

SINGLE MOTHERHOOD AND ITS IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN FUNGOM SUB-DIVISION, NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The concept of family has changed dramatically over the last few decades. Family structure have moved from the traditional two-parent family that is, man, woman and children to diverse forms of family structure. These family structures include blended families, single parent families (single father, single mother. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of single motherhood on the academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Fungom Sub-Division of Cameroon. The study employed the descriptive research design with a sample of 325 participants of whom 293 adolescents and 32 single mothers. Qquestionnaire and interview guide were the instruments used to collect data. The instruments were validated by some experts. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.75. Findings revealed that single mother's involvement, single mothers' parenting styles and single mother-adolescent conflicts moderately influenced academic performance of adolescents. In aggregate, findings of the study equally revealed that single motherhood moderately influenced academic performance of adolescents positively. It was recommended that parents should model good attitude and behavior towards academics as they serve as role models imitated by adolescents, they should practice an eclectic parenting style dominated by an authoritative parenting style and single mothers should improve on and vary their home conflict management with the adolescents.

KEYWORDS: Single motherhood, involvement, parenting style, single-mother adolescent conflict academic performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

A family is a basic unit of the society made up of a father, mother and children. They share resources, responsibility for decisions, values and goals and have a commitment to one another over time. (American Association of family and Consumer Sciences, 2004). Families provide emotional, physical, and economic mutual aid to their members. It is characterized by intimacy, intensity, continuity and commitment among the members. The concept of family has changed dramatically over the last few decades. Family structure have moved from the traditional two-parent family that is, man, woman and children to diverse forms of family structure. These family structures include blended families, single parent families (single father, single mother). Most studies (Burghes, 1996) on single-parent families are based on a deficit model which

views single parent families in some way dysfunctional.

A single mother family is where a woman who has at least one dependent child and is living alone without a partner (Gonzalez, 2005; Dlamini, 2006) and takes care of the child's entire needs. Motherhood is a supportive social responsibility which allows mothers to develop essential primary bonds with their children and allow them to be productive members of the groups in which they belong. The family lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school. Also, the attitude towards education that the child takes to school is determined by the models in the family structure. In the single mother family, the mother is the sole model for her children in the family.

However, expectations from mothers are often in form of norms. A general norm that applies to all women across Africa when it concerns motherhood includes child rearing. This child rearing goes on in and out of the family (Nsamenang, 2006). In the single mother family, child rearing is dependent on the mother and this double rule is usually overwhelming to the mother and adolescents' academic performance can also be affected. This view is in line with Burghes (1996) who opined that, the conditions in which single mothers find themselves combine to make it difficult for them to engage in good mothering. These conditions are poverty, inadequate quality housing, low educational background and insufficient time which makes their children to be less likely to attain success in school. Children are in secondary school at adolescence and their academic performance is often of importance for success in their adult world. These academic performance in single mother family is dependent on the mothers' contributions towards the children. These contributions can be through involvement, parenting and managing conflicts at home.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A single mother family is where a woman who has at least one dependent child is living alone without a partner (Gonzalez, 2005; Dlamini, 2006) and takes care of the child's entire needs. Similarly, Gabel & Kotel (2018) identified the absence of a father as the core basis in the definition of single mother family, especially regarding lack of financial provisions and the absence of a role model for the children. Single motherhood families result for several reasons. Besides, there exist various strengths of single motherhood despite the challenges they face.

Single motherhood status does not exclude mothers from optimal maternal practices. Unger (2001) stated that maternal practice considered as optimal include listening to children, being warm and responsive but also setting ambitious standards and monitoring children's activities. These optimal practices are drawn on views of what is 'good' and appropriate for children. Motherhood is presented as essential, normal and natural for all women. When motherhood produces competent children, who are well adjusted and effective citizens, it is publicly valued. This gives mothers a sense of being effective, powerful and in

control. This does not cancel the awareness of tensions in these mothers.

As considered within developmental psychology the most appropriate setting for motherhood is stable heterosexual relations. Gabel & Kotel (2018) identified the absence of a father as the core basis in the definition of single mother family, especially regarding lack of financial provisions and the absence of a role model for the children. Being a mother is not instinctive rather, it is a social task. Thomson and Walker (1989) interpreted male partners as necessary drawing on gendered division of family roles and men's greater economic power. This power allowed fathers to provide economically for children giving mothers the opportunity to devote themselves to care of children and development of close attachments with children (Burman, 1994). Therefore, the absence of fathers becomes problematic because of the assumptions about their value as male role models for children especially males.

The circumstances in which single mothers bring up children often differ from those of partnered mothers. Single mothers are more likely to be poor and to live in inadequate quality housing in inner-city neighborhoods and their children are less likely to attain success in school. As Burghes (1996) discussed, these circumstances combine to make it difficult for single mothers to engage in 'good' mothering. Similarly, the accounts about single mothers portray the tensions women experience as they try to balance being supportive and responsive to children with earning a living, 'being there' for children and engaging in activities for themselves.

A variety of aspects of mothering have been identified as influencing children's development and linked to children's cognitive, social or emotional development. Mainstream developmental psychology argue that mothering associated with children's competence, adjustments, and development is responsive and child-centered (Burman, 1994). Woollett and Phoenix (1996) provided varied ways in which mothers are considered to demonstrate their child-centeredness depending on the age of the children. Adapting parenting to child development is necessary. Mother's child-centeredness includes being available, giving children quality time and attention, listening to them and responding appropriately.

Likewise, Ribbens (1994) argued that, effective mothering involves being directive, socializing, guiding children, monitoring and controlling their activities. This is to ensure they behave appropriately, perform effectively and fit into society. Mothers are expected to maintain control through discussion with children rather than portraying direct power. Expressing feelings that is warmth and affection towards children is required of good mothering. Mothers are expected to remain calm and patient, maintain control over their emotions and put their needs asides to meet those of their children.

Equally important, mothers are expected to bring a strong educational component to mothering (Woollett

and Phoenix 1996). Within this framework, good mothers are those who encourage children's cognitive development and understanding of their worlds by showing interest in what children are doing, talking to them, modeling cause and effect and who also make contributions for children's competence. Mothers are cheered to turn every activity into an opportunity for facilitating children's competence and educational performance. In fact, mothering with a strong educational component is considered particularly effective when accompanied by warmth, firm control and close monitoring of children (Burman, 1994).

McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) assembled data from several American surveys showing that children who grew up with both of their parents performed better on school performances, finished high school more often, earned more in early adulthood and had fewer children as teenagers than children raised in alternative arrangements. They were not clear in differentiating the outcome of children raised by divorced mothers, widowed mothers, remarried mothers, and never married mothers. This gap was filled by BiBliarz and Gottainer (2000) in their study comparing widowed mothers and divorced mothers' children outcomes. They argued that children of widowed mothers have approximately the same outcome as those from two-parent families and they are usually better than children from divorced mother families (Bibliarz & Gottainer, 2000). Speculations are that children who witnessed their parents' divorce are more prone to emotional traumas (Tyaki, 2001) which could adversely affect their behaviors and life attainment. Although the loss of a father could be traumatic, the effect is considered far less than that of divorce.

At the same time, some scholars have argued that there are some exceptions about the widely held view that children of single mothers are in jeopardy (Lombe, et. al., 2001; Mannis, 1999). The main argument is that single mothers are more likely to have positive aspirations for the welfare of their children, making sacrifices to ensure that their children have the best in life (Lombe, et. al., 2001). This association may be complex to explain because the study did not specifically assess overall welfare outcome for instance school enrollment and access to health care. Similarly, a feminist approach argues that single mothers by choice tend to support positive outcomes of their children. This is based on their economic or financial ability to offer the best for their children (Mannis, 1999).

The fact remains that, welfare aspirations for children of single mothers are dependent on the characteristics of the mother (Gonzalez 2005; Lombe, et. al., 2001). Older single mothers are more likely to have positive welfare aspirations for their children and older women are more likely to support their children, compared to younger single mothers (Lombe, et. al., 2001). Curtis (2001) in her study compared single mothers with married mothers and found out that, the lone mothers are mostly younger, poorer, less educated, have fewer children, and are more likely to be on social assistance more than married mothers.

In sub-Saharan Africa, few studies have been carried out on single motherhood (Moyo, & Kewawe, 2009;

Calvès, 1999). Prominent among these studies is the work by Calvès (1999) using the 1991 Demographic Health Survey (DHS), in which he examined the marginalization of single mothers in the marriage market in Cameroon. The study revealed that single mothers who had been single mothers for up to one year were more likely to marry during the year following childbirth, presumably with the child's biological father, than single women without children. Consequently, the presence of a child had a very different effect on the chances of subsequently entering a union depending on the duration in single motherhood: having a child made marriage significantly more likely in the short-run, but significantly decreased marriage chances in the long-run, especially for divorced and widowed mothers. This finding justified the growth in single motherhood in Cameroon.

METHODS

This study made use of a descriptive survey research design. This is because the researcher was interested in the practices and points of view that prevail in single mother families and its influence on adolescent academic performance. The researcher deemed it necessary to use the descriptive survey research design because the researcher aimed at reporting things the way they are in the study area.

The sample size consisted of 325 participants. Single mothers having students were 32 and adolescents from single mother families were 293. The probability sampling technique, specifically the simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the zones for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the single mothers in the sample. This technique was necessary because it enabled the researcher to concentrate on a specific sample that will provide data for the study. To determine a representative sample size for adolescent population the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) scale was used.

Method of data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using the descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistical tools that were used included frequency count, percentages, pie chart and graphs. Data was presented with the use of charts and frequency distribution tables. Qualitative analysis of data from interview guides was analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of concepts, groundings and sampled quotation.

FINDINGS

Research Question 1: In what ways does single mothers' involvement influence academic performance of adolescents?

Table 1: Single Mothers' Involvement and Adolescent Academic Performance

Sl N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Dec.
1	My mother attends all school meetings (Parent Teacher Association).	35 (11.9%)	92 (31.4%)	15 (5.1%)	143 (48.8%)	8 (2.7%)	R
2	My mother regularly visits my school to find out how I am doing academically.	20 (6.8%)	59 (20.2%)	18 (6.2%)	170 (58.2%)	25 (8.6%)	R
3	My mother provides all my study needs.	113 (38.6%)	110 (37.5%)	8 (2.7%)	55 (18.8%)	7 (2.4%)	A
4	I have a friendly environment for my studies at home.	72 (24.6%)	120 (41.0%)	10 (3.4%)	77 (26.3%)	14 (4.8%)	A
5	My mother checks if my homework is completed.	20 (6.8%)	102 (34.8%)	14 (4.8%)	79 (27.0%)	78 (26.6%)	R
6	My mother moderates my television viewing.	100 (34.1%)	138 (47.1%)	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.9%)	23 (7.8%)	A
7	My mother like my reading habits.	73 (24.9%)	159 (54.3%)	20 (6.8%)	36 (12.3%)	5 (1.7%)	A
8	I always feel tired at school because of too much morning house chores.	25 (8.5%)	127 (43.3%)	10 (3.4%)	63 (21.5%)	68 (23.2%)	A
9	My mother discuss my school problems with me.	72 (24.6%)	157 (53.6%)	10 (3.4%)	43 (14.7%)	11 (3.8%)	A
Total / Average 2636		530 (20.1%)	1064 (40.4%)	111 (4.2%)	692 (26.3%)	239 (9.0%)	A

Table 1 above shows that 61.5% (20.1%+40.4%) of the respondents accept that single mothers' involvement influences adolescent academic performance while 4.2% were neutral and 35.3% (26.3%+9.0%) rejected the opinion. The study therefore found that single mothers' involvement moderately influences academic performances of adolescents.

Table 2: Interview responses on Single Mothers' Involvement

Questions	Responses
What role do you play when your children come home with school problems?	Briefly discuss with them and ask questions to; better understand problems and suggest solutions, Visit school to talk with the administration to seek solution.
In what ways does these roles help your children in overcoming school challenges?	Provide new sources of overcoming school problems; Reduce stress, manage time and resources effectively.
What do you do concern monitoring your children's television viewing?	Control the programs they watch; Moderate time spent watching TV.
How can you describe your children's study environment at home?	Not good but manageable conducive, noise free, furnished, clean, ventilated, and lighted.
How do you attain to your children concerning their homework?	Check if it is completed; Check if it was marked; Do not check because I may not understand; They do it under my supervision.
What is your opinion about Parent Teacher meetings?	It helps to share ideas on solving children's problems; It is time wasting because most resolutions are not implemented; Parents do not have opportunity to state their worries.
How do you encourage your children to do better in school? (Hire private teacher, provide a good study environment, reduce their house chores).	Reduce farm and house chores; Innovate study environment; Provide basic needs and hire private teachers; Motivate best performer.

The above table 2 revealed the activities single mothers engage in when involving in their adolescents' academics both at home and in school. Single mothers' involvement was both in school and at home. School involvement was through activities such as visit school to talk with the administration to seek solution, attend parent teacher association meetings. Single mother involvement at home included; controlling the television programs adolescents watched, moderated time spent watching TV, checked if assignment was completed, checked if it was marked, and supervised adolescents as they do homework. To encourage their children to do better in school, some single mothers reported that, they "hired private teacher, reduce farm and house chores, innovate study environment, provide a good study environment, provide basic needs and motivate best performer".

Research Question 2: How does Single mothers’ parenting style impact the academic performance of adolescents?

Table 3: Single mothers’ parenting styles and Academic Performance

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Dec.
Authoritative Parenting Style							
1	My mother listens when I need someone to talk to in the family.	53 (18.1%)	171 (58.4%)	15 (5.1%)	35 (11.9%)	19 (6.5%)	A
2	My mother gives the reasons for family rules to be respected once established.	44 (15.0%)	116 (39.6%)	12 (4.1%)	68 (23.2%)	53 (18.1%)	A
3	My mother always encourages verbal give-and-take whenever I feel that family rules are unreasonable.	20 (6.8%)	67 (22.9%)	34 (11.6%)	144 (49.1%)	28 (9.6%)	R
Authoritarian Parenting Style							
4	When I state my own opinion, she gets upset and imposes her decision.	53 (18.1%)	114 (38.9%)	17 (5.8%)	68 (23.2%)	41 (14.0%)	A
5	My mother often tells me exactly what she wants me to do and how she expects me to do it.	70 (23.9%)	193 (65.9%)	5 (1.7%)	17 (5.8%)	8 (2.7%)	A
6	My mother solves most problems by strictly and forcibly dealing with me when I do not do what she wants me to do.	29 (9.9%)	152 (51.9%)	14 (4.8%)	68 (23.2%)	30 (10.2%)	A
Permissive Parenting style							
7	My mother allows me to form my own point of view and to decide for myself what I should do.	21 (7.2%)	77 (26.3%)	24 (8.2%)	79 (27.0%)	92 (31.4%)	R
8	My mother does not direct	11	35	13	111	123	R

	my behaviors, activities and desires in the family.	(3.8%)	(11.9%)	(4.4%)	(37.9%)	(42.0%)	
9	My mother seldom gives me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.	47 (16.0%)	102 (34.8%)	17 (5.8%)	78 (26.6%)	49 (16.7%)	A
Total / Average		348 (13.2%)	1027 (38.9%)	151 (5.7%)	668 (25.3%)	443 (16.8%)	A

The above table 3 shows that 52.1% (13.2%+38.9%) of the respondents accept that single mothers’ parenting styles influence adolescent academic performance while 5.7% were neutral and 42.1% (25.3%+16.8%) rejected the opinion. The study therefore found that single mothers’ parenting styles moderately influences academic performances of adolescents.

Table 4: Interview responses on Single Mothers’ Parenting Styles and Academic Performance

Questions	Responses
when your children need someone to talk to at home what do you do?	- Listen to them and help them
What role does your children play in making family rules?	Suggest rules; They are passive most often.
What is your opinion on talking bossy to your children at home?	It leads to conflict and create fear in children; It makes them obey rules and create order at home.
What are your reactions towards your children’s opinions during your discussions?	Calm, warm, cordial, and welcoming; Aggressive; less tolerant; Restrict contribution
How concerned are you about your children’s where about after school hours?	Check to know if they are home; Call to find out; Limit their movement; Ask siblings to check on each other
What family roles indicate good mothering?	Monitoring, controlling; providing love and control; caring and guiding.

Questionnaire administered to adolescents revealed that single mothers’ parenting styles moderately influences academic performances of adolescents. Interview conducted with single mothers indicted this moderate influence through the views revealed by mothers. single mothers reported that, they listened to their adolescents and helped them when their children needed someone to talk to at home, they allowed children to suggest rules and sometimes these children were passive. To get their children to respect family

rules, they gave clear instructions, punished bad behavior, sometimes force them and give reasons. Single mothers outlined varied reactions towards their children’s opinions during their discussions. These reactions took on different emotions depending on the topic of discussion. Therefore, the reactions were topic dependent. These reactions included, being calm, warm, cordial, and welcoming, aggressive, less tolerant and restricted contribution. Single mothers were concerned about their children’s whereabouts after school hours. They checked to know if they were home, called to find out, limited their movement, and asked siblings to check on each other. To these single mothers, family roles that indicated good mothering were, monitoring, controlling, providing love and caring, guiding.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of single mother-adolescent conflicts on the academic performance of adolescents?

Table 5: Single Mother Adolescent Conflict and Academic Performance

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Dec.
1	I frequently disagree with my mother on issues concerning daily house chores.	35 (11.9%)	134 (45.7%)	13 (4.4%)	53 (18.1%)	58 (19.8%)	A
2	We get angry at each other at least three times a week.	55 (18.8%)	115 (39.2%)	11 (3.8%)	33 (11.3%)	79 (27.0%)	A
3	Each time I disagree with my mother I find it hard to concentrate in class.	156 (53.2%)	100 (34.1%)	9 (3.1%)	11 (3.8%)	17 (5.8%)	A
4	My mother quarrels me when I fail a test or an examination.	108 (36.9%)	132 (45.1%)	7 (2.4%)	26 (8.9%)	20 (6.8%)	A
5	I do not interact well with my teachers because I am avoiding disagreements like those at home.	24 (8.2%)	149 (50.9%)	17 (5.8%)	28 (9.6%)	75 (25.6%)	A
6	The talks we have on academic issues at home are frustrating.	15 (5.1%)	157 (53.6%)	14 (4.8%)	48 (16.4%)	59 (20.1%)	A
7	My mother screams a lot when I am late for school.	61 (20.8%)	173 (59.0%)	9 (3.1%)	26 (8.9%)	24 (8.2%)	A
8	In general, I do not think we get along very well.	52 (17.7%)	92 (31.4%)	6 (2.0%)	74 (25.3%)	69 (23.5%)	N
Total / Average		506 (21.6%)	1052 (44.9%)	86 (3.7%)	299 (12.8%)	401 (17.1%)	A

Table 5 above shows that 66.5% (21.6%+44.9%) of the respondents accept that single mother-adolescent conflicts influence adolescent academic performance while 3.7% were neutral and 29.9% (12.8%+17.1%)

rejected the opinion. The study therefore found that single mother-adolescent conflicts moderately influence academic performances of adolescents.

Table 6: Interview responses on Single mother adolescent conflict and academic performance

Questions	Responses
How often do you disagree with your children on a scale of ten?	Several times a week; On daily basis.
Which are the topics you disagree on?	School work, house chores; Decision making, peer relations.
Which topic of disagreement always last longer	Decision making; schoolwork; need for textbooks.
In your opinion what are the benefits of the conflicts between you and your children on their academics?	They develop the zeal to succeed and leave the house; They create awareness of needs; They improve on time and resource management.
Which personal reasons do your children give for conflicting with you?	Search for independence, stress, Confusion, peer pressure, and school, Financial stress. No communication between mother and child.
What is your opinion on how children feel towards studies after having conflicts with you	Conflicts serve to inform them of educational outcomes. They get their desires met and feel encouraged to study hard to improve on performances; Increase responsiveness to academic tasks; Cannot concentrate and loose self-confidence.
Comment on ways you manage these conflicts.	Agreeing with them; Accepting responsibility; Showing humor; Using appropriate voice tone; improve on communication; Constantly guiding and assisting them. Provide their school needs.

Questionnaires administered to the adolescents from single mother families found that single mother-adolescent conflicts moderately influence academic performances of adolescents. This finding was like the interview responses of single mothers. single mothers reported that they had daily conflicts with their adolescents, on topics such as schoolwork, house chores, decision making and peer relations. The topic of

disagreement that lasted longer were decision making, schoolwork and need for textbooks. These mothers reported that through these conflicts, children developed the zeal to succeed and leave the house, adolescents created awareness of needs, they improved on time and resource management. Also, single mothers reported that the reasons adolescent gave for conflicts range from search for independence, stress, confusion, peer pressure, and financial stress, no communication between mother and child. After conflicts children are inform of mothers expected educational outcomes, they get their desires met, and feel encouraged to study hard to improve on performances, increased responsiveness to academic tasks. In the short run, some adolescents could not concentrate and may lose self-confidence. Single mothers managed these conflicts through, agreeing with them, accepting responsibility, using appropriate voice tone, showing humor, constantly guiding and assisting adolescents, improved on communication, and provided their school needs.

DISCUSSION

Single mothers' involvement and academic performance of adolescents

Findings revealed that single mother's involvement moderately influences academic performances of adolescents. Students agreed that, their mothers provided all their study needs, a friendly environment for studies at home, moderated adolescents' television viewing and discussed students' school problems with them.

This is in congruence with the findings of Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry and Childs (2004) who argued that adolescents' academic success in single mother families depend on intervention of mothers in many ways at home and in school like assisting in their children's school and homework. This is also supported by Jaynes (2003) who opined that parent involvement was statistically related to increased academic performance for students.

Also, McNeal (1999) argued that adolescents who benefit from their mother's involvement in school shared in what he called school-situated educational support strategies which leads to positive academic performance especially in older adolescents who often resist parental intervention. This is to say single mother home involvements is most impacting on academic performance of adolescents at early adolescents while school situated educational support-strategies is most effective in impacting academic performance adolescents at late adolescents. This view was supported by Domina (2005) who showed that various forms of parental involvement yield individual associations about educational attainments.

Single mothers' parenting style and the academic performance of adolescents

The findings revealed that single mothers' parenting styles moderately influences academic performances of adolescents. Adolescents reported that, their mothers listened when they needed someone to talk to in the family, gave the reasons for family rules to be respected once established.

Again, the findings revealed that single mothers get upset and imposes their decision, single mothers often tells their adolescents exactly what they wanted them to do and how they expected it to be done and single mothers solved most problems by strictly and forcibly dealing with adolescents when they do not do what their mothers wants them to do. This is in congruence with Baumrind (1971) who opined that, children's academic performance depends on the type of child rearing practice of the family the child is raised. This theory further explains that the academic performance of children in authoritarian parent families are rated to be low about their expected work at school which further retards academic performance. Similarly, Ginsburg and Bronstein (1993) opined that these adolescents benefit the least from educational opportunities in most cases because their thinking is dominated by their parents and children accept.

However, though the most practiced parenting style in single mother families was authoritarian parenting style, data also indicated that single mothers made use of all the parenting styles. They practiced authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting style, that is they practiced eclectic parenting style. This therefore brought about the moderately positive influence of single motherhood on the academic performance of adolescents.

Single mother-adolescent conflicts and the academic performance of adolescents

The study found that single mother-adolescent conflicts moderately influence academic performances of adolescents. This means that, children frequently disagreed with their mothers on issues concerning daily house chores, each time they disagreed with their mothers they find it hard to concentrate in class, their mothers quarreled them when they failed a test or an examination, they do not interact well with their teachers because they were avoiding disagreements like those at home, the talks they had on academic issues at home were frustrating. They agreed that their home conflicts with their mothers impair their concentration in class and hinder their interaction with their teachers in school yet, they get along well with their mothers.

Data gathered through interviews revealed that the issues eliciting the most frequent conflicts include decision making. This is in line with Flannery (2013), who opined that, conflicts could also be because of a lack of agreement about family or societal values. School work and the need for textbooks as revealed by this study is a cause of single-mother adolescent conflict.

On the other hand, single mothers reported that, they disagreed with their children daily on issues such as schoolwork, house chores, decision making, and peer relation. This is in line with Montemayor (1983) review of research on adolescents in which he reported of the most common causes of arguments with parents, issues related to school were among the top three causes. Also, Alison and Schultz (2004) supported that issues related to school such as homework and school performance were among the most frequent and intense areas of conflict between adolescents and their parents. These single mothers indicated that through conflicts children will develop zeal to succeed and leave the house, they create awareness of needs and improve on time and resources managements which to them improve on their academic performance of their adolescents. To these single mothers, conflicts at adolescent is a prerequisite for emerging as an independent adult.

Further these single mothers highlighted that, these conflicts serve to inform adolescents of the outcomes, to increase responsiveness to academic tasks and these adolescents get their desires met and feel encouraged to study hard to improve on academic performance. This is in congruence with the attachment theory of John Bowlby (1907-1990) which argues that caregiver's behaviors are reciprocal to the attachment behaviors and are designed to reestablish proximity and care for the child. Also, adolescents can derive comfort from knowing their parents are supportive even when they are not present.

Adversely, findings of this study contrast with the family deficit model. According to this model, single-parent families have a negative impact on children simply because they do not have a nuclear family structure. Rather it is the various aspects that prevail in the family structure that operate to bring outcomes not the family structure in itself.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it was recommended that, parents should model good attitude and behavior towards academics as they serve as role models imitated by adolescents. The findings of this study show that when mothers who were the only parent got involved in the child's education activities, these children imitated the model; who is their mothers. This helps them develop capacity to cope with academic task and better performance. They should practice an eclectic parenting style dominated by an authoritative parenting style. This is because their school situated involvement, which was limited by their authoritarian parenting style, will increase consequently. The school atmosphere is generally authoritative in nature so, if parenting style is congruent with that of the school, the academic performance of the adolescent will increase. Single mothers should improve on and vary their home conflict management with the adolescents. This is so because varying the methods of managing conflicts at home with the adolescents will make them self-discipline and increase their frustration tolerant ability. Another recommendation for student is that they should make use of alternative parental guidance provided by the

school through school counseling services. This will broaden professional help in managing home conflicts and better their academic performance.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on findings, it can be concluded that, single mother involvement in the study was revealed to be both at home and in school. That is single mother involvement was home situated and school situated. These involvements had a moderate influence on academic performance because single mothers could cope in adverse circumstances such as their challenges. However, the study revealed that single mothers continued to provide all adolescents' study needs, provided a conducive study environment for their children, checked if children's homework was completed and if it were marked, moderated students' television viewing and mother discussed school problems with students. All these activities engaged in by single mothers moderately influenced academic performance of adolescents positively.

Similarly, this simple finding implied that family relationships in most single-mother families are no more contentious. This findings are in line with Amato and Keith, (2000) who opined that when single parenting was relatively rare, dysfunctional families, poorly adjusted children, and contentious relationships may have been overrepresented among households headed by single mothers, but as the prevalence of single parenting increased to encompass more well-adjusted individuals and less contentious relationships, fewer adverse consequences have been found for adolescents from single mother families in the rural area of the developing world. Also, despite conflicts encountered by adolescents and their mothers, academic performance was influenced moderately. The study revealed that single mother adolescent conflicts served as a positive tool towards academic performance of adolescents. This moderate effect was brought about by the strategies these single mothers used to manage these conflicts. Through using conflict management practices like agreeing with children, accepting responsibility, using appropriate voice tone, showing humor, constantly guiding and assisting children, improve communication and providing children's school needs, the adverse effects of single mother adolescent conflicts on academic performance were handled leading to conflicts positive moderate influence on academic performance of adolescents.

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