

**THE UPSURGE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AMONG SINGLE PARENTS IN  
EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

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**OCTOBER, 2025**

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND  
ANTHROPOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN (SOCIOLOGY AND  
ANTHROPOLOGY) FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
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**OCTOBER, 2025**

## **CERTIFICATION**

We the undersigned certify that **Great EWA** with matriculation number **SSC2105922** has completed the requirement for the research work for the award of Bachelor of Science Degree (Sociology and Anthropology) in Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the God Almighty who gives life and strength to complete every tasks in life

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page .....	i
Certification .....	iii
Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgement .....	v
Table of Content .....	vi
List of Table .....	vii
Abstract .....	viii

### CHAPTER ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
1.3	Objective of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1.4	Research Questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1.5	Significance of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1.6	Scope of the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1.7	Definition of Terms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

### CHAPTER TWO

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
2.1	Empirical Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
2.2	Single Parenthood	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
2.3	Causes of Single Parenting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7

2.4	Effects of Single Parenting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
2.5	Mental Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
2.6	Types of Mental Health Issues	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
2.7	Mental Health Issues of Single parent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
2.8	Theoretical Framework	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1	Research Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
3.2	Area of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
3.3	Population of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
3.4	Sample Size/ Sampling Technique	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
3.5	Instrument of Data Collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
3.6	Method of Data Collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
3.7	Method of Data Analysis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28

### **CHAPTER FOUR**

#### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS**

4.0	Introduction .....	29
4.1.	Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondent.....	29
4.2	Data Analysis .....	33
4.3	Discussion of Findings .....	36

### **CHAPTER FIVE**

#### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	Summary of Findings .....	40
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5.2	Conclusion .....	42
5.3	Recommendation .....	43
	References.....	44
	Appendix I (Questionnaire) .....	48

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Socio-Demographic data of respondents.....	30
Table 4.2. Distribution on the types of mental health issues among single parents.....	33
Table 4.3 Distribution on lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents.....	34
Table 4.4- Relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse .....	34
Table 4.5- Distribution on ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents.....	35

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 4.1: Sex Distribution of Respondents.....	30
Figure 4.2: Level of Education of Respondents.....	32

## ABSTRACT

*The study examined the upsurge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor local government area of Edo state. The study investigated the types of mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State. Find out if lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State. Find out if there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse. From the population 400 respondents were purposively selected for the study. A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect necessary information from the respondents. This was ascertained to be both valid and reliable. The data collected was analyzed using simple percentages; The level of significance was taken at 0.05 alpha level. While conclusion revolves around these findings, it was recommended that Sociologist and counsellors should encourage couples to develop positive attitudes that will cause their marriage to last longer in order to avoid mental illness. The government should establish and fund counselling centres at the community, and Local Government levels and employ professional counsellors to help couples or single parent who are going through mental stress. Medical professionals are in position to help single mothers; who have been through the issues before to avoid a repeat of it. There should be public enlightenment through the mass media on the negative effects of divorce, separation etc. Young couples planning to get married should be guided on the ways to avoid desertion in the intimate relationship of marriage.*

**Keywords: Mental Illness, Single Parent, Spouse, Couples, Upsurge**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Single parenthood is a phenomenon that has always been in existence and is as old as mankind. According to Dowd (1997), a single parent is a parent, not living with spouse or partner, who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the child or children. African system of raising children in extended family pattern has changed a great deal, with the advent of industrialization and globalization. Family lives have been disrupted with the rapid social change that comes with the globalization (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). Many of the old customs and traditions which were taught and practiced for several years are becoming obsolete today. WHO (2014) defined mental health as "a condition of well-being in which an individual recognises his or her own abilities, is able to cope with typical life stresses, is capable of productive and fruitful employment, and is able to contribute to his or her community." Mental disorders and disorders associated with psychoactive substances are extremely prevalent worldwide and significantly contribute to morbidity, disability, and premature death; among them are self-efficacy, perceived self-efficacy and self-actualization of one's potential intellectual and emotional well-being, as well as intergenerational dependency (WHO, 2001).

The modern culture has changed and out grown values and benefits that were thought to be the core believes and values of our society. What was unacceptable in the olden days is now becoming fast and rapidly rising trend. In Nigeria, the existence of single parenthood was unknown, and where they existed, they were ignored as exceptional cases. However presently, they are fast growing family patterns both inside and outside Nigeria, and have become even more common than the so-called "nuclear family", consisting of a mother or father and the

children (Tenibiaje. et al 2011). Factors such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples, and single parent adoption are the major causes of single parenthood in our society today (Amato & Keith, 2000). When children are brought up by a single parent, it makes life more demanding and challenging on the parent. If this phase of the child's life is not well managed, it might lead to maladjustment in life. When the subject of single parenthood is being discussed, it would almost certainly involve women since women are usually considered the primary care givers. Apart from being the primary care giver, she becomes the bread winner and head of the family. The demographics of single parenting show a general increase worldwide in children living in single parent homes (Jayson, Sharon 2009). Single parenting has become an accepted norm in the United States and is an accepted trend found in many other countries. Debates concerning issues bothering on single parent households, and more have risen. Recently, the numbers of single parent families have increased drastically and it is gaining a global dimension. These single parents were categorized as a vulnerable group that were at risk of poor physical health such as debilitating chronic illness poor mental and social health with few supportive social contexts. It is based on this that the study seeks to investigate the upsurge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Parenthood is challenging enough even under the best of conditions. So, being a single parent in our society is tasking to say the least. This is because, with one parent, the challenges are multifaceted. Single parenting in our society has been the focus of much interest and research in recent years. (Chiemelie Ezeobi 2011). According to Funmilayo (2011), a communicator, "The effect of single parenting is far reaching because it does not only affect the parents, it also

affects the children. In fact, the effects are more devastating on the part of the children because single parenthood leaves them with deep scars. Being a single parent is a very tough and challenging task. Many of the problems that single parents have, are similar to those of two parent's family, but these problems seem more difficult to bear or manage when the home is being tutored by only one person. For example, all children feel hostile towards their parents as they grow-up and try to be independent. But in a situation, where the anger and rebellion are all directed towards one person, it may seem worse, if there is only one to bear it, not for the two to share. Life as a single parent is often associated with difficulties challenges and high demands. Several common challenges were faced by single parent involving in financial problems, role or task overload problems (such as coordinating childcare and balancing work, child and household responsibilities), social life, problems with ex spouse, and other idiosyncratic problems such as, health concerns, and behavioural problems (Karupiah, 2016).

However, from the previous studies, have found that financial or economic problems of single mothers was the most vital concern and presumably to have financial hardship as married mothers (Intan Hashimah, Azman Azwan & Noraida, (2015); Bull & Mittelmark, (2009); Kotwal & Prabhakar, (2009); Kim, Choi & Kim, (2018). followed by emotional and psychological problems, family problems and stigma and community support problems (Faizah & Hazirah, (2013). The importance of intervening at the sub-threshold level of poor psychological health and well-being, even if it has not yet manifested itself as a diagnosable mental health disease, cannot be overstated. As far as these difficulties are concerned, stress is critical since there is evidence that prolonged exposure to excessive pressure can result in stressful reactions that may ultimately result in the development of a number of more significant mental health conditions (WHO, 2010). Stress, according to the European Commission (2002), is a pattern of emotional,

cognitive, behavioural, and physiological responses to detrimental and toxic features of job content, organisation, or environment that are experienced by employees. Similarly, the European Social Partners (2004) defined stress as "a condition characterised by physical, psychological, or social complaints or dysfunctions that stems from persons feeling unable to bridge a gap with the obligations or expectations put on them."

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to examine the upsurge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State. While the specific objectives are: to

1. Examine the types of mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State.
2. Find out if lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State.
3. Find out if there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse.
4. Suggest ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following were the research questions formulated for the study

1. What are the types of mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State?
2. Does lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State?

3. Is there any significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse?

4. What are the ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant especially as statistics showed the rate of mental health issues globally has been on a steady increase. This work is meant to contribute to the efforts to explore the prevalence and effort to eliminate or reduce mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State. Theoretically, this research would add to existing literature and theoretical orientations in the understanding of mental health issues in the area of study and in Nigeria at large. The study would help to confirm some existing theory and dispute the tenets and assumptions of others on the mental health issues in a modern society. Empirically, the result from this research study is expected to be of immense benefit to health care providers, policy makers, counselors, future researchers and the Nigerian society at large.

This study would be a good tool for policy makers and researchers to clarify issues of misconception regarding mental health issues with respect to couple, age, gender, educational status, employment status and also help see the need for policy makers to rigorously implement policies that will be of immense impetus to the effort to drastically reduce the surge in mental health issues to the barest minimum. Finally, the research will act as a stepping stone for further research and contribute to the existing knowledge in the area of “the surge in mental health issues among single parents” in the study area and the Nigerian society.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

This research work was limited to single parents and other residents of Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Empirical Review**

This portion of the literature review takes a critical look at works of earlier researchers on the topic or similar areas. A comparison of research findings is important in determining the relation between the main variables of the topic and how these relate to theories concerning the topic. Reports of studies in the area of single parenting, its causes and consequences on children are examined.

#### **2.2 Single Parenthood**

A single parent, sometimes called a solo-parent is a parent that is not living with a spouse or partner, who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the child or children. A single parent is usually considered the primary caregiver. The primary caregiver is the parent the child has residency with majority of the time (Dowd (1997). If the parents are separated or divorced, children live with their custodial parent and have visitation or secondary residence with their non-custodial parent. (Benokraitis, Nijole, 2012, 2011, 2008). In western societies in general, following separation, a child will end up with the primary caregiver, usually the father. (Statistics Ginger Bread, 2010). Custody battles, awarded by the court or rationalized in other terms, determined who the child will spend majority of their time with. This affects children in many ways, and counseling is suggested for them.

#### **2.3 Causes of Single Parenting**

Some factors are responsible for determining the status of single parenthood. These factors are divorce of couples with children, desertion, death of a partner, birth to unmarried woman or unintended pregnancy and single parent adoption.

## **Divorce**

Divorce is one of the main events that lead to single parenting in advanced countries (Amato 2000). Divorce was generally rare historically (although this depends by culture and era) and divorce especially became very difficult to obtain after the fall of the Roman Empire, in Medieval Europe, due to strong involvement of ecclesiastical courts in family life (although annulment and other forms of separation were more common (Kent's commentaries on American law). Child custody in reference to divorce refers to which parent is allowed to make important decisions about the children involved. Physical custody refers to who the child lives with. After a certain "crisis period" most children resume normal development, however, their future relationships are often affected as they lack a model upon which to base a healthy long term relationship. Nonetheless, as adult children of divorcees cope better with change. (Cherlin, 2010).

The remarriage of a divorced custodial parent result in a third family configuration that is experienced by an increased number of children. Separation The crucial event of a marital break down is the act of separation. This usually occurs when the relationship between both parents had gone cold. Divorce is a legal consequence that follows the emotional fact of separation, though not all separation leads to divorce. Although separation generally precedes divorce, some couples are able to sort out their misunderstanding and misgivings and are able to put the separation period behind them and move on with their lives. (Olaleye & Oladeji 2010). Strong et al, (2002) opined that as many as one couple out of every six marriages are likely to have separated for at least two days. The changes that take place during separation are crucial because at this point a person's emotions are raw and most profound. Men and women react differently during this period. When separation takes place in the family, the other parent does not know

what to do or expect, there are no divorce ceremonies or rituals to mark this major turning upon the children.

### **Desertion**

Desertion is one of the ways to single parenthood in our society. It is a situation whereby either the father or mother walks away from the marriage, leaving the other party without help or support. Desertion is also known as the poor man's divorce. It is called the poor man's divorce because one party leaves the marriage without going through legal process of divorce. Kendall (2003). The process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in raising such children, which will definitely impact positively on the children during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years (Azuka- Obieke, 2013). Children of deserted parents find it more difficult to understand the reason why they have to do without the other parent. Santrock (2002), asserts that these children see themselves as unloved and unwanted by the deserted parents as if it is their fault for the abscond parent desertion.

### **Death of a Parent**

Single parent families were historically as a result of parental death. In fact, death of a parent was a major cause of single parenting. (Amato, 2000). He further stated that about one-fourth of children born around the turn of the nineteenth century experienced death of a parent before they reached age fifteen.

### **Unintended Pregnancy**

Some out of wedlock births are intended, but many are unintentional. Where out of wedlock births are accepted by society, they may result in single parenting. A partner may also leave as he

or she may want to shirk responsibility of bringing up the child. Where they are not accepted, they sometimes result in forced marriage; however, such marriages fail more often than others. (“Single parent Households- How does it affect the children.

### **Single Parent Adoption**

Single birth adoption has existed since the last 19th century. Men were rarely considered as adoptive parents and were considered far less desired. Often, children adopted by a single parent were raised in pairs rather than alone and adoptions by lesbians and gay men were arranged as single parent adoptions. During the mid-19th century, many states welfare officials made it difficult if not impossible for single persons to adopt, as agencies searched for “normal” families with married men and women. In 1965 the Los Angeles Bureau of adoption sought single African Americans orphans for whom married families could not be found. In 1968, the child welfare league of America stated that married couples were preferred, but there were “exceptional circumstances” where single parent adoptions were permissible.

### **2.4 Effects of Single Parenting**

This reviews research on psychological effect, educational effect, behavioral effect, economic effect and conclude with effect of single parenthood in adult life.

#### **Psychological Effect**

Empirical evidence has shown that children from intact-homes will be taken care of and better socialized. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in raising such children; which will definitely impact positively on the children during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are more likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-social impact on them in school years (Azuka-Obieke, 2013). Adolescence is a transitory

period (12 years to 18 years) between childhood and adulthood and it involves biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes (Santrock, 2004). During this period an individual is seen neither as a child nor as an adult. Salami and Alawode (2000) claimed that adolescents are characterized by emotional instabilities and hyper-activities, which cause them to experience storms and stress. Diane (2007) opines that identity formation creates tension in adolescents to the extent that some of them become confused about their personality. Adolescence period is a transitional period in the development of critical thinking and a time of increased decision making. The theory of cognitive development emphasizes that adolescents think more abstractly, idealistically and also think more logically (Santrock, 2004).

The period of adolescence is very important to the development of any individual. Therefore, any laxity on the part of the parents in assisting and guiding the adolescent may result in academic backwardness and development of unwholesome behaviors. The foundation of what a person becomes in the societies depends is laid in the home and at the initial stage of life. According to Sigmund Freud who is the pioneering architect of psychoanalytic theory, early experiences with parents and family relationships extensively shape development (Santrock 2004). Parents therefore have their children and adolescents acquire the appropriate academics, social, psychological and moral development. Research has consistently shown that family structure can facilitate or limit the ways in which parents are able to positively influence the psycho-social and educational outcomes of their children. (Amato & Keith 2000). A child from home where the father and mother are present will be well taken care of and socialized in the best way possible. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complementary roles in bringing up the child. Such child is likely to achieve self-socialization later in life (Azuka-Obieke, 2013). The problem of deprivation of a second parent is

bad enough but when the remaining parent cannot cope with the resultant problems, a tragic situation arises. In such a situation, the child becomes a misfit in the society. The inability of the single parent to cope is as a result of double responsibilities he/she (the parent) faces which requires extra time, attention, and money of the parent. Hence less attention is paid to the psychological well-being and education of the child. (Azuka-Obieke, 2013). Although growing up in a single parent family is frequently viewed as a risk factor for children, single-parent families have reported positive psychological adjustment educational outcome (Amato 2000).

### **Educational Effect**

Parents are primarily responsible for the educational and career development of their children (Salami & Alawode, 2000). Literatures on academic performance among children suggest that children's academic performance improve when both parents are actively in their education. (Nyarko 2007; Nyarko and Vorgelegt, 2007) married parents are more likely to involve in their children's education than single parents. (Nyarko 2011, and Chowa et al, 2012). As parents engage in the academic activities of their children, it is most likely to have a positive influence on their academic performance. However, this does not necessarily suggest that once parents engage in a child's academic activities, the child would be academically successful as the child's own abilities and the school environment also play critical roles in that respect. In a related way, Donkor (2010) indicates that parents noted that the poor performance of their children emanates from their lack of proper supervision of their ward's homework.

Salami and Alawode (2000) in particular pointed out that both parents have roles to play in the child's education. The father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement while the mother is to supplement the father's effort in this regard. When the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as

supervise the academic performance of the child, he/she (the child) will be backward or withdrawn. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough.

Given the positive influence of parental involvement on children's educational outcome, children under single parent family structure might not receive the necessary attention they required because the single parent might be over whelmed by many responsibilities Abankwa, (2013) states that children in single parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families. Because single parents are the primary and frequently the sole source of financial support for the family, they have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement. In contrast, there are few studies that believe that the single parent household may not have as widespread and adverse an effect on academics as is publicized. Findings suggest that conventional wisdom may exaggerate the detrimental effect of father's absence (Debell, 2007). This study seemed to imply that once the socio-economic factors are controlled there is a much lessened effect on the academic performance and all round well-being of the child.

### **Behavioral Effect**

Interest in parenting and behavioral problem in children is widely acknowledged. Antisocial behavior is a major problem in childhood and beyond. Overall, prior research has shown that children who have experienced any kind of family change have poorer behavioral outcomes than children in stable two-biological parent families (Cherlin, 2005). Children from single parent families tend to have poorer cognitive and behavioral outcomes than those from intact families (W. Single-Rushton S. McLanahan, 2004). Some western studies have noted

greater problem behaviors in children from families with unmarried mothers or it been more for boys than girls (Ackerman et al, 2001). Karst (2000) attributes this greater prevalence to limited supervision, strained financial resources, social isolation, fewer coping supplies compared with children in traditional twoparent families. Also, youths from single parent families appear to be more to peer pressure and more likely to be make decisions without consulting a parent (Griffin et al, 2000).

A related study found higher percentage of psychiatric disorders like depression, anxiety and mood disorders or alcoholism in single mothers (Cairney et al, 2006). Being raised in such homes double the risk for children to develop emotional behavior problems. Both such children as such as well as their parents showed lower ego functioning, lower self-esteem, less empathy, greater aggression, fighting and vandalism, less tolerance for negative behavior and more likelihood to display non age-appropriate behaviors (hollist and Mcbroom 2006; Knoester and Hayne 2005). These problems are linked to future adult crimes, drug and alcohol miss-use, unemployment, poor physical health and mental disorders.

### **Economic Effect**

Being a single parent and struggling for money often coincides. Economic hardship has been found to cause emotional distress in parents, which can in turn hamper parent's ability to be supportive, sensitive and consistent with their children (Dearing, McCartney & Taylor, 2006). Also in a study carried out by Azuka-Obieke, 2013, he noted that single parent homes are more likely to be low-economic homes. These children would therefore be subject to problems associated with their socioeconomic group. When there is only one parent, the family is often less well off financially and this is the main reason for so many family problems. The report of the study shows that effect of coming from a low-income family can include things like lower

educational level; lower economic achievement and can result in leaving the child feeling isolated and lonely. A similar study was carried out by Single-Rushton and McLanahan in 2002.

The study was concerned with the wellbeing of the child in the absence of one parent the outcome of the study draws our attention to the fact that children raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parent. Single parent families tend to be poorer than are two-parent families. Given that family economic status is an important determinant of children's education, it is evident that difference in economic studying between children from single parent homes and intact homes explain some of the educational differences between them. The absence of one parent have serious effects on the adolescent as homes led by single mother's experience lower household income which eventually influence the educational opportunities and success in school (Benokraitis, 2012).

### **Other Effects of Single Parenthood in Adult Life**

Children affected by the negative effect of single parenthood continue on with their lives; however, the lasting effect of divorce have been shown to follow some children into their adulthood, including their marriage and own children's life. The negative views of relationships that have been instilled due to exposure of their "childhood" family conflict can cause long term effects on these now adult and their own children. According to Abankwa, (2013), adults who are able to recall a high level of conflict between parents while growing up tend to report disproportionately a large number of psychological and marital problems in their own lives. Many of these adult children continue to struggle in their everyday lives with symptoms of depression, anxiety and overall feeling of dissatisfaction with their overall lives. In fact, many of adult children will utilize more mental health services than will the adult children of two parent households (Amato and Sobolewski, 2001).

It has been found that parental divorce is associated with lower socio-economic status in adulthood, compared with children from two-parent families, children with divorced parents are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to attend college, and complete fewer years of education overall (Amato and Sobolewski, 2001). Many believe that this is due to the emotional disturbance that is caused in disrupted and chaotic households and a child's potential to form a poor sense of self. This poor sense of self and instability in relationships can lead to still other relationship troubles including infidelity, reoccurring divorce and remarriages and in extreme cases spousal and domestic abuse. Much research that has been published appears to point a picture of somewhat bleak situation. This picture has made the individuals that are affected and involved appear as though they are all hopeless, anxious and somewhat mix up. Fortunately, there is also evidence that children from single parent, divorced or broken homes, with support, have and supported sense of self have become successful adults, and capable of positive marriage and relationships with their own children and have formulated the will to survive (Abankwa, 2013).

## **2.5 Mental Health**

Mental health does not exist on its own. It is an integral and essential part of overall health, which can be defined in at least three ways – as the absence of disease, as a state of the organism that allows the full performance of all its functions or as a state of balance within oneself and between oneself and one's physical and social environment (Sartorius, 2002). Which of these three definitions is used depends on the level to which the basic health needs are satisfied. These needs include food, shelter, survival, protection, society, social support, and freedom from pain, environmental hazards, unnecessary stress and from any part of exploitation (Maslow, 1968). The state of mental health implies that the individual has the ability to form and maintain affectionate relationships with others, to perform in the social roles usually played in

their culture and to manage change, recognize, acknowledge and communicate positive actions and thoughts as well as to manage emotions such as sadness.

Mental health gives an individual the feeling of worth, control and understanding of internal and external functioning. The Society for Health Education and Promotion Specialists (SHEPS, 1997) suggests that mental health also involves feeling positive about oneself and others, feeling glad and joyful and loving. Mental health, like mental illness, is also affected by biological, social, psychological and environmental factors. The individual at the core of functioning is surrounded by the social world – in the proximal world it will include family, kinship, employers, peers, colleagues, friends and, in the distal context, society and culture. The interaction between individuals and society becomes critical in building healthy communities, which in turn can promote mental health.

Vulnerabilities to mental ill health (or, as the Health Education Authority report (HEA, 1997) calls it, mental health demotion) include internal factors such as a lack of emotional resilience, poor self-esteem and social status, feeling trapped and helpless, and problems associated with sexuality or sexual orientation, isolation and poor integration. External factors contributing to this vulnerability have been described as poor social conditions (housing, poverty, unemployment), discrimination or abuse, cultural conflict, stigma and poor autonomy, among other factors (HEA, 1997). The Mental Health Foundation (MHF, 2008) notes that mental health is defined by how individuals think and feel about themselves and their life, and that it affects how an individual copes and manages in times of adversity.

Mental health is seen as affecting one's abilities to function and make the most of the opportunities that are available, and to participate fully with family, workplace, community and peers. There is a close link between physical and mental health, as they affect each other directly

and indirectly. It is thus possible to suggest that mental health is a state of equipoise where the individual is at peace with them, is able to function effectively socially and is able to look after their own basic needs as well as higher function needs. Positive functionality means managing change, relationships and emotions in a constructive manner. The challenge for psychiatry is that it needs to encompass the preservation and promotion of mental health in its practice, research and teaching and that it becomes actively engaged in introducing these notions into the public health efforts.

## **2.6 Types of Mental Health Issues**

According to Sartorius (2002) Mental illness is a general term for a group of illnesses that may include symptoms that can affect a person's thinking, perceptions, mood or behaviour. Mental illness can make it difficult for someone to cope with work, relationships and other demands. The relationship between stress and mental illness is complex, but it is known that stress can worsen an episode of mental illness. Most people can manage their mental illness with medication, counselling or both. Below are common mental health issues and mental illnesses:

**Anxiety disorders:** is a group of mental health disorders that includes generalised anxiety disorders, social phobias, specific phobias (for example, agoraphobia and claustrophobia), panic disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and post-traumatic stress disorder. Untreated, anxiety disorders can lead to significant impairment on people's daily lives.

**Behavioural and Emotional disorder in children:** Common behaviour disorders in children include oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), conduct disorder (CD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Treatment for these mental health disorders can include therapy, education and medication.

**Bipolar affective disorder:** is a type of mood disorder, previously referred to as ‘manic depression’. A person with bipolar disorder experiences episodes of mania (elation) and depression. The person may or may not experience psychotic symptoms. The exact cause is unknown, but a genetic predisposition has been clearly established. Environmental stressors can also trigger episodes of this mental illness.

**Depression:** is a mood disorder characterised by lowering of mood, loss of interest and enjoyment, and reduced energy. It is not just feeling sad. There are different types and symptoms of depression. There are varying levels of severity and symptoms related to depression. Symptoms of depression can lead to increased risk of suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

**Dissociation:** is a mental process where a person disconnects from their thoughts, feelings, memories or sense of identity. Dissociative disorders include dissociative amnesia, dissociative fugue, depersonalisation disorder and dissociative identity disorder.

**Eating disorders:** include anorexia, bulimia nervosa and other binge eating disorders. Eating disorders affect females and males and can have serious psychological and physical consequences.

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** is an anxiety disorder. Obsessions are recurrent thoughts, images or impulses that are intrusive and unwanted. Compulsions are time-consuming and distressing repetitive rituals. Treatments include cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), and medications

**Paranoia:** is the irrational and persistent feeling that people are ‘out to get you’. Paranoia may be a symptom of conditions including paranoid personality disorder, delusional (paranoid) disorder and schizophrenia. Treatment for paranoia include medications and psychological support.

**Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** is a mental health condition that can develop as a response to people who have experienced any traumatic event. This can be a car or other serious accident, physical or sexual assault, war-related events or torture, or natural disasters such as bushfires or floods.

**Psychosis:** People affected by psychosis can experience delusions, hallucinations and confused thinking. Psychosis can occur in a number of mental illnesses, including drug-induced psychosis, schizophrenia and mood disorders. Medication and psychological support can relieve, or even eliminate, psychotic symptoms.

**Schizophrenia:** is a complex psychotic disorder characterised by disruptions to thinking and emotions, and a distorted perception of reality. Symptoms of schizophrenia vary widely but may include hallucinations, delusions, thought disorder, social withdrawal, lack of motivation and impaired thinking and memory. People with schizophrenia have a high risk of suicide. Schizophrenia is not a split personality.

## **2.7 Mental Health Issues of Single parent**

The concept of mental health was referred to “subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and self-actualization of one’s intellectual and emotional potential, among others” (WHO, 2001). People with mental health problems can be categorized into three groups; (1) first group included those with acute mental health problems such as, normal depression and other stressful event, (2) second group referred to those with mental health that was more severe in chronic conditions but can maintain normal functioning, and (3) in third group were those with severe, chronic mental diseases that can influenced functional disability.

From a well-being perspective, life as a single parent has been related to higher levels of chronic stress, mental disorder, episodes of depression, lower satisfaction and happiness in life, more negative life events and many childhood adversities than married parents (Meier, Musick, Flood & Dunifon, 2016); Mowbray, Schwartz, Bybee, Spang, Rueda-Riedle & Oyserman, (2000); Crosier, Butterworth & Rodgers, (2007). Particularly, study found that single parent had an increase chance of an anxiety disorder, depression, dysthymia, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), post-traumatic stress disorder, and antisocial personality disorder compared to married mothers. As a result of mental health problems, single parents were likely to be prevented from undertaking specific tasks. They have also reported to have low self-confidence to take on new challenges (Jayakody & Stauffer, 2000). This clearly showed that poor mental health often leads to physical health problems and is an important risk factor for a range of health problem.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study made use of the Family System Theory; it was developed by Dr Murray Bowen. According to Kerr (200), there are anticipated patterns of interaction that occur in a family system and this help to maintain the family's equilibrium as well as provide hints on how each member should function. The theory also focuses on the bigpicture pattern of a family system instead of a narrower view of what causes difficulties for an individual in the family. The Family System Theory is a theory of human behaviour that views the family as an emotional unit and uses systems thinking to describe the intricate interactions in the family unit. It is opined that it is normal for members of a family to be passionately connected emotionally. There are eight concepts addressed by this theory and these includes triangles, differentiation of self, nuclear family emotional system, family emotional process, multigenerational transmission process,

emotional cut-off, sibling position and societal emotional process. In this study, only four of the concept will be applied.

Differentiation of self is the ability to be in emotional contact with others within the family and yet still autonomous in one's own emotional functioning. Each individual member of the family becomes more of a self in his or her family system through a gradual process of learning which culminate in action. In relation to family functioning and health status, positive happening within the family such as adequate parental care and supportive spouse relationship can promote positive change in each member of the family thereby improving family functioning and consequently the general health status of the family as a whole. Family emotional system is an automatic process that is common to every member of a family. According to Kerr, (2000), the existence of a family emotional field is the result of an emotionally driven relationship process that is usually present in all types of families. In relation to this study, families can have an unfathomable effect on individual member's thought, feelings and actions. In both one-parent and two-parent families, it is expected that each member will solicit other's attention, approval, as well as support and likewise react to each other's needs and expectation and upsets. Emotional cut-off refers to the phenomenon of emotional distancing.

It is a form of internal mechanism of physical distancing, and it is seen as a natural process. In relation to this study, a change in a family member's functioning or negative health statuses especially that of a parent will predictably followed by reciprocal changes in the functioning of other members, and subsequently affect the general well-being of other members of the family. In nuclear family emotional system, the purpose of emotional interdependence of family members is to promote the cohesiveness, as well as the cooperation that the system works in individual family. The social system will reveal new and more effective options for providing

health support and treatment to solving problems in all areas of the family functioning. It is expected of families to protect, shelter, and feed their members. Heightened tension within the family such as emotional stress, illhealth, financial incapacity may leads to problems that will consequently affect the family unity as well as their teamwork thereby affecting the family normal functioning and ultimately their health status. For example, when a member (especially in a one-parent family) assumes too many responsibilities, such a member can absorb system anxiety thus making the family member vulnerable to problems such as depression, alcoholism as well as physical illness. Hence, it is imperative for HCPs to view family as a whole in their care and support rather than focusing only on the client alone.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study is a survey research which involved the quantitative method and also a one-time survey because the researcher intends to go to the field once to collect data. This is because data that will be collected from the study population will attempt to picture current conditions or attitudes i.e. to describe what exists at the moment. Survey research design which inherently makes for the identification of a sample of the research population involved the application of quantitative technique. The quantitative technique was utilized with the administration of questionnaire; the design was considered appropriate because it involved the sampling of opinions of respondents.

#### **3.2 Area of the study**

Egor local government area is in Edo state, South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria and has its headquarters in the town of Uselu. Egor local government council governs the administrations in Egor Local Government, the council is led by a chairman who is the executive head of the local government, and the Egor legislative council also institutes laws that govern the Egor Local Government which is made of 10 councilors representing the 10 wards in the local government. A number of towns and villages make up of Egor local government area and these include Okhoro, Use, Uwelu, Iguikpe, Ugbighoko, Iguediaye, Evbougide and Oghedaivbiobaa. The population of Egor local government area is estimated at 258,442 inhabitants with the area hosting members of several tribal groups such as the Esan, Bini, and the Owan.

The area is home to Christians, Muslims, and traditional worshippers while the Bini, Owan and Esan languages are spoken in the area. It falls under the Tropical Savannah Climate

while the LGA covers a total area of 93 square kilometers. The area experiences two major seasons which are the rainy and the dry seasons while the average temperature of the area is at 28 degrees centigrade. The average humidity level of the Egor local government area is estimated at 68 percent. The Enogie of Egor Kingdom, His Royal Highness Tony Aigberowman II oversees the kingdom traditionally.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The population of Egor local government area is 340,287 as at 2006 and a projected population of 445800 in 2016 (Egor statistics department, 2023), The Population of the study consisted of all adults within the ages of 20-69 years which is 176338; this was selected within Egor local government area. This figure therefore constitutes the population of the study. This comprises of both male and female irrespective of their educational qualification, socio economic backgrounds, employment status, religious affiliation, marital status and ethnic affiliation.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

This study adopted the multi stage sampling technique. In the first stage, Egor was stratified into wards and ten wards make up Egor local government area. The second stage, the researcher randomly selected 18 streets from the ten wards. The third stage, the snowballing method was used to select respondents in each of the streets using lucky-dip method to select streets numbered A, B, C, and D. To get a sizable number of the respondents, the streets will be further divided into households, where systematic sampling adopted in the selection of households, so that the household was evenly selected. The household was selected at certain intervals using the “kth” element represented as:

$$k=N$$

$$n = \frac{N}{k}$$

Where k= sampling interval

N= population size

n= sample size

In each of the selected households, at least two adults including the head of the household were selected purposively.

To determine the sample size; Solvin's formula for calculating sample size was adopted.

It is represented as thus:  $n = \frac{N}{(1+N(e)^2)}$

Where n= sample size

N=Population of the study

E=Degree of freedom

1=Constant

Therefore

$$N= 176338$$

$$E=0.05$$

$$n= \frac{N}{(1+N(e)^2)}$$

$$n= \frac{176338}{(1+176338 (0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{176338}{(1+176338)(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{176338}{(1+440.845)}$$

$$n = \frac{176338}{441.845}$$

$$n = 399.0$$

$$n = 400$$

From the analysis above, the sample size was 400

The sample size was achieved through the Yaro-Yamani mathematical model of determining sample size.

### **3.5 Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument of data collection that was used in the study was the questionnaire. Structured questions were used in the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section “A” focuses on classified questions to gain the socio-demographic data of the respondents. Section “B” Drafted question that were made up of close and open-ended questions for detailed analysis of issues under examination. The questions were administered with the help of a research Assistant directly to those who are literate enough to respond to the questions without assistance, while those who are not literate enough were assisted by the researcher and the research Assistant.

### **3.6 Method of Data Collection**

By the virtue of the nature of the study, survey method was used as a method of data collection. This is necessary because the study requires that not all the individuals within the study

population involved in the study. Hence, there was need to select a sample that was representative enough to represent the entire population. A one-time survey method was used in the study. This enabled the researcher go to the field once and collect data for the purpose of analysis.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

The study adopted a quantitative method for data analysis since the study is basically a quantitative study. The descriptive statistics such as tables, charts, frequency distribution, and percentages were used in analyzing data gathered from respondents. All quantitative data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 version.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

**4.0 Introduction**

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the field. It deals with the analysis and presentation of the quantitative data. A total of three hundred and ninety-nine (399) questionnaires were retrieved out four hundred (400) questionnaires that were administered. Below are the responses obtained from the questionnaires presented in tabular form, bar and pie charts representing each of the questions. In this survey, two aspects of data analysis are used. The first is the general description of social-demographic distribution of respondents. The second is cross tabulation of the data gotten from respondents in the section B of the questionnaire in relation to the objectives of the study.

**Table 4.1- Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Measurements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	199	49.7%
	Female	200	50.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	20-24years	42	10.5%
	25-34years	74	18.5%
	35-44 years	210	52.6%
	45-54years	34	8.5%
	55 years – Above	39	9.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion</b>	Christianity	241	60.4%
	Islam	46	11.5%
	Traditional	112	28.1%
	Others	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	180	45.1%
	Married	190	47.6%
	Separated	10	2.5%
	Divorced	10	2.5%
	Widow/Widower	9	2.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Level of Education</b>	No Formal Education	50	12.5%
	Primary level	84	21.1%
	Secondary level	200	50.1%
	Bachelor's Degree	40	10.0%
	Others	25	6.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	Government employee	90	22.6%
	Non-government employee	180	45.1%
	Retiree	90	22.6%
	Self-employed	30	7.5%
	Unemployed	9	2.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field work, 2025

Fig 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

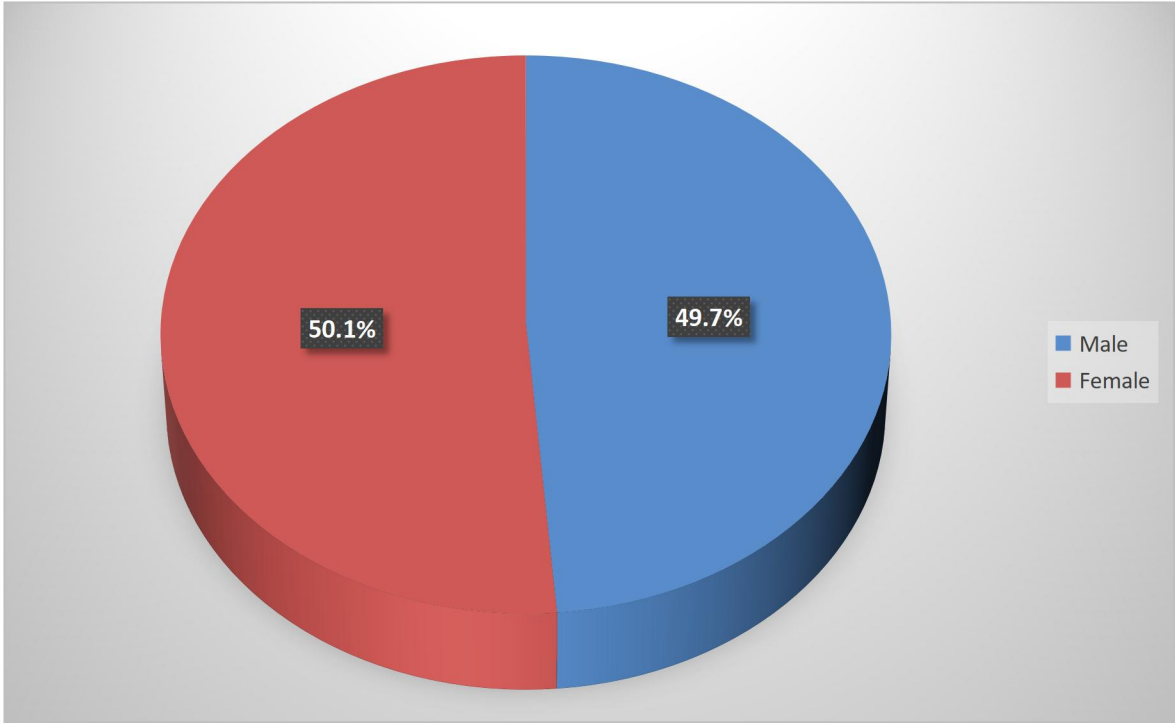


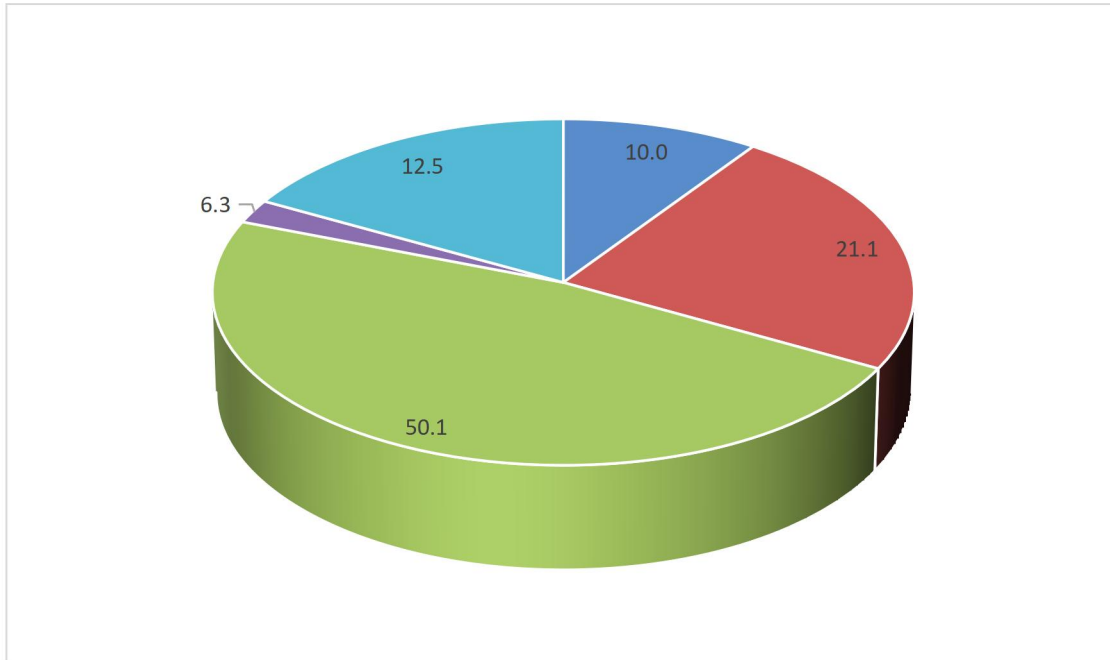
Table 4.1. Showed gender distribution of the respondents, out of the 399 Respondents that were sampled for the study, the result revealed that 49.7% were males while 50.1% were females.

**The table 4.1 above showed the age distribution of respondents,** the result from the table revealed that 42 of them, representing 10.5% 20-24 years; while 74, representing 18.5% are within the age range of 25-34 years. Also 210 of the respondents, representing 52.6% of the entire respondents' falls within ages 35-44 years. However, 34 of them, representing 8.5% are within the age range of 45-54 years; and also 39 of them, representing 9.8% of the respondents fall within ages 55 years and above. Therefore, majority of the respondents who participated in this study fall within ages 35-44 years.

**The table above shows religious distribution of respondents,** the result from the table revealed that of the 399 respondents, 241 of the respondents representing 60.4% were Christians, 112 of the respondents representing 28.1% were from the Islamic religion; while 46 of the respondents representing 11.5% were from the African Tradition religion, Other religious group recorded zero respondent in the study. Therefore, it can be said that the majority of respondents in this study were Christians.

**The table above shows marital distribution of respondents,** the data on the marital distribution of respondents revealed that 45.1% are single, the study further shows that 47.6% are married, also 2.5% and 2.5% are separated and divorced respectively, while 2.2% are Widow/Widower, therefore majority of the respondents who participated in the study were married.

**Fig 2: Level of Education of Respondents**



The data on the academic distribution of respondents revealed that 12.5% have no formal education, 21.1% Primary school certificate, 50.1% had secondary school certificate, 10.0% have Bachelor's degree certificate while 6.3% have other certificate not specified. This shows that majority of the respondents who participated in the study are secondary school certificate holders.

**The table above shows occupational distribution of respondents**, the result on the occupation of respondents revealed that 22.6% of the respondents were Government employees, also 45.1% of the respondents were Non- Government employees, while 22.6% of the respondents were Retirees, while 7.5%and 2.2% of the respondents were both self-employed and unemployed respectively. This shows that majority of the respondents who participated in the study were Non- Government employees.

## 4.2 Analysis Relating to Specific Objectives

This was designed to address specific objectives to provide an analysis on the upsurge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo State. Their responses and analysis are presented below.

**Table 4.2- Distribution on the types of mental health issues among single parents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do you know that there are various types of mental health issues among single parent?	YES	260	65.2%
	NO	134	33.5%
	Don't know	5	1.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Do you think that post-traumatic stress disorder is a type of mental health issue?	YES	295	73.9%
	NO	100	25.0%
	Don't know	4	1.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Do you know that anxiety disorder is a mental health issue among single parent?	Yes	263	65.9%
	No	131	32.8%
	Don't know	5	1.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field work, 2025*

The data on the distribution of the types of mental health issues among single parents, table 4.2 revealed that 65.2% are aware of the various types of mental health issues among single parent while 35.5% said No, and 1.3% said that they don't know, as to whether post-traumatic stress disorder is a type of mental health issue. Similarly, 73.9% said yes, while 25.0% said no, and 1.0% said that they don't know. Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether if anxiety disorder is also a mental health issue among single parent. The result revealed that 65.9% said yes, while 32.8% said no, and 1.3% said that they don't know. This shows that from the

analysis above, that there are various types of mental health issues in single parents which include post-traumatic disorder and anxiety as affirmed by majority of the respondents.

**Table 4.3- Distribution on lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do you think that lack of finance is one of the reasons why single parents have mental health issues?	Yes	290	72.7%
	No	100	25.0%
	Don't know	9	2.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100</b>
Do you know that lack of attention and care can result in mental health issue in single parent?	Yes	240	60.1%
	No	150	37.6%
	Don't know	9	2.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2023*

The data on the distribution on lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents, table 4.3 revealed that 72.7% affirmed that lack of finance is one of the reasons why single parents have mental health issues, while 25.0% said No, and 2.3% said that they don't know, probing further on the issue, 60.1% affirmed that lack of attention and care can result in mental health issue in single parent. This can be deduced that lack of finance can result in mental health issues in single parents.

**Table 4.4- Distribution on if there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do you think that the mental health issue faced is as a result of being separated from their spouses?	YES	260	65.2%
	NO	134	33.5%
	Don't know	5	1.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Do you think that there is a relationship between mental health issues and being separated from each other?	YES	295	73.9%
	NO	100	25.0%
	Don't know	4	1.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Do you think that the death of a partner/desertion can result in mental health issue of the other?	Yes	265	66.4%
	No	131	32.8%
	Don't know	3	0.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field work, 2025*

The data on there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse, table 4.4 revealed that 65.2% are aware that the mental health issue faced is as a result of being separated from their spouses, while 35.5% said No, and 1.3% said that they don't know, as to whether there is a relationship between mental health issues and being separated from each other. Similarly, 73.9% said yes, while 25.0% said no, and 1.0% said that they don't know. Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether the death of a partner/desertion can result in mental health issue of the other. The result revealed that 66.4% said yes, while 32.8% said no, and 0.7% said that they don't know. This shows that from the analysis above, that there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse as affirmed by majority of the respondents.

**Table 4.5 - Distribution on ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do you think that there are ways of reducing mental health issues in single parents?	YES	260	65.2%
	NO	130	32.6%
	Don't know	9	2.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Can helping separated couples come back together reduce mental health issue in single parents?	YES	295	73.9%
	NO	100	25.0%
	Don't know	4	1.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Do think that providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue?	Yes	265	66.4%
	No	131	32.8%
	Don't know	3	0.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field work, 2025*

The data on ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents, table 4.4 revealed that 65.2% agreed that there are ways of reducing mental health issues in single parents, while 32.6% said No, and 2.3% said that they don't know, as to whether helping separated couples come back together reduce mental health issue in single parents. Similarly, 73.9% said yes, while 25.0% said no, and 1.0% said that they don't know. Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue. The result revealed that 66.4% said yes, while 32.8% said no, and 0.7% said that they don't know. This shows that from the analysis above, that there are ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents as affirmed by majority of the respondents. The study further affirmed that providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue.

### **4.3 Discussion of Finding**

Parenthood is challenging enough even under the best of conditions. So, being a single parent in our society is tasking to say the least. These single parents were categorized as a vulnerable group that were at risk of poor physical health such as debilitating chronic illness poor mental and social health with few supportive social contexts. The data on the types of mental health issues among single parents, table 4.2 revealed that 65.2% are aware of the various

types of mental health issues among single parent while 35.5% said No, and 1.3% said that they don't know, as to whether post-traumatic stress disorder is a type of mental health issue. This is in line with Sartorius (2002) Mental illness is a general term for a group of illnesses that may include symptoms that can affect a person's thinking, perceptions, mood or behaviour. Mental illness can make it difficult for someone to cope with work, relationships and other demands. The relationship between stress and mental illness is complex, but it is known that stress can worsen an episode of mental illness.

Most people can manage their mental illness with medication, counselling or both. Anxiety disorders, Behavioural and Emotional disorder in children, Bipolar affective disorder and Depression etc. The data on the distribution that lack of finance promotes the surge in mental health issues among single parents, table 4.3 revealed that 72.7% affirmed that lack of finance is one of the reasons why single parents have mental health issues, probing further on the issue, 60.1% affirmed that lack of attention and care can result in mental health issue in single parent. This can be deduced that lack of finance can result in mental health issues in single parents, this is in consonance with Azuka-Obieke, 2013, he noted that single parent homes are more likely to be low-economic homes. These children would therefore be subject to problems associated with their socioeconomic group. When there is only one parent, the family is often less well off financially and this is the main reason for so many family problems. The report of the study shows that effect of coming from a low-income family can include things like lower educational level; lower economic achievement and can result in leaving the child feeling isolated and lonely.

A similar study was carried out by Single-Rushton and McLanahan in 2002. The study was concerned with the wellbeing of the child in the absence of one parent the outcome of the

study draws our attention to the fact that children raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parent. Single parent families tend to be poorer than are two-parent families. Given that family economic status is an important determinant of children's education, it is evident that difference in economic studying between children from single parent homes and intact homes explain some of the educational differences between them. The absence of one parent have serious effects on the adolescent as homes led by single mother's experience lower household income which eventually influence the educational opportunities and success in school (Benokraitis, 2012).

The data on there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse, table 4.4 revealed that 65.2% are aware that the mental health issue faced is as a result of being separated from their spouses, as to whether there is a relationship between mental health issues and being separated from each other. Similarly, 73.9% said yes. Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether the death of a partner/desertion can result in mental health issue of the other. The result revealed that 66.4% said yes, this shows that from the analysis above, that there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse as affirmed by majority of the respondents. According to Amato (2000).

Divorce was generally rare historically (although this depends by culture and era) and divorce especially became very difficult to obtain after the fall of the Roman Empire, in Medieval Europe, due to strong involvement of ecclesiastical courts in family life (although annulment and other forms of separation were more common (Kent's commentaries on American law). Child custody in reference to divorce refers to which parent is allowed to make important decisions about the children involved. Physical custody refers to who the child lives

with. After a certain “crisis period” most children resume normal development, however, their future relationships are often affected as they lack a model upon which to base a healthy long term relationship. Nonetheless, as adult children of divorcees cope better with change. (Cherlin, 2010).

The remarriage of a divorced custodial parent result in a third family configuration that is experienced by an increased number of children. Separation The crucial event of a marital break down is the act of separation. This usually occurs when the relationship between both parents had gone cold. Divorce is a legal consequence that follows the emotional fact of separation, though not all separation leads to divorce. Although separation generally precedes divorce, some couples are able to sort out their misunderstanding and misgivings and are able to put the separation period behind them and move on with their lives. (Olaleye & Oladeji 2010). Children of deserted parents find it more difficult to understand the reason why they have to do without the other parent.

Santrock (2002), asserts that these children see themselves as unloved and unwanted by the deserted parents as if it is their fault for the abscond parent desertion. The data on ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents, table 4.4 revealed that 65.2% agreed that there are ways of reducing mental health issues in single parents, as to whether helping separated couples come back together reduce mental health issue in single parents. Similarly, 73.9% said yes, Probing the issue further, respondents were asked whether providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue. The result revealed that 66.4% said yes, this shows that from the analysis above, that there are ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents as affirmed by majority of the respondents. The

study further affirmed that providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The findings of this research revealed that the upsurge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor local government area is well known and the individuals in this area are aware of it. Findings of this research revealed that the respondents were majorly females. It also revealed that majority of the respondents who participated in this study fall within ages 35-44 years, also majority of respondents in this study were Christians. The study also revealed that the respondents who participated in the study were mostly married people. The study also revealed that majority of the respondents who participated in the study was secondary school certificate holders. Findings of this research revealed that majority of the respondents are aware of the various types of mental health issues in single parents which include post-traumatic disorder and anxiety as affirmed by majority of the respondents.

The study show that that lack of finance can result in mental health issues in single parents. This shows that from the analysis above, that there is a significant relationship between mental health issues faced by single parent families and their separation from their spouse as affirmed by majority of the respondents. It also shows that from the analysis above, that there are ways of reducing the surge in mental health issues among single parents as affirmed by majority of the respondents. The study further affirmed that providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

Considering all that had been discussed, the review of related literature and research findings obtained in this study, it can be seen beyond every reasonable doubt that mental illness in single parents is on the increase in Egor local government area of Edo state and Nigeria

at large. Single parent households, particularly single mother headed, are increasing in Nigeria. However, few studies to date have considered the effects of gender and urban/rural residence on the mental well-being of single parents. In this study, the proportion of single parents who rated their mental health as “fair or poor” did not differ significantly by gender rural residence. Single mothers were more likely to suffer mood and anxiety disorders in comparison with single fathers, though the prevalence did not vary by residence. However, single mothers and single fathers living in Further research, with more sophisticated data analyses and a longitudinal design is needed to determine whether the association observed in this study can be replicated and in addition, to shed light on the potential mechanisms linking “place” with an increased risk of mental issues.

In conclusion, evaluating the adversities and analyzing the mental health problems of single mothers can be helpful in the development of sustainable family policies and service systems that are required to promote women mental health. Financial hardship is the most fundamental adversities faced by single mothers. Therefore, to overcome this problem, formal support system such as the government agencies, welfare institutions, community networks, and experts should play their role to alleviate poverty among single mothers. On the other hand, social and family support should be improved to reduce psychological distress, stress, and depression and to let the single mothers feel loved, valued, and cared.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the aforementioned findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Sociologists and counsellors should encourage couples to develop positive attitudes that will cause their marriage to last longer in order to avoid mental illness.

2. The government should establish and fund counselling centres at the community, and Local Government levels and employ professional counsellors to help couples or single parent who are going through mental stress.
3. Medical professionals are in position to help single mothers; who have been through the issues before to avoid a repeat of it.
4. There should be public enlightenment through the mass media on the negative effects of divorce, separation etc.
5. Young couples planning to get married should be guided on the ways to avoid desertion in the intimate relationship of marriage.

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## APPENDIX

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Faculty of Social Science,  
University of Benin,  
Benin City.  
Questionnaire**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

My name is **Ewa Great**; I am presently a Final year student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin. In order for me to complete my B.Sc. Degree programme I am required by the University to develop and conduct a research project on the topic “*the upsurge in mental health issues among single parents in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State.*” The findings of this study will provide useful information as the upsurge in mental health issues. This is an academic exercise and all answers will be strictly treated confidentially. Your objective response is highly appreciated.

Thanks for your anticipated response.

**Yours Faithfully,**

**Ewa Great**

### **SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

**Answer all questions either ticking in the appropriate boxes or writing in the provided spaces.**

- 1. Gender:** Male ( ) Female ( )
- 2. Age** 20-24years ( ),25-34years ( ) 35-44 years ( ) 45-54years ( ) 55 years - Above
- 3. Sex:** Male ( ) Female ( )
- 4. Religion:** Christianity ( ) Islam ( ) Traditional ( ) Others ( )
- 5. Marital Status:** Single ( ) Married ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced ( ) Widow/Widower ( )

6. **Level of Education:** No Formal Education ( ) Primary level ( ) Secondary level ( )  
Bachelor's Degree ( )

7. **Occupation:** Government employee ( ) Non-government employee ( ) Retiree ( )  
Self-employed ( ) Unemployed ( )

**SECTION II: Answer all questions either ticking in the appropriate (√) spaces**

8. Do you know what mental health is? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )

9. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you know that there are various types of mental health issues among single parent?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )

11. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you think that post-traumatic stress disorder is a type of mental health issue? Yes ( )

No ( ) Don't know ( )

13. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you know that anxiety disorder is a mental health issue among single parent? Yes ( )

No ( ) Don't know ( )

15. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you think that lack of finance is one of the reasons why single parents have mental

health issues? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )

17. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you know that lack of attention and care can result in mental health issue in single

parent? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )

19. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you think that the mental health issue faced is as a result of being separated from their spouses? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
21. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you think that there is a relationship between mental health issues and being separated from each other? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
23. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_
24. Do you think that the death of a partner/desertion can result in mental health issue of the other? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
25. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_
26. Do you think that there are ways of reducing mental health issues in single parents Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
27. If yes please mention some.....
28. Can helping separated couples come back together reduce mental health issue in single parents? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
29. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_
30. Do think that providing adequately for a single parent can help reduce mental health issue? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
31. If yes how \_\_\_\_\_