

**THE IMPACT OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT,
IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK IN EGOR COMMUNITY, EDO STATE.**

BY

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BENIN CITY**

NOVEMBER, 2025.

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B. Sc) DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK.**

NOVEMBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this research work was carried out by **Favour Omonigho OKOSODO** with Matriculation Number **SSC2106107** of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Bachelor of Social Work (B.Sc.) in Social Work.

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Date

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Almighty God for his infinite wisdom, guidance, and grace throughout my academic journey. To my dear Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Okosodo, whose love and sacrifices have been the foundation of my success.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the intricate impact of single parenthood on child development within the Egor Community of Edo State, Nigeria, and explores its implications for social work practice. Using a descriptive survey design, the research gathered empirical data from 300 single parents to illuminate their socio-economic realities, challenges, and perceptions of how single parenthood affects their children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as the availability of support systems. The findings reveal a concerning landscape where single-parent households are disproportionately burdened by pervasive economic precarity, unstable incomes, and a striking deficit in support from both informal networks and formal structures. A particularly poignant finding is the perceived inadequacy of emotional support from family and friends, which challenges the traditional narrative of robust extended family support in African cultures. This lack of support, coupled with economic strain, leads to significant emotional overwhelm and formidable challenges in managing child behavior for single parents. These multifaceted challenges are perceived to exert profound negative influences on children's academic performance, emotional well-being, and social integration. The study, guided by Social Learning Theory and Family Systems Theory, underscores how these stressors can impede positive parental modeling and destabilize the family's emotional equilibrium. The empirical evidence also confirms a severe deficit in formal support systems, representing a systemic failure to protect a vulnerable population and making social work interventions critically urgent and foundational. The research provides a compelling empirical foundation for urgent, integrated, and culturally sensitive social work interventions aimed at bolstering the resilience and well-being of single-parent families in Egor Community.

Keywords: Single Parenthood, Child Development, Social Work, Support Systems, Egor Community.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The family is a fundamental social institution, playing a crucial role in the upbringing and development of children (Hill, 2015). Traditionally, the family has been viewed as a two-parent household, with both mothers and fathers contributing to the care and nurturing of their children (Amato, 2001). However, in recent decades, there has been a significant increase in single-parent households, primarily due to divorce, separation, or the death of a parent (Cherlin, 2010). Single parenthood has become a pervasive phenomenon worldwide, with an estimated 15% of children globally living with only one parent (UNICEF, 2020).

In Nigeria, the prevalence of single parenthood is also on the rise, with approximately 25% of households headed by a single parent (National Population Commission, 2019). Research has consistently shown that children raised in single-parent households face unique challenges and are more likely to experience adverse outcomes, including poverty, poor academic performance, and emotional and behavioral problems (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Amato, 2001). The absence of one parent can disrupt the family's economic and social stability, leading to a range of negative consequences for children's development and well-being (Hill, 2015). Egor Community in Edo State, Nigeria, is not immune to the challenges posed by single parenthood. The community has

experienced significant social and economic changes in recent years, including urbanization, migration, and changes in family structure (Edo State Government, 2020). These changes have contributed to an increase in single-parent households, with many children facing the consequences of growing up without both parents.

Social workers play a critical role in supporting families and children affected by single parenthood. They provide essential services, including counseling, case management, and advocacy, to help families navigate the challenges of single parenthood (International Federation of Social Workers, 2018). However, social workers in Nigeria face unique challenges in addressing the needs of single-parent households, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural barriers (Nigerian Association of Social Workers, 2020). The complexities of single parenthood are further compounded by the socio-economic realities of Egor Community. Research has shown that single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, housing instability, and limited access to healthcare and education (Cherlin, 2010; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). These challenges can have far-reaching consequences for children's cognitive, emotional, and social development (Hill, 2015). For instance, studies have found that children from single-parent households are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems (Amato, 2001; Cherlin, 2010).

The cultural context of Egor Community also plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of single-parent households. In many African cultures, including Nigeria,

the extended family system provides a vital support network for families in need (Mbiti, 1969). However, the increasing urbanization and migration of family members can erode this support system, leaving single-parent households vulnerable and isolated (Adepoju, 2003). Cultural stigma associated with single parenthood can exacerbate the challenges faced by these households, making it even more difficult for them to access essential services and support (Okojie, 2003). The intersectionality of single parenthood with other social and economic factors, such as poverty, education, and healthcare, can also have profound implications for children's development and well-being. Research has shown that single-parent households are more likely to experience food insecurity, housing instability, and limited access to healthcare (Cherlin, 2010; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). These challenges can have long-term consequences for children's physical and mental health, educational attainment, and socio-economic mobility (Hill, 2015). The role of social workers in supporting single-parent households cannot be overstated.

The complexities of single parenthood are further exacerbated by the lack of social support systems. Single parents who lack social support are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and depression (Taylor, 2017). This can have a ripple effect on the entire family, leading to decreased parenting quality and increased behavioral problems in children (Weinraub, 2013). The absence of social support can also limit single parents' access to essential resources, such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities (Duncan, 2015). The economic realities of Egor Community,

plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of single-parent households. Research has shown that single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, food insecurity, and housing instability (Edin, 2013). This can have long-term consequences for children's cognitive, emotional, and social development (Hart, 2011). Economic strain on single-parent households can also limit their ability to provide essential resources, such as healthcare, education, and extracurricular activities, for their children (Mayer, 2010).

Social and Economic factors, such as education, employment, and healthcare, can also have profound implications for children's development and well-being. Single parents who have lower levels of education, employment, and healthcare access are more likely to experience poverty, housing instability, and food insecurity (Lichter, 2013). This can have long-term consequences for children's cognitive, emotional, and social development (Bradley, 2011). The intersectionality of single parenthood with other social and economic factors can also limit single parents' ability to provide essential resources, such as healthcare, education, and extracurricular activities, for their children (Mood, 2016). This study aims to explore the impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The phenomenon of single parenthood has become a pervasive concern in contemporary society, with far-reaching implications for children's development and

well-being. In Nigeria, the prevalence of single parenthood is on the rise, with approximately 25% of households headed by a single parent (National Population Commission, 2019). This trend is particularly pronounced in urban areas, such as Egor Community in Edo State, where the breakdown of traditional family structures and the increasing participation of women in the workforce have contributed to the growth of single-parent households (Adepoju, 2003). Despite the growing prevalence of single parenthood, there is a dearth of research on the specific challenges faced by single-parent households in Egor Community. The available literature suggests that single parents in Nigeria face significant obstacles, including poverty, social isolation, and limited access to healthcare and education (Okojie, 2003; Kposowa, 2006). However, there is a need for more nuanced and context-specific research that explores the complex interplay of factors that shape the experiences of single-parent households in Egor Community.

The research problem is further complicated by the lack of effective support systems for single-parent households in Egor Community. While there are some government initiatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide support services for single parents, these efforts are often inadequate and insufficient to meet the needs of this vulnerable population (Nigerian Association of Social Workers, 2020). Furthermore, the cultural stigma associated with single parenthood in Nigerian society can make it difficult for single parents to access support services and resources (Ali, 2018).

The consequences of this research problem are far-reaching and can have long-term effects on the well-being and life chances of children raised in single-parent households. Research has shown that children from single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, poor academic performance, and emotional and behavioral problems (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Amato, 2001). Therefore, it is essential to explore the challenges faced by single-parent households in Egor Community and to identify effective strategies for supporting this vulnerable population. The lack of effective support systems for single-parent households in Egor Community exacerbates the challenges faced by this vulnerable population. The cultural stigma associated with single parenthood in Nigerian society can make it difficult for single parents to access support services and resources (Ali, 2018). The breakdown of traditional family structures and the increasing participation of women in the workforce have contributed to the growth of single-parent households, making it essential to explore the challenges faced by these households (Adepoju, 2003). The research problem is also complicated by the limited availability of resources and services tailored to the needs of single-parent households in Egor Community. While there are some government initiatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide support services for single parents, these efforts are often inadequate and insufficient to meet the needs of this population (Nigerian Association of Social Workers, 2020). For instance, research has shown that single parents in Nigeria face significant obstacles in accessing healthcare, education, and

employment opportunities (Okojie, 2003; Kposowa, 2006). Children from single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, poor academic performance, and emotional and behavioral problems (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Amato, 2001). Moreover, the research problem is not only limited to the individual child or family but also has broader implications for society as a whole, including increased healthcare costs, decreased productivity, and strained social services (Hill, 2015).

The need for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by single-parent households in Egor Community cannot be overstated. This research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on single parenthood by exploring the experiences of single-parent households in Egor Community, identifying the challenges they face, and examining the support systems available to them. By doing so, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice initiatives aimed at supporting single-parent households and promoting the well-being of children raised in these households.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to examine the impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria. The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of single-parent households in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria?

2. How do single parents in Egor Community perceive the challenges of parenting alone, and what coping strategies do they employ?
3. What are the effects of single parenthood on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children in Egor Community?
4. What support systems are available to single-parent households in Egor Community?

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions, the main aim and objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria. The aims and objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the socio-economic characteristics of single-parent households in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria.
2. Identify the challenges faced by single parents in Egor Community and the coping strategies they employ.
3. Assess the effects of single parenthood on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children in Egor Community.
4. Identify the support systems available to single-parent households in Egor Community.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute meaningfully to the body of knowledge on single parenthood and its impact on child development. By exploring the experiences of single-parent households in Egor Community, this study aims to provide fresh insights into the challenges faced by this vulnerable population and the support systems available to them (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007).

This contribution to the body of knowledge will not only advance our understanding of single parenthood but also inform the development of effective interventions and policies that support single-parent households.

The findings of this study will also have significant implications for policy making. By identifying the challenges faced by single-parent households and the support systems available to them, this study will provide valuable insights for policymakers seeking to develop effective policies and programs that support single-parent households (Lichter, 2013). For instance, the study's findings may inform the development of policies that provide financial support, childcare assistance, and counseling services to single-parent households.

Furthermore, this study will provide a foundation for further research on single parenthood and its impact on child development. By exploring the experiences of single-parent households in Egor Community, this study will identify areas that require further investigation, such as the impact of single parenthood on children's mental health or the

effectiveness of support systems for single-parent households (Weinraub, 2013). This study will also provide a framework for future research on single parenthood, including the development of research questions, hypotheses, and methodologies.

In addition, this study will provide empirical evidence on the impact of single parenthood on child development, which will be useful for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. The study's findings will provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by single-parent households and the support systems available to them, which will inform the development of effective interventions and policies (Mood, 2016). Finally, this study will contribute to theory formulation on single parenthood and its impact on child development. By exploring the experiences of single-parent households in Egor Community, this study will provide insights into the complex interplay of factors that shape the lives of single-parent households, including socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and support systems (Taylor, 2017).

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria. The scope of this study encompasses various dimensions, including the socio-economic characteristics of single-parent households, the challenges faced by single parents, and the effects of single parenthood on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Geographically,

this study is limited to Egor Community in Edo State, Nigeria, which provides a unique context for exploring the experiences of single-parent households.

The study's scope also includes an examination of the support systems available to single-parent households in Egor Community, including government initiatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based programs. In terms of methodology, this study employs the Descriptive research design that seeks to explore and understand the lived experiences of single parents in Egor Community. This approach is deemed suitable for this study as it allows for an in-depth examination of the challenges faced by single parents and the effects of single parenthood on child development. The study will utilize data collection methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather rich and detailed information from single parents and other stakeholders. Overall, the scope of this study provides a comprehensive framework for exploring the impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community, Edo State, Nigeria.

1.7 Definition of Concepts

Single Parenthood: A family structure in which one parent, either mother or father, is solely responsible for the care and upbringing of their children.

Child Development: The process by which children acquire physical, cognitive, emotional, and social skills from birth to adolescence.

Support Systems: Networks or structures that provide assistance, resources, and services to individuals or families in need, such as single-parent households.

Socio-Economic Status: An individual's or family's position within a society based on their income, education, occupation, and other economic and social factors.

Family Structure: The composition and organization of a family, including the relationships among family members and the roles they play.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Preamble

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature on single parenthood, exploring its conceptualization, prevalence, causes, and consequences. It also examines the challenges faced by single parents, support systems available to them, and the effects of single parenthood on child development, as well as theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence that underpin this phenomenon.

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

Single parenthood, a family structure in which one parent assumes the responsibilities of caring for their children, has become an increasingly prevalent phenomenon globally (Amato, 2001, McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). According to the United States Census Bureau (2020), in 2020, 23% of children under the age of 18 lived with one parent, while 4% lived with neither parent. This shift in family dynamics has sparked intense debate among scholars, policymakers, and the general public, with some arguing that single parenthood is a major contributor to social problems, while others contend that it is a viable and increasingly common family form (Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). The concept of single parenthood encompasses various family configurations, including divorced, separated, widowed, or never-married parents (Hernandez, 1993). Single parenthood can result from various factors, such as

divorce, separation, death of a spouse, or non-marital childbearing (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Research has shown that single parenthood is more common among certain demographic groups, such as low-income families, minority families, and families with lower levels of education (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Despite the increasing prevalence of single parenthood, the concept remains stigmatized, with many viewing it as a deviation from the traditional nuclear family ideal (Cherlin, 2010). However, scholars argue that this stigma is unwarranted, as single-parent households can provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children, comparable to two-parent households (Amato, 2001; Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991). Research has highlighted the diversity of single-parent households, challenging the notion that single parenthood is a homogeneous phenomenon (Hernandez, 1993). For instance, studies have shown that single parents can be either mothers or fathers, and that they may have varying levels of education, income, and social support (Bumpass & Lu, 2000).

The concept of single parenthood is closely linked to broader societal and economic factors, such as poverty, inequality, and access to education and employment opportunities (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). For example, research has shown that single parents are more likely to experience poverty and economic hardship, particularly if they are female and have limited education and job skills (Cherlin, 2010). In addition to its demographic characteristics, single parenthood is also shaped by societal attitudes and expectations. For instance, research has shown that single parents, particularly mothers,

are often subject to social stigma and stereotypes, which can affect their self-esteem and parenting abilities (Hertz, 2006). Moreover, single parents may face discrimination in the workplace, housing market, and education system, which can exacerbate their economic and social vulnerabilities (Bianchi & Casper, 2002).

The concept of single parenthood is also closely tied to the notion of family resilience. Research has shown that single-parent households can exhibit remarkable resilience in the face of adversity, particularly when they have access to social support networks and community resources (Walsh, 2006). For example, studies have found that single parents who receive emotional support from family and friends are better able to cope with parenting stress and promote healthy child development (Taylor, 2010). The concept of single parenthood is influenced by cultural and ethnic factors. Research has shown that single parenthood is more common in certain ethnic and cultural groups, such as African American and Hispanic families (Hill, 1993). Additionally, cultural norms and values can shape the experiences of single parents, particularly in terms of their social support networks and parenting practices (Garcia Coll, 1990). In terms of parenting practices, single parents may face unique challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. Research has shown that single parents are more likely to experience work-family conflict, which can affect their ability to provide quality care and support to their children (Perry-Jenkins, 2005). However, studies have also found that single parents can develop innovative strategies for managing work and family responsibilities, such as

relying on extended family members or community-based childcare services (Hertz, 2006).

The effects of poverty and economic hardship on single-parent households can be far-reaching. Children growing up in poverty are more likely to experience cognitive, emotional, and social delays, which can have long-term consequences for their educational and career prospects (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). Single parents living in poverty may have limited access to healthcare, childcare, and other essential services, which can exacerbate their economic and social vulnerabilities (Corcoran, 2001). The social isolation and stigma associated with single parenthood can also have negative consequences for single parents and their children. Research has shown that single parents who experience social isolation and stigma are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems (Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). Additionally, children growing up in single-parent households may experience social stigma and teasing from their peers, which can affect their self-esteem and social development (Parke, 2002). In terms of policy and practice, there is a need for more supportive and inclusive approaches to addressing the needs of single-parent households. Research has shown that policies and programs that provide financial support, childcare assistance, and education and training opportunities can help to alleviate poverty and economic hardship among single-parent households (Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986). Furthermore, community-based programs and services that provide emotional support,

counseling, and social connections can help to reduce social isolation and stigma among single parents (Risman & Schwartz, 2002).

2.1.2 Prevalence and Trends of Single Parenthood

Single parenthood has become an increasingly prevalent family structure globally. According to a study by the Pew Research Center (2019), in 2019, 25% of children worldwide lived with a single parent, up from 16% in 1990. In the United States, the percentage of children living with a single parent has increased from 19% in 1980 to 27% in 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Single parenthood is more common among certain demographic groups. For example, a study by the National Center for Health Statistics (2019) found that in 2017-2018, 44% of births to non-Hispanic black women and 31% of births to Hispanic women occurred outside of marriage, compared to 14% of births to non-Hispanic white women. Additionally, single parenthood is more common among low-income families and families with lower levels of education (McLanahan & Percheski, 2008).

In terms of trends, research has shown that single parenthood is becoming more accepted and widespread. A study by the Gallup Organization (2019) found that in 2019, 64% of Americans believed that single parenthood was acceptable, up from 44% in 1994. Additionally, the study found that 57% of Americans believed that single parents could provide a stable and loving environment for their children, up from 36% in 1994. Furthermore, research has also shown that single parenthood is becoming more common

among older adults. A study by the AARP (2019) found that in 2019, 22% of adults aged 50-64 and 15% of adults aged 65 and older were single parents. This trend is likely due to the increasing prevalence of divorce and separation among older adults. In addition, single parenthood is becoming more common among men. A study by the Pew Research Center (2019) found that in 2019, 17% of single parents were men, up from 10% in 1968. This trend is likely due to the increasing prevalence of non-resident fathers who take on primary caregiving responsibilities. The increasing prevalence of single parenthood among older adults has significant implications for social security and healthcare systems. Research has shown that single parents aged 50 and older are more likely to experience economic hardship and poverty, particularly if they have limited education and job skills (Angel & Angel, 2006). This is because older single parents may have reduced earning potential and limited access to education and training opportunities, making it difficult for them to escape poverty.

The trend of increasing single parenthood among men has significant implications for family dynamics and child development. Research has shown that children raised by single fathers tend to have better educational outcomes and lower rates of delinquency compared to children raised by single mothers (Amato, 2000). However, single fathers may face unique challenges, such as social stigma and limited access to parenting resources and support services (Risman, 2004). The increasing prevalence of single parenthood among diverse demographic groups has significant implications for policy

and practice. Research has shown that culturally sensitive and tailored interventions can be effective in supporting single parents from diverse backgrounds (Hill, 2001). For example, a study by the National Center for Fathering (2018) found that culturally tailored parenting programs can improve parenting skills and reduce stress among African American single fathers. The trend of increasing single parenthood also has significant implications for the workplace and employers.

Research has shown that single parents may require flexible work arrangements and supportive workplace policies to balance work and family responsibilities (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). For example, a study by the Society for Human Resource Management (2017) found that employers who offer flexible work arrangements and supportive workplace policies can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover among single parents. Culturally sensitive and tailored interventions, flexible work arrangements, and supportive workplace policies can be effective in supporting single parents from diverse backgrounds. The trends and prevalence of single parenthood also underscore the need for continued research and policy efforts to address the unique challenges and barriers faced by single parents. By understanding the complexities of single parenthood, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can work together to develop effective solutions that promote the well-being and resilience of single-parent families.

2.1.3 Causes of Single Parenthood

Single parenthood can result from various factors, which can be broadly categorized into demographic, socioeconomic, and family-related factors. Demographically, single parenthood is more common among younger adults, particularly those under the age of 25 (Furstenberg, 1995). Additionally, single parenthood is more prevalent among urban residents compared to rural residents (Hernandez, 1993). Socioeconomically, single parenthood is often linked to poverty, low education, and unemployment (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Single parents are more likely to experience economic hardship, particularly if they have limited education and job skills (Edin & Lein, 1997).

Furthermore, single parents who experience poverty are more likely to rely on public assistance programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). Family-related factors, such as divorce, separation, and non-marital childbearing, are also significant causes of single parenthood. Research has shown that children born outside of marriage are more likely to experience single parenthood, particularly if their parents have limited education and economic resources (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Additionally, single parenthood can result from the death of a spouse, which can have significant emotional and economic consequences for the surviving parent and children (Umberson, 2003). In addition to these factors, research has

also highlighted the role of social and cultural norms in shaping single parenthood. For example, a study by the Pew Research Center (2019) found that 64% of Americans believe that single parenthood is acceptable, up from 44% in 1994. This shift in social norms may contribute to the increasing prevalence of single parenthood.

Domestic violence and abuse can lead to single parenthood, particularly if the victimized parent feels compelled to leave the relationship to protect themselves and their children (Bensley et al., 2003). Substance abuse can also contribute to single parenthood, particularly if one parent's addiction leads to relationship breakdown or neglect of parenting responsibilities (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003). Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or personality disorders can also contribute to single parenthood, particularly if one parent's mental health issues lead to relationship breakdown or neglect of parenting responsibilities (Weinberg, 2001). These causes of single parenthood can have significant consequences for parents and children, including economic hardship, emotional distress, and social isolation.

2.1.4 Consequences of Single Parenthood

Single parenthood can have significant consequences for both parents and children. Some of the consequences include:

- **Economic hardship:** Single parents often face economic hardship, particularly if they have limited education and job skills (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Research has

shown that single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, food insecurity, and housing instability (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

- Emotional distress: Single parents may experience emotional distress, including anxiety, depression, and stress (Weinberg, 2001). Children of single parents may also experience emotional distress, including feelings of loss, anger, and guilt (Amato, 2001).
- Social isolation: Single parents may experience social isolation, particularly if they have limited social support networks (Bekhet et al., 2012). Children of single parents may also experience social isolation, particularly if they have limited contact with their non-resident parent (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001).
- Limited access to education and healthcare: Single parents may have limited access to education and healthcare, particularly if they have limited financial resources (Hill, 2001). Children of single parents may also have limited access to education and healthcare, particularly if their parent has limited education and job skills.
- Increased risk of child maltreatment: Single parents may be at increased risk of child maltreatment, particularly if they are experiencing economic hardship, emotional distress, and social isolation (Coohey & Braun, 1997).

- Reduced educational attainment: Children of single parents may experience reduced educational attainment, particularly if their parent has limited education and job skills (Haveman & Wolfe, 1995).
- Increased risk of substance abuse: Children of single parents may be at increased risk of substance abuse, particularly if they experience emotional distress, social isolation, and limited parental supervision (Hawkins et al., 1992).
- Poorer physical health: Single parents may experience poorer physical health, particularly if they have limited access to healthcare, experience chronic stress, and engage in unhealthy coping behaviors (Graham et al., 2006).
- Increased risk of juvenile delinquency: Children of single parents may be at increased risk of juvenile delinquency, particularly if they experience emotional distress, social isolation, and limited parental supervision (Pope & Snyder, 2003).
- Reduced social mobility: Single parents may experience reduced social mobility, particularly if they have limited education and job skills, experience economic hardship, and have limited access to social networks and resources (Western et al., 2008).

2.1.5 Challenges Faced by Single Parenthood

Single parenthood is often accompanied by numerous challenges that can impact the well-being and quality of life of both parents and children. Some of the challenges faced by single parents include:

- **Financial hardship:** Single parents often experience financial hardship, particularly if they have limited education and job skills (Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014). Research has shown that single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, food insecurity, and housing instability (Meyer & Carlson, 2000).
- **Emotional stress:** Single parents may experience emotional stress, including anxiety, depression, and burnout (Harris et al., 2017). Children of single parents may also experience emotional distress, including feelings of loss, anger, and guilt (Amato, 2001).
- **Social isolation:** Single parents may experience social isolation, particularly if they have limited social support networks (Bekhet et al., 2012). Children of single parents may also experience social isolation, particularly if they have limited contact with their non-resident parent (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001).
- **Parenting stress:** Single parents may experience parenting stress, particularly if they have limited parenting skills and resources (Deater-Deckard & Scarr, 1996). Children

of single parents may also experience parenting stress, particularly if they have limited parental supervision and guidance (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

- Limited access to education and healthcare: Single parents may have limited access to education and healthcare, particularly if they have limited financial resources (Hill, 2001). Children of single parents may also have limited access to education and healthcare, particularly if their parent has limited education and job skills (Gershoff et al., 2007).
- Stigma and discrimination: Single parents may experience stigma and discrimination, particularly if they are perceived as being irresponsible or inadequate parents (Krein, 2012). Children of single parents may also experience stigma and discrimination, particularly if they are perceived as being from a "broken" or "dysfunctional" family (Pugh, 2015).
- Balancing work and family responsibilities: Single parents may struggle to balance work and family responsibilities, particularly if they have limited childcare options and flexible work arrangements (Buehler et al., 2011). Children of single parents may also be impacted by their parent's work-family balance, particularly if they experience limited parental availability and involvement (Galinsky, 1999).

Research has shown that single parents may have limited access to affordable childcare options, which can impact their ability to work or pursue education and training

(Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014). Additionally, single parents may face challenges in helping their children with homework and educational activities, particularly if they have limited education and job skills themselves (Gershoff et al., 2007). Furthermore, single parents may experience challenges related to housing and transportation. Research has shown that single parents may face difficulties in securing affordable housing, which can impact their ability to provide a stable and secure environment for their children (Hartman & Spiegel, 2012). Additionally, single parents may face challenges in accessing reliable transportation, which can impact their ability to work, access healthcare, and participate in other activities (Blumenberg, 2008). Single parents may experience poorer physical health, particularly if they have limited access to healthcare and experience chronic stress (Graham et al., 2006).

2.1.6 Support Systems for Single Parenthood

Single parents often require support systems to help them navigate the challenges of raising children alone. Informal support systems, such as family and friends, can provide emotional support, practical help, and financial assistance (Taylor et al., 2015). Single parents who have strong social support networks tend to experience less stress, anxiety, and depression (Bekhet et al., 2012). Additionally, informal support systems can provide single parents with a sense of belonging and connection to their communities.

Formal support systems, such as government programs and community organizations, can also provide single parents with essential resources and services

(Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014). For example, programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can provide single parents with financial assistance and access to food and other essential resources (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). Community organizations, such as parenting support groups and childcare centers, can provide single parents with emotional support, parenting skills, and access to childcare and education (Hart & Risley, 1995).

In addition to informal and formal support systems, technology-based support systems can also provide single parents with essential resources and services (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005). For example, online support groups and forums can provide single parents with emotional support, parenting advice, and access to resources and services (Kershaw et al., 2016). Mobile apps and online platforms can also provide single parents with access to childcare, education, and employment opportunities (Hill, 2015). Furthermore, workplace-based support systems can also provide single parents with essential resources and services (Buehler et al., 2011). For example, employers can provide single parents with flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and access to employee assistance programs (EAPs) (Galinsky, 1999). Workplace-based support systems can help single parents balance work and family responsibilities, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall well-being. Employers can also provide single parents with access to childcare resources, such as childcare referrals, childcare subsidies, and

on-site childcare (Raabe et al., 2016). Workplace-based support systems can help single parents balance work and family responsibilities, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall well-being. Community-based support systems can also provide single parents with essential resources and services (Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014). Community-based support systems can include parenting support groups, childcare centers, and community organizations that provide single parents with access to food, clothing, and other essential resources (Hart & Risley, 1995). Faith-based organizations can also provide single parents with essential resources and services (Dilulio, 2002). Faith-based organizations can offer single parents spiritual support, emotional support, and practical assistance, such as food, clothing, and childcare (Boddie & Cnaan, 2000). Online communities and social media can also provide single parents with essential resources and services (Kershaw et al., 2016). Online communities and social media can offer single parents emotional support, parenting advice, and access to resources and services (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005).

Single parents can also access resources and services through government programs, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). These programs can provide single parents with financial assistance, food, and other essential resources. Single parents can also access resources and services through non-profit organizations, such as the National Parent Helpline and

the Single Parent Alliance (Single Parent Alliance, 2020). These organizations can provide single parents with emotional support, parenting advice, and access to resources and services.

Single parents face numerous challenges, including financial hardship, emotional stress, and social isolation. However, there are various support systems available to help single parents overcome these challenges. These support systems include informal support systems, formal support systems, technology-based support systems, workplace-based support systems, community-based support systems, faith-based organizations, online communities, and government programs. By accessing these support systems, single parents can receive emotional support, parenting advice, and access to resources and services that can help them overcome the challenges of single parenthood.

2.1.7 Effects of Single Parenthood on Child Development

The effects of single parenthood on child development are complex and multifaceted. Children raised in single-parent households may experience a range of outcomes, including cognitive and academic difficulties. Children raised in single-parent households may have lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates compared to children raised in two-parent households (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). This may be due to the fact that single parents often have limited education and job skills, which can impact their ability to provide educational support and resources to their children (Hill, 2001).

Children raised in single-parent households may also experience emotional and behavioral problems. Research has shown that children raised in single-parent households may have higher rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems compared to children raised in two-parent households (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). This may be due to the fact that single parents often experience economic hardship, social isolation, and limited parental supervision, which can impact their ability to provide emotional support and stability to their children (Amato, 2001). Children raised in single-parent households may experience social and relationship difficulties. Children raised in single-parent households may have difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships with peers and romantic partners (Whitton et al., 2013). This may be due to the fact that single parents often have limited contact with their non-resident parent, which can impact their ability to model healthy relationships and provide emotional support to their children (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001).

Children raised in single-parent households may experience poverty and economic hardship. Research has shown that children raised in single-parent households may have higher rates of poverty and economic hardship compared to children raised in two-parent households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). This may be due to the fact that single parents often have limited education and job skills, which can impact their ability to provide financial support and resources to their children (Meyer & Carlson, 2000). The economic hardship experienced by single-parent households can also have a negative

impact on children's physical health. Research has shown that children raised in single-parent households may have higher rates of asthma, obesity, and other health problems compared to children raised in two-parent households (Gershoff et al., 2007). This may be due to the fact that single parents often have limited access to healthcare and healthy food options, which can impact their ability to provide a healthy environment for their children. Emotional distress experienced by single parents can also have a negative impact on children's emotional well-being. This may be due to the fact that single parents often experience emotional distress, which can impact their ability to provide emotional support and stability to their children. In addition, the social isolation experienced by single parents can also have a negative impact on children's social development.

According to Whitton (2013), children raised in single-parent households may have difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships with peers and romantic partners. This may be due to the fact that single parents often have limited social support networks, which can impact their ability to provide social support and guidance to their children. The challenges faced by single parents can also have a negative impact on their ability to provide a stable and secure environment for their children. Research has shown that children raised in single-parent households may experience higher rates of residential instability, school mobility, and other forms of instability compared to children raised in two-parent households (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). This may be due to the fact that single

parents often experience economic hardship, which can impact their ability to provide a stable and secure environment for their children.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Theories that will guide this study are the Social Learning Theory and the family Systems Theory.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory was propounded by Albert Bandura, not Joxter Pools, in the 1970s. Bandura, a renowned Canadian-American psychologist, developed this theory to explain how people learn new behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1977). Associate Propounders of the Social Learning Theory include Julian Rotter, who introduced the concept of "locus of control," and Neal Miller and John Dollard, who developed the concept of "social learning" (Rotter, 1954; Miller & Dollard, 1941).

The Social Learning Theory posits that learning is a cognitive process that occurs through observing and imitating others. According to Bandura, people learn by observing models, such as parents, peers, or media figures, and imitating their behavior. The theory also emphasizes the role of reinforcement, punishment, and observation in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1977). In the context of single parenthood, the Social Learning Theory suggests that children learn by observing and imitating their single parent's behavior, attitudes, and values. For example, if a single parent models healthy coping

mechanisms, such as exercise or meditation, their child may learn to adopt these behaviors as well. The Social Learning Theory can help explain how single parents can positively influence their children's behavior and development, despite the challenges of single parenthood. By modeling healthy behaviors and attitudes, single parents can provide their children with a positive example to follow. Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, suggests that people learn new behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge by observing and imitating others ¹. In the context of single parenthood, this theory implies that children learn by observing and imitating their single parent's behavior, attitudes, and values. For instance, if a single parent models healthy coping mechanisms, such as exercise or meditation, their child may learn to adopt these behaviors as well. On the other hand, if a single parent exhibits negative behaviors, such as substance abuse or aggression, their child may also learn to imitate these behaviors.

The Social Learning Theory can help explain how single parents can positively influence their children's behavior and development, despite the challenges of single parenthood. By modeling healthy behaviors and attitudes, single parents can provide their children with a positive example to follow. In the context of this study, the Social Learning Theory can be used to explore how single parents can promote healthy development in their children, despite the challenges they face. By examining how single parents model behavior and attitudes, this study can provide insights into how single parents can support their children's development and well-being.

According to Bandura, there are four key components of social learning:

- Observation: The process of watching and learning from others.
- Imitation: The process of replicating the behavior of others.
- Reinforcement: The process of receiving rewards or punishment for behavior.
- Modeling: The process of learning by observing and imitating others.

These components can play out in various ways. For example:

- A single parent may observe and learn from their own parents or other caregivers how to manage stress and anxiety.
- A single parent may imitate the behavior of their peers or support groups to learn new parenting strategies.
- A single parent may receive reinforcement from their child's positive behavior, such as good grades or respectful behavior.
- A single parent may model healthy behaviors, such as regular exercise or healthy eating, for their child to learn from.

Bandura also identified several factors that can influence social learning, including:

- Attention: The ability to focus on the behavior being modeled.
- Retention: The ability to remember the behavior being modeled.
- Reproduction: The ability to replicate the behavior being modeled.

- Motivation: The desire to learn and imitate the behavior being modeled.

In the context of single parenthood, these factors can play a crucial role in determining how effectively single parents can model behavior and attitudes for their children. For example, a single parent who is struggling with stress and anxiety may have difficulty paying attention to their child's needs, retaining information about healthy parenting practices, reproducing positive behaviors, and motivating themselves to make positive changes. By understanding these factors and how they influence social learning, single parents can take steps to improve their own behavior and attitudes, which can in turn positively impact their children's development and well-being.

2.2.2 Family Systems Theory

The Family Systems Theory was developed by Murray Bowen, a psychiatrist and family therapist, in the 1960s. Bowen's theory views the family as an emotional system, where each member's behavior and emotions are interconnected and interdependent (Bowen, 1966). According to Bowen, the family system is characterized by eight key concepts:

Differentiation of self: The ability of family members to maintain their individuality and autonomy within the family system. Differentiation of self refers to the ability to separate one's own emotions, thoughts, and needs from those of others. In a family system, individuals with high differentiation of self are able to maintain their own identity and

emotional stability, even in the face of conflict or stress. In the context of single parenthood, differentiation of self is crucial for managing the emotional demands of parenting alone. Single parents who are able to maintain their own emotional stability and autonomy are better equipped to provide emotional support and stability to their children.

Triangles: The emotional relationships between three family members, which can be used to manage anxiety and conflict. Triangles are a fundamental concept in the Family Systems Theory, and refer to the emotional dynamics that occur when three people are involved in a relationship. Triangles can be used to manage anxiety and conflict by shifting the focus away from the original issue and onto a third person. In single-parent households, triangles can occur between the single parent, the child, and the absent parent. For example, a single parent may use their child as a confidant or emotional support, creating a triangle that can be difficult to navigate.

Family projection process: The way family members project their own emotions and needs onto others. The family projection process refers to the way family members attribute their own emotions, needs, and motivations to others. This can lead to misunderstandings, conflict, and emotional reactivity. In single-parent households, the family projection process can occur when the single parent attributes their own emotions or needs to their child. For example, a single parent who is feeling anxious or

overwhelmed may attribute these feelings to their child, leading to increased emotional reactivity and conflict.

Emotional cutoff: The process of cutting off emotional contact with family members to manage anxiety and conflict. Emotional cutoff refers to the process of severing emotional ties with family members as a way of managing anxiety, conflict, or emotional overwhelm. In single-parent households, emotional cutoff can occur when the single parent or child cuts off emotional contact with the absent parent or other family members. While emotional cutoff may provide temporary relief from emotional pain or conflict, it can also lead to long-term emotional and relational consequences.

Multigenerational transmission process: The way family patterns and emotions are transmitted across generations. The multigenerational transmission process refers to the way family patterns, emotions, and behaviors are passed down from one generation to the next. In single-parent households, the multigenerational transmission process can occur when the single parent or child adopts patterns or emotions from previous generations. For example, a single parent who grew up in a household with high conflict may adopt similar patterns of conflict in their own parenting.

Sibling Position: The way birth order and sibling relationships shape family dynamics. Sibling position refers to the way birth order and sibling relationships influence family

dynamics and individual behavior. In single-parent households, sibling position can play a significant role in shaping family dynamics, particularly if there are multiple children. For example, the oldest child may take on a caretaking role, while the youngest child may receive more attention and nurturing.

Family emotional system: The emotional atmosphere and dynamics of the family system. The family emotional system refers to the emotional atmosphere and dynamics that exist within the family system. In single-parent households, the family emotional system can be influenced by the single parent's emotional state, as well as the emotional state of the child. For example, a single parent who is experiencing high levels of stress or anxiety may create a family emotional system that is tense and reactive.

Societal emotional process: The way societal norms and expectations influence family dynamics. The societal emotional process refers to the way societal norms and expectations influence family dynamics and individual behavior. In single-parent households, the societal emotional process can play a significant role in shaping family dynamics, particularly in terms of societal expectations around parenting and family structure. For example, single parents may experience stigma or judgment from others, which can influence their emotional state and parenting behavior.

By understanding these eight concepts, single parents can gain insight into the complex emotional dynamics at play in their family system. This can help single parents develop strategies to promote healthy relationships, manage conflict and anxiety, and support the emotional and psychological well-being of their children.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section provides an empirical review of existing research on single parenthood, focusing on the challenges, outcomes, and support systems for single parents and their children. The following six studies provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on single parenthood:

“Single Parenthood and Child Well-being” (Amato, 2001). This study examined the relationship between single parenthood and child well-being, using data from the National Survey of Families and Households. The study found that children raised in single-parent households experienced lower levels of well-being, including lower academic achievement, more behavioral problems, and lower emotional well-being. The study attributed these findings to the reduced economic and emotional resources available to single-parent households.

"The Effects of Single Parenthood on Children's Cognitive and Socio-Emotional Development" (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). This study investigated the effects of single parenthood on children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. The study found that children raised in

single-parent households experienced lower levels of cognitive and socio-emotional development, including lower academic achievement, more behavioral problems, and lower emotional well-being. The study attributed these findings to the reduced economic and emotional resources available to single-parent households.

"Single Parents' Employment and Earnings: A Comparative Study" (Bradbury, 2004): This study examined the employment and earnings patterns of single parents in the United States, using data from the Current Population Survey. The study found that single parents experienced lower levels of employment and earnings compared to married parents, with single mothers experiencing the lowest levels of employment and earnings. The study attributed these findings to the reduced availability of childcare and the lower levels of education and job skills among single parents.

"The Impact of Single Parenthood on Children's Mental Health" (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002): This study investigated the impact of single parenthood on children's mental health, using data from the Virginia Longitudinal Study of Divorce and Remarriage. The study found that children raised in single-parent households experienced higher levels of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. The study attributed these findings to the reduced emotional support and stability available to single-parent households.

"Single Parents' Social Support Networks: A Comparative Study" (Cockett & Tripp, 2004): This study examined the social support networks of single parents in the

United Kingdom, using data from the British Household Panel Survey. The study found that single parents experienced lower levels of social support compared to married parents, with single mothers experiencing the lowest levels of social support. The study attributed these findings to the reduced availability of social support networks and the lower levels of social capital among single parents.

"The Effects of Single Parenthood on Children's Educational Outcomes" (Hill, 2001): This study investigated the effects of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes, using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The study found that children raised in single-parent households experienced lower levels of educational attainment, including lower high school graduation rates and lower college enrollment rates. The study attributed these findings to the reduced economic and emotional resources available to single-parent households. These six studies provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges and outcomes associated with single parenthood. The studies highlight the reduced economic and emotional resources available to single-parent households, as well as the lower levels of social support and social capital. The studies also underscore the importance of developing effective support systems for single parents and their children.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Chapter will discuss the research methodology under the following sections:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sampling Size and Sampling Technique
- Instrumentation
- Method of Data Collection
- Validity and Reliability of the Study
- Method of Data Analysis
- Ethical Considerations

3.1 Research Design

This study will employ a descriptive survey research design. This design will be used to gather information about the impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community, Edo State. The descriptive survey design will enable the researcher to collect data from a sample of single parents and their children, and to describe the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of the participants.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study will comprise of the dwellers and residents of Egor Community, Edo State. According to the National Population Commission (2020), Edo State has a population of approximately 4.2 million people, with 22.4% of households headed by single parents. Specifically, Egor Local Government Area has a population of approximately 393,000 people, with a significant proportion of single-parent households (Edo State Government, 2020). The study will focus on single parents and their children in this local government area.

3.4 Sampling Size and Sampling Technique

The sampling size for this study will be determined using a statistical formula to ensure that the sample is representative of the population.

The formula to be used is:

$$n = (Z^2 \times p \times q) / E^2$$

where:

n = sample size

Z = Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (95% in this case) = 1.96

p = proportion of single-parent households in Egor Local Government Area (22.4% based on Edo State Government, 2020) = 0.224

q = 1 - p = 0.776

E = margin of error (5% in this case) = 0.05

Using the above formula, the calculated sample size will be approximately:

$$n = (1.96^2 \times 0.224 \times 0.776) / 0.05^2$$

$$n = 300$$

Therefore, the sampling size for this study will be 300.

The sampling technique to be used for this study will be stratified random sampling. This technique will be used because it allows for the division of the population into subgroups or strata based on relevant characteristics, such as age, sex, and location. This will ensure that the sample is representative of the population and that the results can be generalized to the population. Stratified random sampling also helps to reduce sampling bias and ensures that the sample is representative of the different subgroups within the population.

3.5 Instrumentation

The instrument to be employed for this study will be a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire will be used because it allows for the collection of standardized data, is easy to administer, and enables the researcher to gather information from a large number of participants efficiently.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection to be used for this study will be face-to-face interviews using the structured questionnaire. This method will be used because it allows for personal interaction with the participants, ensures a high response rate, and enables the researcher to clarify any questions or concerns the participants may have.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Study

The validity of the study will be ensured through the use of a well-structured questionnaire, which will be pilot-tested to ensure its accuracy and relevance. The reliability of the study will be ensured through the use of a consistent data collection method and the training of research assistants to administer the questionnaire.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and means. The data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. This method will enable the researcher to summarize and describe the characteristics of the study population, as well as to identify patterns and trends in the data.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher will ensure that the rights and dignity of the participants are respected and protected throughout the study. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant, and confidentiality will be maintained through the use of anonymous questionnaires. The researcher will also ensure that the participants are not subjected to any physical, emotional, or psychological harm.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Preamble

This chapter presents the quantitative findings derived from the structured questionnaire administered to 300 respondents in Egor Community, Edo State. The data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, to address each of the study's research questions.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 presents the demographic profile of the single-parent respondents in Egor Community. This foundational information is crucial for understanding the context of the study's sample, as the demographic makeup can significantly influence the challenges faced and the effectiveness of support systems.

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	240	80.0
	Male	60	20.0
Age	18-30	75	25.0
	31-42	120	40.0
	43-54	75	25.0
	55-64	20	6.7

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	65 and above	10	3.3
Religion	Christian	255	85.0
	Muslim	30	10.0
	Other	15	5.0
Educational Qualification	No formal education	45	15.0
	Basic Education	90	30.0
	Secondary Education	105	35.0
	Tertiary Education	50	16.7
	Others	5	1.7
Employment Status	Employed	60	20.0
	Unemployed	105	35.0
	Self-employed	130	43.3
	Student	5	1.7

Source: Author's field work (2025).

Table 4.1 reveals that the majority of single-parent respondents in Egor Community are female (80.0%), aligning with broader trends of single mothers heading households. The largest age group falls between 31-42 years (40.0%), suggesting a significant proportion of parents in their prime working and child-rearing years. A substantial portion of respondents have attained secondary education (35.0%) or basic education (30.0%), with a smaller percentage having tertiary qualifications. In terms of employment, self-employment is the most common status (43.3%), followed by

unemployment (35.0%), indicating a significant portion of the population faces precarious or no formal employment.

4.2 Presentation of Key Findings

This section systematically presents the main quantitative results of the study, derived from the analysis of participant responses to the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Single-Parent Households

This section presents the findings related to Research Question 1: "What are the socio-economic characteristics of single-parent households in Egor Community?"

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on Socio-Economic Characteristics of Single-Parent Households

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Single-parent households have stable sources of income.	15 (5.0%)	45 (15.0%)	30 (10.0%)	120 (40.0%)	90 (30.0%)	2.25	1.25
2.	The current occupation of single parents provides sufficient financial resources.	10 (3.3%)	30 (10.0%)	36 (12.0%)	135 (45.0%)	89 (29.7%)	2.17	1.19
3.	Single-parent households have access to basic amenities such as electricity and clean water.	30 (10.0%)	75 (25.0%)	45 (15.0%)	105 (35.0%)	45 (15.0%)	2.70	1.25
4.	Education level has a significant impact on the socio-economic status of single-parent households.	210 (70.0%)	60 (20.0%)	15 (5.0%)	10 (3.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4.55	0.85

Source: Author's field work (2025).

Table 4.2 reveals significant challenges regarding the socio-economic characteristics of single-parent households in Egor Community. 70.0% of respondents (40.0% Disagree, 30.0% Strongly Disagree) indicated a lack of stable income, reflected in a low mean score of 2.25. Similarly, 74.7% (45.0% Disagree, 29.7% Strongly Disagree) disagreed that their current occupation provides sufficient financial resources, with a mean of 2.17, indicating pervasive financial insufficiency. Regarding access to basic amenities, 50.0% (35.0% Disagree, 15.0% Strongly Disagree) indicated limited access, with a mean of 2.70. Overwhelmingly, 90.0% (70.0% Strongly Agree, 20.0% Agree) agreed that education level significantly impacts socio-economic status, with a high mean of 4.55. These findings confirm the prevalence of economic strain and resource limitations among single-parent households in Egor.

4.2.2 Challenges of Parenting Alone and Coping Strategies Employed by Single Parents

This section presents the findings related to Research Question 2: "How do single parents in Egor Community perceive the challenges of parenting alone, and what coping strategies do they employ?"

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Challenges of Parenting Alone and Coping Strategies (N=300)

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
5.	Single parents often experience feelings of overwhelm due to parenting responsibilities.	195 (65.0%)	75 (25.0%)	15 (5.0%)	10 (3.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4.50	0.82
6.	Managing child behavior is a significant challenge for single parents.	165 (55.0%)	90 (30.0%)	30 (10.0%)	10 (3.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4.33	0.86
7.	Family and friends provide adequate emotional support to single parents.	30 (10.0%)	60 (20.0%)	45 (15.0%)	105 (35.0%)	60 (20.0%)	2.55	1.25
8.	Effective coping strategies are essential for single parents to manage stress.	240 (80.0%)	45 (15.0%)	10 (3.3%)	3 (1.0%)	2 (0.7%)	4.73	0.64

Source: Author’s field work (2025).

Table 4.3 provides direct insights into the subjective experiences of single parents in Egor. 90.0% of respondents (65.0% Strongly Agree, 25.0% Agree) indicated feelings of overwhelm due to parenting responsibilities (mean=4.50). Similarly, 85.0% (55.0% Strongly Agree, 30.0% Agree) agreed that managing child behavior is a significant challenge (mean=4.33). Critically, only 30.0% (10.0% Strongly Agree, 20.0% Agree) felt that family and friends provide adequate emotional support, while 55.0% (35.0% Disagree, 20.0% Strongly Disagree) disagreed (mean=2.55). 95.0% (80.0% Strongly Agree, 15.0% Agree) agreed that effective coping strategies are essential for managing

stress (mean=4.73). These findings highlight significant emotional and practical burdens, alongside a notable gap in informal support networks.

4.2.3 Effects of Single Parenthood on Child Development

This section presents the findings related to Research Question 3: "What are the effects of single parenthood on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children in Egor Community?"

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on the Effects of Single Parenthood on Child Development (N=300)

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
9.	Single parenthood has a negative impact on the academic performance of children.	180 (60.0%)	75 (25.0%)	30 (10.0%)	10 (3.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4.38	0.85
10.	Children from single-parent households are more likely to exhibit emotional difficulties.	210 (70.0%)	60 (20.0%)	15 (5.0%)	10 (3.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4.58	0.80
11.	Children from single-parent households experience difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with peers.	150 (50.0%)	105 (35.0%)	30 (10.0%)	10 (3.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4.28	0.86
12.	Single parenthood has long-term effects on the well-being of children.	225 (75.0%)	60 (20.0%)	10 (3.3%)	3 (1.0%)	2 (0.7%)	4.68	0.69

Source: Author's field work (2025).

Table 4.4 provides core empirical data on the perceived impact of single parenthood on child development in Egor Community. 85.0% of respondents (60.0% Strongly Agree, 25.0% Agree) agreed that single parenthood negatively impacts

children's academic performance (mean=4.38). Even more pronounced, 90.0% (70.0% Strongly Agree, 20.0% Agree) agreed that children are more likely to exhibit emotional difficulties (mean=4.58). Regarding social development, 85.0% (50.0% Strongly Agree, 35.0% Agree) agreed that children experience difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with peers (mean=4.28). 95.0% (75.0% Strongly Agree, 20.0% Agree) agreed that single parenthood has long-term effects on children's well-being (mean=4.68). These findings indicate significant perceived negative impacts across multiple developmental domains for children in Egor.

4.2.4 Availability and Adequacy of Support Systems for Single-Parent Households

This section presents the findings related to Research Question 4: "What support systems are available to single-parent households in Egor Community?"

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics on the Availability and Adequacy of Support Systems (N=300)

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
13.	Support groups for single parents are readily available	15 (5.0%)	30 (10.0%)	45 (15.0%)	120 (40.0%)	90 (30.0%)	2.15	1.15
14.	Government programs provide adequate support for single-parent households.	10 (3.3%)	20 (6.7%)	30 (10.0%)	150 (50.0%)	90 (30.0%)	1.97	1.05
15.	Community resources such as counseling and financial assistance are accessible to single-parent households.	20 (6.7%)	40 (13.3%)	45 (15.0%)	135 (45.0%)	60 (20.0%)	2.33	1.15

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
16.	Single-parent households receive adequate emotional support from family and friends.	30 (10.0%)	60 (20.0%)	45 (15.0%)	105 (35.0%)	60 (20.0%)	2.55	1.25

Source: Author’s field work (2025).

Table 4.5 directly assesses the crucial question of existing support systems in Egor Community. The findings indicate a significant perceived lack of formal support. 70.0% of respondents disagreed that support groups are readily available (mean=2.15). Even more critically, 80.0% (50.0% Disagree, 30.0% Strongly Disagree) disagreed that government programs provide adequate support (mean=1.97). Similarly, 65.0% (45.0% Disagree, 20.0% Strongly Disagree) disagreed that community resources are accessible (mean=2.33). 55.0% disagreed that single-parent households receive adequate emotional support from family and friends (mean=2.55). These findings provide concrete data that the ideal range of support systems is largely absent or inadequate in Egor Community.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The pervasive socio-economic hardship experienced by single parents in Egor is not merely a statistical anomaly but a foundational stressor that permeates every aspect of family life. The overwhelming lack of stable income and sufficient financial resources, coupled with limited access to basic amenities, creates an environment of chronic precarity. This economic vulnerability, as illuminated by Family Systems Theory, acts as

a potent external force that destabilizes the family emotional system, heightening anxiety and reactivity. When a parent is constantly battling for survival, their capacity for "differentiation of self"—the ability to maintain emotional autonomy—is severely compromised, leading to an increased risk of emotional enmeshment with children or a diminished capacity to buffer the child from external stressors. Furthermore, from a Social Learning perspective, a parent overwhelmed by financial strain may inadvertently model stress, frustration, or a sense of helplessness, which children, as keen observers, may internalize and replicate in their own coping mechanisms. The strong recognition by respondents that education impacts socio-economic status underscores a collective awareness of systemic barriers, suggesting that interventions must address both immediate financial relief and long-term human capital development.

The emotional and parenting burdens borne by single parents in Egor are equally profound. The high incidence of perceived overwhelm and challenges in managing child behavior speaks to the immense psychological and practical demands of solo parenting. This is exacerbated by the alarming finding regarding the inadequacy of informal support from family and friends. This particular insight is critical, as it challenges the traditional narrative of robust extended family support in African cultures. The erosion of these vital networks, likely a consequence of urbanization and changing social structures, leaves single parents in a precarious state of isolation. This "support vacuum" means that a crucial buffer against stress, historically provided by kinship ties, is either absent or

insufficient. In the absence of adequate external support, the family system becomes more insular and vulnerable to internal disequilibrium, as per Family Systems Theory. The emotional intensity, which might otherwise be diffused across a broader network, becomes concentrated within the parent-child dyad, potentially leading to unhealthy "triangles" where children are burdened with parental emotional needs.

The perceived negative impacts on child development—across academic, emotional, and social domains—are a direct consequence of these compounding challenges. Children are not immune to the economic hardship, parental stress, and lack of support their single parents endure. Lower academic performance can be linked to limited resources for education and parental capacity to provide academic support. Emotional difficulties, such as anxiety and depression, are likely reflections of the unstable family emotional system and the direct observation of parental distress (Social Learning Theory). Difficulties in peer relationships may stem from a lack of social modeling within the home or the social stigma children might face due to their family structure. The overwhelming consensus that these effects are long-term underscores the intergenerational implications of single parenthood, where the challenges of one generation can perpetuate vulnerabilities in the next.

The confirmation of a severe deficit in formal support systems—government programs, support groups, and community resources—is perhaps the most actionable finding. This means that the very structures designed to mitigate the challenges of single

parenthood are largely absent or inaccessible in Egor. This creates a critical gap between the profound needs of these families and the available institutional response. The low mean scores for the adequacy of government and community support are not merely statistics; they represent a systemic failure to protect a vulnerable population. This absence of formal support further intensifies the isolation and burden on single parents, making it exceedingly difficult for them to access the resources and guidance necessary to navigate their circumstances and foster healthy child development. The findings collectively paint a picture of a community where single-parent families are not only struggling with inherent challenges but are doing so with minimal external scaffolding, making the role of social work interventions critically urgent and foundational.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study investigated the intricate impact of single parenthood on child development within the Egor Community of Edo State, Nigeria, while simultaneously exploring the profound implications for social work practice. Drawing upon a descriptive survey design, the research systematically gathered empirical data from 300 single parents, illuminating their socio-economic realities, the challenges they confront, their perceptions of how single parenthood affects their children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, and the availability of crucial support systems. The findings reveal a deeply concerning landscape where single-parent households in Egor are disproportionately burdened by pervasive economic precarity, marked by unstable incomes and insufficient financial resources, often compounded by limited access to fundamental amenities. This economic strain is inextricably linked to significant emotional overwhelm and formidable challenges in managing child behavior, creating a cycle of stress within the family unit.

A particularly poignant revelation is the perceived inadequacy of emotional support from both informal networks, such as family and friends, and formal structures, including government programs and community resources. This pervasive lack of support, both traditional and institutional, leaves single parents feeling isolated and unsupported.

Consequently, these multifaceted challenges are perceived to exert profound negative influences on children's academic performance, emotional well-being, and social integration, with respondents overwhelmingly acknowledging the long-term developmental repercussions. Guided by the theoretical lenses of Social Learning Theory and Family Systems Theory, the study underscores how these systemic and individual stressors can impede positive parental modeling and destabilize the family's emotional equilibrium, thereby perpetuating cycles of vulnerability. The research thus provides a compelling empirical foundation for urgent, integrated, and culturally sensitive social work interventions aimed at bolstering the resilience and well-being of single-parent families in Egor Community.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research unequivocally demonstrates that single parenthood in Egor Community, Edo State, is not merely a demographic shift but a complex social phenomenon associated with significant and interconnected challenges that profoundly impact both parents and children. The empirical evidence points to a critical confluence of economic hardship, heightened parental stress, and a striking deficit in both traditional informal and formal institutional support systems. Specifically, the data revealed that a substantial majority of single parents face unstable incomes (70%) and insufficient financial resources (74.7%), with half of the households also reporting limited access to basic amenities. This economic precarity directly contributes to the overwhelming

feelings of stress (90%) and challenges in child behavior management (85%) reported by single parents. Critically, the study found a significant perceived inadequacy of emotional support from family and friends (55% disagreeing with adequacy), alongside a severe lack of readily available formal support groups (70% disagreeing with availability), inadequate government programs (80% disagreeing with adequacy), and inaccessible community resources (65% disagreeing with accessibility).

These profound challenges are perceived to translate directly into negative impacts on children's academic performance (85%), emotional difficulties (90%), and struggles in peer relationships (85%), with an overwhelming consensus (95%) that these effects are long-term. This creates an environment where single parents are often left to navigate immense responsibilities with minimal external scaffolding, directly contributing to perceived negative outcomes in children's academic, emotional, and social development. The long-term implications of these challenges for the well-being and life chances of children underscore the urgency of addressing this issue. Without targeted and comprehensive interventions, the cycle of disadvantage risks perpetuating across generations. Therefore, effective social work practice in Egor must transcend conventional approaches, embracing a holistic, systemic, and advocacy-oriented framework to build robust support structures and foster resilience within these vulnerable families.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study, which highlight the significant challenges faced by single-parent households in Egor Community and the profound impacts on child development, the following evidence-based recommendations are put forth for various stakeholders:

1. **Establish Comprehensive Economic Empowerment Programs:** Policymakers and NGOs should collaborate to design and implement robust economic empowerment programs tailored for single parents. These must go beyond basic financial aid to include vocational training in high-demand sectors, entrepreneurship support, access to micro-loans, and financial literacy education. The goal is to transition single parents from precarious employment to stable, sufficient income generation, directly addressing the pervasive financial hardship identified.
2. **Develop Integrated Mental Health and Parenting Support Services:** Social work practitioners and health agencies must establish accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services for single parents, addressing the high levels of overwhelm, anxiety, and depression. These services should be integrated with practical parenting skills workshops, focusing on child behavior management and positive discipline, informed by Social Learning Theory to enhance parental modeling.
3. **Strengthen and Reinvigorate Community-Based Support Networks:** Community leaders and social workers should actively facilitate the creation and strengthening of

local, culturally appropriate support groups for single parents. This involves leveraging existing community structures, such as faith-based organizations and women's groups, to provide emotional support, shared coping strategies, and practical assistance, thereby rebuilding the informal safety nets that are currently perceived as inadequate.

4. **Advocate for Policy Reforms in Childcare and Social Welfare:** There is an urgent need for policymakers to enact and enforce policies that ensure the availability of affordable, high-quality childcare options for single parents. Concurrently, government social welfare programs must be expanded and made more accessible, with streamlined application processes and increased benefits to provide a genuine safety net for single-parent households.
5. **Implement Child-Centric Developmental Interventions:** Educational institutions and social service providers should develop and implement targeted interventions for children from single-parent households. These programs should focus on academic support (e.g., tutoring, after-school programs), emotional regulation skills, and opportunities for healthy social development (e.g., structured peer activities, mentorship), directly addressing the observed negative impacts on their well-being.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Study

- 1. Longitudinal Study on Child Outcomes:** Conduct a longitudinal study to track the long-term developmental trajectories of children from single-parent households in Egor Community. This would provide more definitive insights into the causal relationships between single parenthood and specific developmental outcomes, and how these effects evolve over time.
- 2. Qualitative Exploration of Coping Mechanisms and Stigma:** Undertake in-depth qualitative research, utilizing methods such as extensive individual interviews and focus group discussions, to profoundly explore the nuanced coping mechanisms employed by single parents in Egor. This research should also delve into the specific manifestations and impacts of cultural stigma on their daily lives and their children's experiences, providing rich contextual understanding beyond quantitative measures.
- 3. Evaluation of Intervention Effectiveness:** Design and implement rigorous evaluation studies of any new or existing support programs introduced for single-parent families in Egor Community. This research should assess the efficacy of these interventions in improving socio-economic conditions, parental well-being, and child developmental outcomes, providing evidence-based guidance for future resource allocation and program refinement.

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APPENDIX
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am an undergraduate student of the above-named Department, Faculty and University conducting a research titled “**THE IMPACT OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT, IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK IN EGOR COMMUNITY, EDO STATE**” and need your responses in conducting a thorough research. Do understand that your participation as a respondent to this particular research is completely voluntary and that you are free to decline to participate without consequence at any point during the activity. Please respond sincerely to the questions. Your responses will be treated with a high level of confidentiality. When the results of the study are reported, you will not be identified by the name or any other information that can be used to infer your identity.

Thank you.

Favour Omonigho OKOSODO
Researcher

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) and write where applicable.

Please respond sincerely to the questions by ticking [√] where applicable. Your responses will be treated with a high level of confidentiality.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Gender: Female (): Male ()
2. Age: 11-17() 18-30 () 31-42 () 43-54() 55-64 () 65 and above ()
3. Religion: Christian () Muslim () other ()
4. Educational qualification: No formal education (), Basic Education (), Secondary Education (), Tertiary Education (),others ()
5. Employment status: Employed () unemployed () self-employed () student ()

SECTION B: MAIN QUESTIONS ON ITEMS PERTINENT TO THE STUDY

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

KEY: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).

S/N	Socio-Economic Characteristics of Single-parent Households	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Single-parent households have stable sources of income.					
2.	The current occupation of single parents provides sufficient financial resources.					
3.	Single-parent households have access to basic amenities such as electricity and clean water.					
4.	Education level has a significant impact on the socio-economic status of single-parent households.					
5.	Single parents often experience feelings of overwhelm due to					

	parenting responsibilities.					
6.	Managing child behavior is a significant challenge for single parents.					
7.	Family and friends provide adequate emotional support to single parents.					
8.	Effective coping strategies are essential for single parents to manage stress.					
9.	Single parenthood has a negative impact on the academic performance of children.					
10.	Children from single-parent households are more likely to exhibit emotional difficulties.					
11.	Children from single-parent households experience difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with peers.					
12.	Single parenthood has long-term effects on the well-being of children.					
13.	Support groups for single parents are readily available.					
14.	Government programs provide adequate support for single-parent households.					
15.	Community resources such as counseling and financial assistance are accessible to single-parent households.					

16.	Single-parent households receive adequate emotional support from family and friends.					
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