational facilities; transport teachers and pupils to competitions, ceremonies etc; and make funds available to the school to meet diverse needs (PTA/SMC Resource Handbook (2001) In Ghana in recent times, newly recruited teachers at the pre-university level have had to endure the unpleasant situation of working without remuneration for about a year after their first appointment (MOESS, 2006).

 The finding here does not support the relevant literature that shows that most parents in developing countries have been found to provide financial (e.g. PTA subscriptions, levies) or in-kind contributions such as materials and labour for the construction or maintenance of school buildings when it comes to involvement in school governance (Geo-Jaja, 2004; Chikoko, 2007).

4.5 Parental Involvement in SMC Meeting

Involvement in SMC opens spaces for parental involvement in school (Nkansah and Chapman, 2006). Ghana's decentralisation policy prescribes the SMC as the formal forum for parental involvement in basic school governance, particularly in matters of

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financial management, school and teacher discipline (GES, PTA/SMC, 2001; Nkansah and Chapman, 2006, p. 509-532). In contrast, the PTA serves as a forum for building parental/community/school relations and networks (GES, PTA/SMC, 2001; Adam, 2005). The rationale for instituting SMCs was to engage qualified community members with technical wherewithal to support a school's internal administrators (Mankoe, 2002). In Ghana, in line with the GES, PTA/SMC (2001) policy, membership of a SMC is made up of the head teacher; a representative of the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly; chairperson of the Unit Committee; a representative of the Education Unit; a representative of the PTA (selected at a general meeting through voting); a representative of the village chief; two members of the teaching staff; and two co-opted members of the community who might be parents.

A critical determinant for appointment to an SMC is the issue of relevant skills, knowledge and expertise because of their combined efforts on school policy, administration, finance and development (Mankoe, 2002; MOESS, 2005). Yet, these criteria have been described as barriers to the democratic process because the majority of parents in small communities are unlikely to contribute on account of their obvious lack of these skills (Adam, 2005). As indicated in the literature review, the capacity of rural communities to provide this sort of supports (refresher courses. seminars and in-service training) for SMC is challenged (Watt, 2001; Adam, 2005). One major challenge is that poor communities with low levels of education attainment often lack the time, money, confidence, skills and lack of cooperation of the school staff (Watt, 2001; Adam, 2005; Donkor, 2010).

The data on Single parents' involvement in SMC meetings are shown in table 4.11

Table 4.11- Parental Involvement in SMC meeting

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	11.4
No	155	88.6
Total	175	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in Table 4.11 show results of parental involvement in SMC meetings. The results show that 20 (11.4%) respondents said their single parents are involved in SMC meetings/activities while 155 (88.6%) are not involved. The result implies that majority of single parents are not involved in SMC meetings in the Effutu Municipality. According to Addae-Boahene and Arkorful, 1999), SMC aims at fostering effective community involvement and mobilization for effective education provision and delivery.

4.6 Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in academic support between male and female pupils in public Junior High School in Effutu Municipality.

In answering the research hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to find out whether there is significant differences in the perceptions of male and female pupils on the academic support. The responses for the statements under the segment 'factors affecting single parents in academic support of pupils on the questionnaire were computed together to represent how single parenting affected academic support of pupils. The test was used because the following assumptions were met.

1. The dependent variable was measured on a continuous scale (i.e., it is measured at the interval or ratio level.

2. Independent variable consists of two categorical, independent groups. In this study, independent variables that meet this criterion include gender (2 groups: male or female).

3. Independence of observations, which means that there is no relationship between the observations in each group or between the groups themselves.

4. There were no significant outliers.

5. The dependent variable was approximately normally distributed for each group of the independent variable.

6. Equal variances were assumed.

The results are for the independent samples t-test are presented in 4.12.

Table 4.12: Independent Samples T-Test for Gender Difference in effect of single parents in academic support of pupils

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	78	21.5	4.35			
				173	0 . 801	0.424
Female	97	22.1	3.96			

 Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Data in Table 4.12 show the independent samples t-test performed on the effect of single parenting on academic support of male and female pupils. It was revealed that the mean for the males was 21.5 while that of females was 22.1. Again, the standard deviation (SD) for males was 4.35 while the standard deviation (SD) for females was 3.96. It can be concluded from data in Table 4.15 that there is no statistically

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significant difference in the effects of single parenting on academic support of male and female pupils (t= .801, df = 173, p=0.424, 2-tailed). The probability value (p-value) of 0.424 is greater than the 0.05 significant level. Therefore, based on the result above, there is no statistically significant difference in the effects of single parenting on academic support of male and female pupils. Thus, the effects of single parenting on academic support is the same or similar for males and females.

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Owusu-Ansah (2017) which states that there was no support for the contention that parental academic support has more detrimental consequences for males than females. In other words, there was no difference in the factors that affect academic support of male and female pupils in the Effutu Municipality. The finding supports Hasan (2019) that there is no significant difference found between the academic achievements of parental academic support groups of male and female. However, the finding of this study disagrees with Pomerantz (2004) that single fathers' parenting was more closely associated with girls' school adjustment than boys. In turn, maternal interpersonal involvement was more allied with sons' enjoyment of school than daughters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter consists of the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study. In addition, suggestions for further study were presented in this chapter.

5.1 Summary

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of single parenting on the academic support of Junior High School pupils in the Effutu Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the nature of single parenting of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

2. investigate the factors that affect single parenting in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

3. examine how single parenting affect academic support of pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

4. examine how the sex of pupils affect the level of academic support given by single parent in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

Descriptive survey (Cross-sectional design) was employed for the study. The study targeted 1205 single parenting pupils in public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality. Out of the target population, a sample of 175 pupils were selected through stratified and simple random sampling technique for the study. Self-designed questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using frequency, percentages and independent samples t-test.

5.2 Findings

The findings of the study revealed the following:

1. The nature of single parenting was mother dominated in-spite of their economic challenges.

2. The factors affecting single parents' ability to support pupils' academic work had to do with lack of interest in their wards' academic work, limited formal education, limited income and financial resource and difficulty in speaking the official language of the school.

3. The main effects of single parents on academic support of pupils featured in parental difficulty in assisting with supervision and monitoring of homework and therefore fell largely on siblings for assistance. Others included poor participation in PTA and SMC meetings/activities.

4. The findings of the study show that there is no statistically significant difference in the implications of single parenting on academic support of male and female public junior high school pupils in the Effutu Municipality. This means, both male and female pupils from public Junior High Schools in the Effutu Municipality have almost the same implications or consequences of being single parented.

5.3 Conclusions

The predominance of mother-led single parenthood suggests that, despite economic difficulties, mothers often take on the primary caregiving role. This could reflect societal norms and expectations about gender roles in parenting. The economic challenges faced by these mothers likely exacerbate the stress and pressures associated with single parenthood, potentially affecting their capacity to provide adequate academic support for their children.

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Several key factors hinder single parents' ability to support their children's education. A lack of interest in their children's academic progress, coupled with limited formal education, suggests a possible lack of understanding or undervaluing of the importance of academic support. Limited income and financial resources can restrict access to educational materials and extracurricular opportunities. Additionally, difficulty in speaking the school's official language can create barriers to effective communication with teachers and understanding school policies and requirements.

Single parents face significant challenges in supervising and monitoring their children's homework, often relying on older siblings for assistance. This reliance can lead to inconsistent academic support and potentially overburden siblings. Poor participation in PTA and SMC meetings and activities indicates a lack of engagement in school governance and community, which may result in reduced advocacy for their children's needs and fewer opportunities to influence school policies and practices that affect their children.

The lack of a statistically significant difference in the implications of single parenting on the academic support of male and female pupils suggests that the challenges associated with single parenthood affect all children similarly, regardless of gender. This finding indicates that interventions aimed at supporting single-parent families should be inclusive and address the needs of both male and female pupils equally, ensuring that all students receive the necessary support to thrive academically.

Overall, the study highlights the critical role of mothers in single-parent households and the substantial economic and educational barriers they face. It underscores the need for targeted interventions to support single parents, such as providing financial assistance, educational programs to enhance parental engagement, and language

support services. The reliance on siblings for academic support and poor parental involvement in school activities are areas that require attention to improve the overall academic outcomes for children in single-parent families. Additionally, the findings suggest that these interventions should be designed to support all children equally, regardless of gender, to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed academically.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings above:

1. School authorities and community leaders should work together to organize seminars and workshops for single parents to enable them know that their supervision of their children's learning is vital to the academic work of their children.

2. Teachers should be encouraged to pay attention to single parented pupils to help them adjust better and successfully pursue their academic work.

3. Government agencies and NGOs should provide some form of assistance to pupils from single parent homes to enable them cope with the financial burden that comes with it so that they can get the needed books and materials for academic work.

4. School counselors should engage in occasional talks with pupils from single parent homes to be able to identify any social or behavioural issues they might be battling with and in so doing provide the necessary counseling assistance.

5. School counsellors should again, organize study skills seminars or workshops for class teachers so that if they identify any issues that single parented pupils are battling with, they can refer the pupils to the school counsellors.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

It is suggested that qualitative research be conducted to provide some of the findings to serve as a form of validating the findings of the single parented pupils. Further research should be advanced towards the use of a longitudinal study to address the causal relationships between the single parenthood and academic support over time as this study did not specifically examine the trends between these variables overtime.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Please kindly spend few minutes of your time to respond objectively to the following questions to support the study with the title "Single Parenthood: Implications for Academic Support among Public Junior High School Pupils in Effutu Municipality". This research is purely for academic purpose and any information provided would be treated with the maximum confidentiality it deserves. Respondents are also assured that their identity will not be associated with any aspect of the research report. Please tick the appropriate answer(s) or specify where necessary. Thank you in anticipation of your maximum support.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PUPILS

Please kindly spend few minutes of your time to respond objectively to the following questions to support the study with the title "**Influence of Single Parenting on Academic Support of Public Junior High School Pupils in Effutu Municipality".** This research is purely for academic purpose and any information provided would be treated with the maximum confidentiality it deserves. Respondents are also assured that their identity will not be associated with any aspect of the research report. Please tick the appropriate answer(s) or specify where necessary. Thank you in anticipation of your maximum support.

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Data

1. Sex: a. Male [ ] b. Female [ ]

2. Age:

9-11 years   [ ]

12-20 years   [ ]

Above 20 years [ ]

3. What is the occupation of your parent you live with live?

a. Teaching [ ] b. Farming [ ] c. Fishing [ ] d. Trading [ ]   e. Others (specify)…………………

4. Can your parent read and write? Yes [ ] No [ ]

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SECTION B: Nature of Parenthood of Single Parenting Pupils

5. Which of your parents do you stay with? a. Mother [ ] b. Father [ ] c. Grandparent [ ] d. Other (specify)……………………………………

6. Which of your parents takes care of your education or school needs?

      Mother [ ]   Father [ ]

7. Indicate your birth position among your siblings…………………..………

8. How many of your siblings are in school? ……………………….……

9. Are you living or staying with a single parent?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

10. Is the parent a single mother or single father or both?

Single mother [ ]   Single father [ ]   Both [ ]

11. Which of the above (10) is the source of your academic support?

Section C: Factors affecting Single Parental Academic Support

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

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	My parent's occupation does not adequately support academic work				
13	My parent receives an average income of Ghc 300.00 per month				
14	My parent can read and write				
15	My parent had no formal education				
16	My parent cannot speak the language used in school				
17	My parent does not show any interest in my academic work				

Section D : Single Parenthood and its Effects on Academic Support

18. Do your parent facilitate your study or learning at home?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

19. Who normally supervise your learning at home?

a. Mother [ ]   b. Father   [ ] c. Siblings [ ]   Others (specify): ………

20. If your parents facilitate your study or learning at home, how often do you learn in a week?

a. Every day [ ]

b. Twice in a week [ ]

c. As and when I feel like [ ]

d. When I have homework [ ]

e. During exams [ ]

21 Do you participate in PTA activities?   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

22 Does the PTA support school infrastructure? Yes [ ]   No [ ]

23. What is the nature of Support from PTA infrastructural funding? Material [ ] Labour [ ] others [ ]

24 Do you participate in SMC activities? Yes [ ]   No [ ]

25. Which role do you play in SMC decision-making?

Financial management [ ]   Monitoring of teachers [ ]   Others [ ]