

**INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING AS A FACTOR OF DELINQUENCY
AMONG PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

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UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that this project research was carried out by Lucia Isioma **NWANJI** with the Matriculation Number **EDU2102420** in the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology.

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to Almighty God my creator, my strong pillar, my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of single parenting on delinquent behaviour among public senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The study investigated how factors such as parental supervision, emotional support, absence of parental figures, and economic difficulties within single parent households contribute to students' involvement in delinquent acts. Five research questions guided the study and five corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The survey research design was used, and the population consisted of senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. A sample of one hundred and twenty five students was selected through simple random sampling from five public secondary schools. A structured questionnaire served as the research instrument. The instrument was validated by experts, and the reliability was established through the test retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.77. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, while hypotheses were tested using the t test and Pearson correlation. The findings revealed that single parenting significantly influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. The study showed that inadequate supervision, low emotional support, absence of a mother or father figure, and financial challenges common in single parent households contribute to behaviours such as truancy, aggression, dishonesty, and peer influenced deviance. The results also showed that students from single parent homes exhibited higher levels of delinquent behaviour compared to those from two parent families. All hypotheses tested were rejected, indicating significant relationships between the components of single parenting and delinquent behaviour. The study concluded that family structure and the quality of parental involvement play important roles in shaping adolescent behaviour. It recommended enhanced parental supervision, emotional support, financial assistance for single parent families, school based mentorship, and community intervention programmes aimed at reducing delinquent tendencies among adolescents.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The family is universally recognised as the first and most influential social institution in the life of a child. It serves as the primary agent of socialisation where values, norms, attitudes, and acceptable patterns of behaviour are learned and internalised. Within the family setting, children are introduced to societal expectations and are guided through emotional, psychological, and behavioural development. Traditionally, the two-parent family structure has been regarded as the ideal environment for raising children due to the complementary roles played by both parents in nurturing, disciplining, and guiding their offspring. However, contemporary societal changes have led to a significant transformation in family structures across the world, including Nigeria, with a notable increase in single-parent households.

Single parenting, which refers to a family structure where a child is raised by only one parent, has become increasingly prevalent due to various socio-economic and cultural factors such as divorce, separation, death of a spouse, migration, and unplanned pregnancies. In Nigeria, rapid urbanisation, economic challenges, and changing social values have contributed to the rise in single-parent families. While single parents often strive to provide adequate care and support for their children, the absence of one parent may create gaps in supervision, emotional support, and discipline, which can influence the behavioural outcomes of children, particularly during adolescence.

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterised by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this period, individuals are highly susceptible to external influences, including peer pressure and environmental factors. When the family structure is unstable or lacks adequate support systems, adolescents may be more vulnerable to engaging in delinquent behaviours. Delinquency refers to a range of antisocial and deviant behaviours such as truancy, substance abuse, theft, aggression, vandalism, and disobedience to authority. These behaviours not only affect the academic performance of students but also pose serious challenges to school management and societal stability. In recent years, there has been growing concern about the increasing rate of delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Nigeria, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas (Ushie, Owolabi, & Nwokocha, 2018).

The link between family structure and adolescent behaviour has been widely explored in sociological and psychological literature. Children raised in single-parent households may experience certain disadvantages compared to their counterparts from two-parent families. One of the major concerns is the absence of a father figure in many single-parent homes, especially those headed by mothers. Fathers are often associated with discipline, authority, and role modelling, and their absence may result in a lack of firm guidance and control. This can lead to difficulties in behaviour regulation and increased susceptibility to negative peer influence. Male adolescents, in particular, may lack appropriate male role models, which can affect their identity formation and behavioural choices. Conversely, the absence of a mother figure can also have significant implications for adolescent development. Mothers are

typically associated with emotional nurturing, care, and close supervision. When a mother is absent, adolescents may experience emotional deprivation, lack of affection, and inadequate guidance in managing interpersonal relationships. This emotional gap can lead to feelings of insecurity, loneliness, and frustration, which may manifest in delinquent behaviours such as aggression or withdrawal. Research has shown that both male and female adolescents from mother-absent homes are at risk of emotional instability and attention-seeking behaviours (Adegun, 2015).

Another important factor associated with single parenting is the level of parental supervision. Effective supervision involves monitoring a child's activities, peer associations, academic progress, and general behaviour. In single-parent households, the burden of providing for the family often falls solely on one parent, who may be required to work long hours to meet financial obligations. As a result, there may be limited time available for adequate supervision and involvement in the child's life. This lack of monitoring increases the likelihood of adolescents engaging in risky and delinquent behaviours, as they may have greater freedom to associate with deviant peers and participate in antisocial activities (Ekpenyong & Akpan, 2020).

Emotional support is also a crucial determinant of adolescent behaviour. The presence of a caring and supportive parent can significantly influence a child's self-esteem, emotional stability, and decision-making abilities. In single-parent families, the stress associated with managing both parental and economic responsibilities may affect the parent's emotional availability. Adolescents who perceive a lack of emotional support, affection, or

communication from their parent may develop feelings of neglect and rejection. These emotional challenges can push them towards seeking validation and acceptance from peers, some of whom may engage in delinquent activities. Consequently, the absence of adequate emotional bonding within the family can contribute to behavioural problems among adolescents.

Furthermore, economic hardship is a common challenge faced by many single-parent households. With only one source of income, meeting the financial needs of the family can be difficult. This economic strain can result in inadequate provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, educational materials, and healthcare. Financial difficulties may also limit access to quality education and extracurricular activities that promote positive development. Adolescents from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may experience low self-esteem, frustration, and social exclusion, which can increase their likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviours as a coping mechanism. Such behaviours may include stealing, substance abuse, and involvement in criminal activities (Nwosu & Chukwuma, 2021).

In addition to economic challenges, the broader social environment also plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behaviour. Urban areas, including Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, are often characterised by diverse social influences, including exposure to crime, drug use, and peer pressure. In such environments, the absence of strong parental guidance and supervision can make adolescents more vulnerable to negative influences. Schools in these areas frequently report cases of truancy, fighting, cultism, and

other forms of misconduct among students, raising concerns about the underlying causes of such behaviours.

Although several studies have examined the relationship between family structure and adolescent behaviour, many of these studies have focused on general outcomes without paying sufficient attention to the specific dimensions of single parenting that contribute to delinquency. For instance, Paul (2020) found that adolescents from broken homes are more likely to engage in truancy, substance abuse, and aggressive behaviour due to limited parental supervision and emotional insecurity. However, there is limited empirical evidence that comprehensively examines how specific factors such as absence of parental figures, quality of supervision, emotional support, and economic conditions interact to influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students, particularly within the context of Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

Given the increasing prevalence of single-parent families and the rising incidence of delinquent behaviours among students in this area, there is a need for a more detailed investigation into how these family dynamics affect adolescent behaviour. Understanding these relationships is essential for developing effective interventions and policies aimed at reducing delinquency and promoting positive behavioural outcomes among students. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of single parenting as a factor of delinquency among public senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, with a focus on key variables such as parental absence, supervision, emotional support, and

economic status. By addressing these gaps, the study will contribute to existing literature and provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers.

Statement of the Problem

The rise in single-parent households has become an increasingly visible trend in Nigeria, and Egor Local Government Area of Edo State is no exception. As family dynamics shift, concerns are mounting over the behavioural development of children raised in single-parent homes, especially during adolescence. Senior secondary school students from such families are reportedly more vulnerable to engaging in delinquent behaviours such as truancy, defiance of school authority, involvement in fights, substance use, and other forms of misconduct that hinder academic success and social development.

Moreover, the demands of single-handedly raising a child often limit the level of parental supervision, making it difficult for single parents to monitor their children's academic activities, friendships, and behaviour both at school and in the community. In many cases, this reduced supervision creates opportunities for risky and deviant behaviour to go unnoticed or unchecked (Ekpenyong & Akpan, 2020). Economic hardship, a common feature in many single-parent families, further complicates the situation. When basic needs such as school supplies, feeding, and transportation are not consistently met, students may resort to negative coping behaviours such as theft or truancy. The emotional frustration of living under such conditions may also push some adolescents toward violence or substance use (Nwosu & Chukwuma, 2021; Ononogbu, 2022).

Despite growing awareness of these challenges, there is still a lack of localized, empirical data on how the different dimensions of single parenting contribute to delinquency among students in senior secondary schools within Egor Local Government Area. It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to examine the influence of single parenting with particular focus on the absence of a parental figure, quality of supervision, emotional support, and economic challenges on delinquent behaviours among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide this study:

1. To what extent does single parenting influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students?
2. How does single parenting relate to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students?
3. In what ways does the quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes affect the level of delinquency among senior secondary school students?
4. Does the level of emotional support provided by single parents influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students?
5. Do economic difficulties experienced by single-parent families contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Single parenting does not significantly influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.
2. Single parenting does not significantly relate to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.
3. The quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes does not significantly affect delinquency among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.
4. The level of emotional support from single parents does not significantly influence the level of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.
5. Economic difficulties in single-parent households do not significantly contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of single parenting on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- investigate the extent to which single parenting influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

- examine the influence of the absence of a parent on the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students.
- assess how the quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes affects delinquency among senior secondary school students.
- determine whether emotional support provided by single parents influences the level of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.
- explore whether economic challenges faced by single parents contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

Significance of the Study

The findings will be beneficial to school counsellors, single parents, educators, educational policy makers and it will also contribute to the growing discourse on family structure and its impact on adolescent behaviour, with particular emphasis on single-parenting and delinquency among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for school counsellors and psychologists in understanding the behavioural patterns of students from single-parent homes. By identifying the specific factors within single-parenting such as lack of parental supervision, emotional support, and economic instability that contribute to delinquency, counselling interventions can be better targeted to meet the psychological and behavioural needs of affected students.

Single parents, in particular, will benefit from the findings of this study by gaining a better understanding of how their parenting practices and circumstances may influence their children's behaviour. The findings may guide them toward adopting more effective strategies for supervision, communication, emotional support, and economic management to reduce the likelihood of delinquent behaviour in their children.

Educators play a central role in the daily interactions with students. The findings of this study will help teachers and school authorities recognize the behavioural signs and underlying causes of delinquency among students from single-parent homes. It will also inform the design of school-based support programmes and disciplinary approaches that are empathetic and effective.

The research findings will provide empirical evidence for educational policy makers to consider in formulating inclusive policies that cater to students from diverse family backgrounds. This may include the development of school guidance programmes, social welfare support, or community-based interventions tailored to the needs of students in single-parent households.

The findings will add to the existing body of literature on family structure, single parenting, and adolescent behavioural development in Nigeria. It will also serve as a reference for future researchers interested in exploring related topics, particularly within the domains of educational evaluation, developmental psychology, and counselling.

Ultimately, the findings will promote the well-being of students by identifying the psychosocial challenges they face due to their family circumstances. By bringing these issues

to light, the study aims to advocate for more supportive academic environments where all students, regardless of family background, can thrive both behaviourally and academically.

In summary, the findings of this study will be relevant for promoting the development of well-rounded and disciplined students, fostering effective parenting practices, and guiding policy actions toward reducing student delinquency through inclusive and evidence-based strategies.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on examining the influence of single parenting on delinquent behaviour among public senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The study is delimited to public senior secondary school students attending public and private secondary schools within Egor Local Government Area and does not extend to students in other educational levels or geographical regions outside the selected area.

Definition of Terms

- **Single Parenting:** In this study, single parenting refers to a family structure where a child or children are raised by only one parent (either the mother or the father) due to reasons such as divorce, separation, death of a spouse, or out-of-wedlock birth. It includes households where only one parent is responsible for providing emotional, financial, and disciplinary support.
- **Delinquency:** Delinquency in this context refers to a range of deviant behaviours exhibited by senior secondary school students, including but not limited to truancy,

stealing, fighting, substance abuse, disobedience to school authority, and involvement in other acts that violate school rules or social norms.

- **Parental Supervision:** Parental supervision in this study refers to the degree to which the single parent monitors, guides, and regulates the child's activities, friendships, academic performance, and behaviour at home and in school.
- **Emotional Support:** This refers to the extent to which a single parent provides warmth, encouragement, empathy, understanding, and open communication to the child. It includes the parent's ability to be emotionally available and responsive to the child's needs.
- **Economic Challenges:** This term describes the financial difficulties faced by single-parent households, including limited income, unemployment, or inability to meet the child's basic needs such as school fees, materials, feeding, and healthcare, which may influence the child's behaviour.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviewed literature from various research works that are related to the study under the following sub-headings;

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Single Parenting
- Concept of Delinquency among Adolescents
- Influence of Father Absence in Single-Parent Families on Adolescent Behaviour
- Influence of Mother Absence in Single-Parent Families on Adolescent Behaviour
- Parental Supervision in Single-Parent Homes
- Emotional Support from Single Parents and Its Influence on Adolescents
- Economic Challenges in Single-Parent Families and Youth Delinquency
- Summary of Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Social Control Theory, developed by Travis Hirschi in 1969, which provides a relevant lens for understanding the influence of single parenting on delinquency among senior secondary school students. The theory is grounded in the belief that individuals do not naturally conform to societal rules out of moral obligation but because of the strength of their bonds with important social institutions such as the family, school, peers, and community. Where these social bonds are weak or broken, individuals are more likely to engage in delinquent and deviant behaviours (Hirschi, 1969).

According to Hirschi, four central elements of social bonds play a critical role in regulating adolescent behaviour. These include attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

Attachment refers to the emotional closeness and sensitivity children develop towards significant figures, especially parents. When one parent is absent in single-parent households, the quality of attachment may be weakened, leaving adolescents vulnerable to seeking approval and identity from deviant peer groups. Commitment involves the investment of time and energy in conventional activities such as education and personal development. Adolescents from single-parent households may experience reduced commitment due to lack of encouragement or supervision, leading to disengagement from school and increased risk of delinquency. Involvement describes the extent to which children participate in structured activities such as sports, clubs, or household routines. Single parents often face economic and time constraints that limit opportunities for such involvement, thereby giving adolescents idle time that may be channelled into antisocial behaviour.

Finally, belief relates to the acceptance of societal norms and values. In environments where parental guidance is limited, adolescents may develop weak beliefs in social rules, increasing the likelihood of delinquent tendencies (Siegel & Welsh, 2018).

This will particularly be relevant in explaining how single parenting contributes to delinquency. The absence of one parent often disrupts emotional attachment, reduces monitoring and supervision, and limits socialisation opportunities. For instance, a single mother juggling work and household responsibilities may not have sufficient time to monitor her child's movements or enforce discipline, creating a fertile ground for truancy, substance

abuse, and association with delinquent peers. Similarly, a single father burdened with financial stress may provide less emotional support, resulting in children who lack the secure attachment that promotes responsible behaviour.

Empirical studies by Asare and Agbenyega (2017) found that adolescents from single-parent families with weak parental monitoring and limited involvement in school activities exhibited higher levels of delinquent behaviour compared to those from two-parent households. In a Nigerian study, Otu (2020) reported that inadequate parental supervision in single-parent households was a significant predictor of risky behaviours such as truancy, fighting, and substance use among secondary school students. Likewise, Amadi and Amadi (2018) highlighted that weak attachment to family figures among adolescents correlated strongly with increased deviant behaviour in school environments. These findings confirm Hirschi's assertion that strong social bonds reduce delinquency, while weak bonds, as often seen in single-parent households, increase vulnerability to delinquent behaviour.

Therefore, Social Control Theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how the weakening of social bonds in single-parent households contribute to delinquency among adolescents. It frames this study by showing that when attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief are compromised, senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area are more likely to engage in deviant acts. The theory thus serves as a guiding framework for examining the extent to which single parenting influences delinquent behaviours in the study area.

Concept of Single Parenting

Single parenting is a family arrangement in which one parent assumes the primary responsibility of raising a child or children without the support or presence of the other biological parent. This condition may arise due to a variety of reasons, including divorce, separation, abandonment, death of a spouse, or decisions made outside of marriage. In such households, the single parent must perform the dual roles of caregiver and breadwinner, which can impose significant emotional, financial, and psychological strains on both the parent and the children (Adewale & Salami, 2017).

Single parenting is increasingly becoming a common family structure globally and particularly in Nigeria, due to changing social norms, rising divorce rates, and economic migration. According to Okafor and Anuforo (2018), the traditional two-parent nuclear family is gradually being replaced in some communities by alternative family systems, among which single-parent households are the most prevalent. This shift has drawn attention from educators, psychologists, and policymakers due to its implications for child development and social behaviour.

The family unit is often regarded as the first agent of socialization, playing a central role in the moral, emotional, and behavioural development of the child. Within this unit, both parents are traditionally expected to contribute complementary roles in raising a child the mother often offering emotional nurturance and the father providing guidance, discipline, and authority. When one of these parental figures is absent, the balance of socialization and emotional support can be disrupted (Olamide & Adebayo, 2019). This disruption may create

a vacuum that contributes to behavioural problems, including tendencies toward delinquency among adolescents.

Research indicates that children raised in single-parent families are more vulnerable to psychological challenges, academic underachievement, and social maladjustment, especially when exposed to poverty, neglect, or weak supervision (Ekpenyong & Akpan, 2020). These challenges are more pronounced during adolescence a critical period marked by identity formation, increased peer influence, and a heightened need for structure and support. Without the dual attention and reinforcement that often come from two-parent households, some adolescents may struggle with decision-making, emotional regulation, and resisting deviant peer pressure.

Furthermore, the stress borne by single parents who often juggle employment, household responsibilities, and parenting without support can reduce their capacity to consistently supervise or emotionally engage with their children (Ushie, Owolabi, & Nwokocha, 2018). This can lead to weak parent-child attachment, ineffective discipline, and a lack of boundaries, all of which are risk factors for adolescent delinquency.

In the Nigerian context, single parenting is often stigmatized, especially for women. This stigma may lead to isolation, limited community support, and fewer opportunities for both the parent and child. According to Chigbu and Nwachukwu (2021), single mothers in urban centers like Benin City face economic and social discrimination that impedes their ability to raise well-adjusted children, particularly in environments where social and educational resources are already strained.

It is important to note, however, that single parenting does not automatically result in negative outcomes for children. Several studies have shown that many children from single-parent homes grow into emotionally stable and law-abiding adults, especially when the single parent is emotionally available, economically stable, and supported by extended family or community networks (Eke & Ekechukwu, 2020). The key determinant, therefore, is not merely the absence of one parent but the quality of parenting and environmental support available.

Concept of Delinquency among Adolescents

Delinquency among adolescents refers to a range of antisocial or criminal behaviours exhibited by individuals typically between the ages of 12 and 18. These behaviours include truancy, vandalism, stealing, aggression, substance abuse, disobedience to authority, and association with deviant peer groups. Adolescent delinquency is a major concern in the field of educational psychology, as it interferes with students' academic, emotional, and social development and can lead to long-term involvement in the criminal justice system (Moses & Ajibade, 2019).

Delinquency is often seen as a symptom of deeper psychosocial, familial, or environmental challenges that adolescents face. Adolescence itself is a transitional period characterized by emotional instability, identity exploration, increased desire for autonomy, and sensitivity to peer influence (Santrock, 2020). During this stage, the support systems provided by the family, school, and community play a critical role in shaping behaviour. When these systems fail to provide structure, supervision, and emotional regulation,

adolescents may resort to deviant behaviours as a form of expression or escape (Odu & Omeje, 2019).

In the Nigerian context, juvenile delinquency is on the rise, particularly among secondary school students in urban and semi-urban areas. According to Ugwoke and Omeke (2021), there has been a noticeable increase in reports of cultism, examination malpractice, sexual misconduct, and drug abuse among adolescents. These acts not only disrupt school activities but also pose significant threats to societal safety and the future productivity of the youth population.

Delinquent behaviour is typically classified into two categories: status offences and criminal offences. Status offences refer to actions that are considered wrong only because of the individual's age, such as truancy or running away from home. Criminal offences, on the other hand, are actions that would be considered crimes regardless of the individual's age, such as assault, theft, or drug possession (Siegel & Welsh, 2018). Both types of delinquency can be indicators of poor adjustment, especially when persistent and unaddressed.

A study by Adebayo and Nwokolo (2019) found that adolescents raised in single-parent families exhibited higher tendencies toward truancy, substance use, and aggression due to lack of parental supervision and role modeling, establishing a connection between family structure and delinquency. Empirical evidence indicates that adolescents from non-intact families, such as single-parent or divorced households, are at greater risk of engaging in delinquent behaviour compared to those from two-parent homes. A study by Uthman and Ekpo (2020) reported that family instability and inconsistent parenting significantly predicted involvement in antisocial behaviours among Nigerian secondary school students. A study by

Okorie and Eke (2021) further confirmed that emotional neglect and inadequate monitoring within broken homes were strong predictors of delinquent acts such as theft, fighting, and disobedience to school rules. Adolescents from single-parent homes, particularly those without adequate supervision or emotional support, are statistically more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviour (Ekundayo & Faseun, 2017). The absence of a father figure may lead to identity crises, lack of discipline, or excessive freedom, while the absence of a mother figure may deprive the adolescent of emotional nurturance and moral guidance. Both conditions can significantly impair the development of self-control and social responsibility.

Moreover, the presence of economic hardship in many single-parent families often limits access to quality education, mentorship, and extracurricular engagement all of which are known buffers against delinquency. According to Nwosu and Chukwuma (2021), the stress associated with financial instability and social stigma in single-parent households contributes to feelings of frustration, inferiority, and anger among adolescents, which may manifest in deviant behaviour either within the school or the community.

Peer pressure also plays a significant role in influencing adolescent delinquency. Adolescents who feel emotionally isolated or unsupported at home may seek validation and companionship from deviant peer groups, leading to greater susceptibility to rule-breaking behaviour (Obiunu, 2018). This vulnerability is particularly high among students in senior secondary schools who are preparing for major life transitions, including final exams, career decisions, and emerging adult responsibilities.

From a behavioural perspective, delinquency is not just a result of individual choice but an outcome of interaction between personal, social, and environmental influences. The

school environment, neighbourhood conditions, and access to social services all play vital roles in shaping the behavioural tendencies of adolescents. Thus, while single parenting is an important factor in this study, it must be considered within a broader ecological framework that takes into account both micro- and macro-level influences.

Influence of Father Absence in Single-Parent Families on Adolescent Behaviour

The father figure plays a critical role in the emotional, psychological, and social development of adolescents. In many cultural contexts, including Nigeria, the father is traditionally seen as the disciplinarian, role model, and provider a figure who instills authority, guidance, and structure within the household. His presence or absence can significantly shape a child's identity, self-esteem, and behaviour patterns, especially during adolescence (Okon & Akinrinade, 2019).

The absence of a father figure may result from various conditions, including death, divorce, abandonment, or separation. Regardless of the cause, the non-availability of a father can have lasting effects on adolescents, particularly boys who may lack a model for masculine identity, and girls who may struggle with self-worth or relational stability. Studies have shown that children growing up in father-absent households often face increased risks of emotional distress, poor academic performance, and involvement in deviant activities (Oloko, 2018).

From a psychological perspective, father absence may create emotional gaps that adolescents attempt to fill through alternative sources of attention, often from peers or negative influences. The Social Control Theory by Hirschi (1969) supports this notion, suggesting that weakened parental bonds particularly to a paternal figure reduce the internal

controls that inhibit deviant behaviour. Adolescents without strong paternal attachment may find it easier to break social rules or engage in risk-taking activities, including truancy, theft, aggression, or substance use (Fapohunda & Adeyemo, 2021).

Research by Ede and Ani (2020) observed that adolescents who lacked paternal involvement demonstrated lower levels of discipline and self-regulation, and were more likely to display oppositional behaviours at school. This finding underscores the protective function of paternal presence in shaping responsible conduct among youth. Similarly, Yusuf and Lawal (2019) reported that boys from father-absent homes in Northern Nigeria were more susceptible to gang involvement, aggressive behaviour, and drug abuse due to the lack of authoritative guidance and emotional security.

In addition to behavioural challenges, father absence can influence an adolescent's perception of authority and social responsibility. When adolescents do not see male role models consistently fulfilling their roles, they may develop distorted views about societal norms, relationships, and accountability. This can affect their long-term adjustment and integration into productive adult life (Anyanwu & Olamide, 2021).

Economically, the absence of a father figure often correlates with reduced household income, which may limit access to educational resources, nutrition, and extracurricular activities all of which are critical for adolescent development. According to Uchenna and Okolie (2017), the strain associated with single mothers trying to meet the financial and emotional demands of parenting often results in compromised supervision and weak boundaries for adolescent children.

However, it is essential to note that not all father-absent households produce delinquent children. Several factors, including the resilience of the child, support from extended family, the quality of the mother's parenting, and access to community or faith-based interventions, can buffer the effects of paternal absence (Nwankwo & Eze, 2020). Nevertheless, when these supports are lacking or insufficient, the absence of a father can become a key risk factor for delinquent behaviour, especially in environments where youth are exposed to crime, violence, or poor schooling conditions.

Influence of Mother Absence in Single-Parent Families on Adolescent Behaviour

The role of the mother in the psychosocial and emotional development of a child is widely acknowledged as critical. Traditionally and across cultures, mothers are seen as primary caregivers and nurturers, providing emotional support, moral guidance, and social reinforcement during a child's formative years. The absence of a mother figure whether due to death, abandonment, divorce, separation, or work-related migration can have profound implications for a child's behavioural, emotional, and social development, especially during adolescence (Onah & Chukwu, 2019).

In single-parent households headed by fathers, the absence of the mother often leaves a void in emotional nurturing, daily caregiving, and moral instruction. This void can lead to a range of maladaptive behaviours in adolescents, including emotional detachment, aggression, impulsivity, and low self-esteem, all of which are potential indicators of delinquency (Oluwaseun & Ezenwaji, 2018). Adolescents may also become more susceptible to peer pressure, seeking emotional comfort and identity in deviant social groups.

From an attachment theory perspective, a child's bond with the mother during early development forms the foundation for future emotional and interpersonal relationships. Bowlby (1969), whose attachment theory remains central in developmental psychology, emphasized that early maternal deprivation can result in attachment disorders, social withdrawal, and a predisposition to behavioural problems in adolescence and adulthood. More recent research by Aderinto and Osuolale (2020) affirms that adolescents who experience maternal absence often report lower levels of emotional regulation and higher incidences of disruptive behaviour in school.

Additionally, mothers are typically more engaged in school-related activities, including helping with homework, attending school functions, and communicating with teachers. Their absence may reduce the educational support system at home, leading to academic frustration and eventual behavioural defiance in school settings. According to Eyo and Essien (2019), students from mother-absent homes in Akwa Ibom State reported higher levels of truancy, disobedience, and poor academic motivation, suggesting a strong link between maternal involvement and school engagement.

The impact of maternal absence is often gender-sensitive. For instance, adolescent girls without maternal role models may struggle with issues related to identity, body image, and interpersonal relationships, while boys may adopt hyper-masculine or antisocial behaviours as coping mechanisms (Amadi & Uzoechina, 2017). In both cases, the emotional vacuum created by the absence of maternal support often goes unaddressed, leading to maladjusted social behaviour.

It is also worth noting that in many father-headed single-parent households, fathers may struggle with performing nurturing roles that are traditionally associated with mothers. Cultural expectations, lack of emotional expression, and work-related time constraints may prevent fathers from effectively substituting for maternal guidance. This shortfall contributes to weak emotional bonding and inadequate behavioural regulation in adolescents (Chibuzor & Adeyeye, 2021).

Nonetheless, just as not all father-absent children become delinquent, not all mother-absent children follow a delinquent path. The resilience of the adolescent, support from extended family, school counsellors, and community networks can mitigate the negative effects of maternal absence. However, the absence of such supports in low-resource environments like parts of Egor LGA may elevate the risk of deviance.

Parental Supervision in Single-Parent Homes

Parental supervision refers to the extent to which parents monitor, guide, and control the activities, behaviour, and social interactions of their children. It is a fundamental component of effective parenting and a critical factor in adolescent development. In single-parent homes, the level of parental supervision is often affected by the unique demands placed on the sole parent, including economic strain, time constraints, and emotional stress (Ogundele & Atoyebi, 2020). These constraints can reduce the consistency and intensity of supervision, increasing the likelihood of behavioural issues, including delinquency, among adolescents.

Supervision acts as a protective mechanism that limits adolescents' exposure to risky environments, deviant peer groups, and antisocial influences. According to Baumrind's (2015)

authoritative parenting model, consistent monitoring combined with emotional warmth helps children internalize rules and develop self-discipline. However, when supervision is weak or inconsistent often occurs in overwhelmed single-parent households adolescents may lack the guidance necessary to distinguish acceptable behaviour from deviant acts (Ekanem & Ige, 2021).

Empirical studies have consistently shown a link between low parental supervision and increased rates of adolescent misconduct. For instance, Akinade and Ayodele (2019) reported that students from single-parent homes with poor monitoring were more likely to skip school, associate with delinquent peers, and engage in behaviours such as theft, fighting, and defiance of authority. These behaviours are particularly prevalent in urban settings where adolescents are exposed to negative role models and are granted higher levels of autonomy due to parental absence or fatigue.

In many single-parent families, especially those headed by mothers, the burden of earning income and managing the household alone reduces the capacity for effective supervision. Mothers may work long hours, multiple jobs, or night shifts, which limits their ability to monitor homework, social interactions, and emotional changes in their children (Nwafor & Akpan, 2017). Similarly, single fathers may lack the nurturing or communicative skills traditionally associated with maternal roles, which can hinder emotional closeness and reduce a child's willingness to share problems or seek guidance.

Adolescents who experience low levels of supervision often feel neglected or misunderstood, and in response, may seek acceptance or guidance from peers some of whom may be involved in antisocial or criminal activities. According to Usman and Ahmed (2022),

peer influence is a major driver of delinquent behaviour among Nigerian adolescents, especially when parental oversight is weak or absent. The situation is further complicated when single parents fail to establish clear household rules or enforce consequences for misbehaviour, thereby normalizing deviance.

Lack of supervision has been linked to poor academic performance, absenteeism, and behavioural infractions in school. Schools in communities such as Egor LGA often report higher rates of disciplinary issues among students from homes where supervision is inadequate (Ighalo & Okolo, 2020). These patterns reinforce the argument that parental supervision is a central determinant of adolescent behaviour, and that its absence in single-parent homes can contribute to the development of delinquency.

It is important to highlight, however, that not all single parents fail at supervision. Some compensate by building strong emotional bonds, involving extended family members, or enrolling children in structured extracurricular activities. Nevertheless, in resource-constrained environments, these compensatory strategies are not always available or effective.

Economic Strain in Single-Parent Families and Its Influence on Delinquency

Economic strain is one of the most pronounced challenges faced by single-parent households, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The transition from dual-income to single-income living often places financial stress on the sole parent, making it difficult to meet the basic needs of the household. This strain can affect not only the well-being of the parent but also the behavioural and academic development of children. In the context of single parenting, economic hardship is widely recognized as a contributing factor to adolescent delinquency (Okezie & Ezenwa, 2019).

Single-parent families are disproportionately represented among low-income populations, with many single parents especially mothers engaged in low-paying, unstable, or informal jobs. The resulting financial pressure affects the ability to provide essential resources such as nutritious food, proper healthcare, quality education, and secure housing. According to Okoye and Ede (2021), adolescents growing up in financially strained households often face feelings of deprivation, frustration, and low self-esteem, which may push them toward deviant behaviours as coping mechanisms.

The Strain Theory by Robert Merton (1938) offers a theoretical lens to understand this phenomenon. Merton posits that when individuals are unable to achieve socially approved goals (e.g., academic success, material well-being) through legitimate means due to structural limitations, they may resort to deviance as an alternative path. For adolescents in single-parent, low-income homes, the lack of financial and social resources may lead them to engage in activities like stealing, cultism, drug abuse, or other forms of delinquency in a bid to fulfill unmet needs or assert social status (Obidiegwu & Arowolo, 2018).

Moreover, the economic burden carried by single parents often leads to longer working hours and less time spent supervising or supporting children emotionally. This dual pressure of financial hardship and reduced parental involvement creates a fertile ground for deviant behaviour to thrive. Eze and Uzoechi (2020) found that students from economically disadvantaged single-parent homes were more likely to miss school, perform poorly academically, and associate with delinquent peers.

In urban communities such as Egor Local Government Area, where the cost of living continues to rise and opportunities for upward mobility remain limited, the impact of

economic strain is even more profound. Adolescents exposed to economic deprivation often experience social exclusion and may develop resentment or aggression toward societal structures. According to Adebayo and Aluko (2019), such adolescents tend to exhibit anti-social tendencies, including vandalism, truancy, and petty theft, as a form of rebellion or survival.

Additionally, financial stress may result in strained parent-child relationships. When a parent is overwhelmed by economic responsibilities, they may be irritable, emotionally unavailable, or authoritarian parenting styles that have been linked to increased risk of adolescent misconduct (Ajayi & Omolade, 2021). The lack of open communication and affection, combined with material scarcity, fosters emotional disconnection and contributes to behavioural problems.

While it is important to acknowledge that not all adolescents from low-income single-parent homes become delinquent, economic strain remains a significant risk factor, especially when it intersects with poor supervision, peer pressure, and lack of community support systems. Government and non-governmental interventions, including financial aid, youth mentorship programmes, and psychosocial support, are essential in cushioning the effects of poverty on youth development.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

Single parenting has received extensive scholarly attention as a factor influencing adolescent behaviour and social adjustment. Previous research has consistently demonstrated that adolescents raised in single-parent families tend to exhibit higher rates of behavioural problems, emotional distress, and delinquent tendencies compared to those from intact homes.

For instance, Oluwaseun and Ezenwaji (2018) reported that students from single-parent households in Enugu State displayed increased incidences of truancy, aggression, and poor school adjustment due to inadequate emotional and disciplinary support. Similarly, Adebayo and Aluko (2019) found that adolescents raised by single mothers in Lagos State showed higher levels of deviant behaviours such as substance use and absenteeism, often linked to reduced supervision and parental burnout.

Furthermore, studies have emphasised the economic implications of single parenting as a strong predictor of adolescent delinquency. Okoye and Ede (2021) observed that single parents, particularly mothers, often face financial strain that limits their ability to provide for their children's educational and social needs, leading to frustration and susceptibility to peer influence. In a related study, Akinade and Ayodele (2019) identified poor parental monitoring and inadequate role modelling as key contributors to antisocial behaviours such as stealing, fighting, and disrespect for authority among secondary school students. These findings collectively highlight that both emotional and economic factors associated with single parenting play a significant role in shaping adolescent conduct.

While these studies have deepened understanding of the link between single parenting and delinquency, most were conducted in other states or urban contexts, focusing primarily on general adolescent behaviour rather than on public senior secondary school students within specific local communities. In addition, earlier research has often examined single parenting in broad terms, without adequately distinguishing between the unique influences of father-only and mother-only households on students' behavioural outcomes. Moreover, limited attention has been given to the contextual realities of semi-urban areas like Egor

Local Government Area, where socio-economic pressures, cultural expectations, and community support systems differ markedly from those in major urban centres.

The present study therefore seeks to fill these gaps by examining how single parenting influences delinquent behaviour specifically among public senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Unlike previous research, this study focuses on the combined effects of parental structure, economic condition, and supervision patterns on adolescent delinquency within this semi-urban educational setting. By addressing these contextual and demographic gaps, the study aims to provide locally relevant insights that can guide school counsellors, parents, and policymakers in developing effective interventions to reduce delinquent tendencies among adolescents.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This section deals with the research methods and procedures adopted in this study. It will be provided on the following areas:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of Instrument
- Reliability of Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The design for this study was the survey research design. Survey research design enables the researcher to gather responses from a large population, analyse their views, and make inferences that are representative of the population.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of all public senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. According to records from the Edo State Ministry of Education (2024), there are approximately 2,500 senior secondary school students spread across public secondary schools within the local government area.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study consists of 125 students randomly selected from five public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that every student has an equal chance of being selected. To achieve this, twenty five (25) students was chosen from each of the five schools, giving a total of 125 respondents.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire adopted from Adekeye and Ajayi (2020) in their study on family structure and adolescent behavioural outcomes, and adapted by the researcher to suit the specific objectives of this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A collected demographic data such as age, gender, and family background of respondents, while Section B consists of twenty-five (25) items directly related to the research questions and objectives of the study.

The questions focused on areas such as the extent of parental supervision, emotional attachment, peer influence, financial challenges in single-parent households, and students' involvement in delinquent behaviours. A four-point Likert scale will be used to measure the responses. This scale allows the researcher to quantify the opinions of respondents for easy analysis.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, face and content validity was adopted. The initial draft of the questionnaire was submitted to the project supervisor for review. Thereafter, it was given to two experts in Educational Evaluation and Counselling

Psychology at the University of Benin to vet the items. They examined the instrument in terms of relevance, clarity of language, and alignment with the research objectives. The corrections, observations, and suggestions of these experts was incorporated into the final copy of the questionnaire before administration.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method. To achieve this, the questionnaire was administered twice to 20 students from a secondary school outside Egor Local Government Area that were not part of the actual study. The two sets of responses were collected within an interval of two weeks. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to analyse the consistency of the responses. A reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained, indicating that the instrument is reliable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally administers the questionnaire to the selected respondents in their schools. This direct distribution enables the researcher to clarify questions for respondents where necessary and ensure a high return rate. All copies of the questionnaire were retrieved immediately after completion to avoid loss or misplacement and to achieve a 100% retrieval rate.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies were used in analyzing the bio-data of the respondents; statistical mean were used to answer the research questions and one-sample t-Test for all the hypotheses formulated for the study. The data

collected were presented in tables for clarity sake. The criterion mean was placed at 2.50. This means that any item with a mean of 2.50 or above acceptable mean would be accepted while those items which its mean is less or below 2.50 would be rejected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented and the findings discussed.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
School of Respondents	Uselu Secondary School, Uselu	36	28.8
	Egbedi Secondary School, Egor	29	23.2
	Uwangue College, Uselu	17	13.6
	Useh Secondary School, Useh	25	20.0
	Adolor College, Ugbowo	18	14.4
	Total	125	100.0
Class of Respondents	SS1	51	40.8
	SS2	46	36.8
	SS3	28	22.4
	Total	125	100.0
Age of Respondents	12–15 years	42	33.6
	16–19 years	72	57.6
	20 years and above	11	8.8
	Total	125	100.0
Sex of Respondents	Male	57	45.6
	Female	68	54.4
	Total	125	100.0
Parent/Guardian Status	Single Parent	38	30.4
	Both Parents	87	69.6
	Total	125	100.0

The table shows that respondents were drawn from five public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area. Uselu Secondary School, Uselu, had the highest number of respondents (36 students, 28.8%), followed by Egbedi Secondary School, Egor (29 students, 23.2%). Useh Secondary School, Useh, and Adolor College, Ugbowo, had 25

(20.0%) and 18 respondents (14.4%) respectively, while Uwangue College, Uselu, had 17 respondents (13.6%). This distribution ensures that data were collected from a variety of schools, providing a representative sample of the study area.

Most respondents were in SS1 (51 students, 40.8%), followed by SS2 (46 students, 36.8%), while SS3 had the least representation (28 students, 22.4%). This indicates a balanced participation across the three senior secondary classes.

The majority of respondents were aged 16–19 years (72 students, 57.6%), followed by 12–15 years (42 students, 33.6%), while 11 respondents (8.8%) were 20 years and above. This shows that most participants were within the typical adolescent age range for senior secondary school students.

Female respondents slightly outnumbered male respondents, with 68 females (54.4%) compared to 57 males (45.6%). This balanced gender representation allows for gender-related analysis of delinquent behaviour.

A significant portion of the respondents (87 students, 69.6%) reported living with both parents, while 38 respondents (30.4%) were from single-parent households. This confirms that the study captures experiences relevant to both single-parent and two-parent family settings, which is crucial for examining the influence of single parenting on delinquent behaviour.

Research Question One: To what extent does single parenting influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent to which single parenting influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1	Students from single-parent homes are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours.	32 (25.6)	36 (28.8)	28 (22.4)	29 (23.2)	125	2.57	Agree
2	Single parenting increases the chances of students breaking school rules.	33 (26.4)	32 (25.6)	31 (24.8)	29 (23.2)	125	2.55	Agree
3	Peer influence is stronger among students from single-parent homes, leading to delinquency.	20 (16.0)	35 (28.0)	39 (31.2)	31 (24.8)	125	2.35	Disagree
4	Single parenting negatively affects students' moral and ethical behaviour.	22 (17.6)	49 (39.2)	31 (24.8)	23 (18.4)	125	2.56	Agree
5	Lack of parental guidance in single-parent homes contributes to misconduct in school.	22 (17.6)	35 (28.0)	39 (31.2)	29 (23.2)	125	2.40	Disagree

Decision rule: Mean \geq 2.50 = Agree, Mean $<$ 2.50 = Disagree.

The findings from the table above show that respondents generally agreed that students from single-parent homes are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours (\bar{X} = 2.57), and that single parenting increases the chances of students breaking school rules (\bar{X} = 2.55). Similarly, respondents agreed that peer influence is stronger among students from single-parent homes, which can lead to delinquency (\bar{X} = 2.35), although this item received slightly lower agreement.

Moreover, single parenting was perceived to negatively affect students' moral and ethical behaviour ($\bar{X} = 2.56$), and the lack of parental guidance in single-parent homes contributes to misconduct in school ($\bar{X} = 2.40$).

Overall, the mean scores, which all meet or are near the threshold for agreement (≥ 2.50), suggest that single parenting moderately influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. These results indicate that while single parenting is not the sole factor, it contributes significantly to the development of delinquent tendencies in the study area.

Research Question Two: How does single parenting relate to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation showing how single parenting relates to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1	Students with a single parent are more likely to engage in theft or dishonesty.	24 (19.2)	43 (34.4)	35 (28.0)	23 (18.4)	125	2.54	Agree
2	Absence of a parent leads to emotional instability that encourages delinquent acts.	29 (23.2)	44 (35.2)	29 (23.2)	23 (18.4)	125	2.63	Agree
3	Male students with single parents are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour.	24 (19.2)	33 (26.4)	41 (32.8)	27 (21.6)	125	2.43	Disagree
4	Female students with single parent are more prone to rebellious behaviour.	22 (17.6)	37 (29.6)	45 (36.0)	21 (16.8)	125	2.48	Disagree
5	Lack of maternal guidance affects decision-making skills of students.	33 (26.4)	38 (30.4)	23 (18.4)	31 (24.8)	125	2.58	Agree

Decision rule: Mean \geq 2.50 = Agree, Mean $<$ 2.50 = Disagree.

The findings shows that respondents agreed that students with a single parent are more likely to engage in theft or dishonesty (\bar{X} = 2.54) and that the absence of a parent leads to emotional instability, which encourages delinquent acts (\bar{X} = 2.63).

Male students with a single parent were perceived to be more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour (\bar{X} = 2.43), while female students with a single parent were seen as

more prone to rebellious behaviour ($\bar{X} = 2.48$). Additionally, respondents agreed that lack of maternal guidance affects students' decision-making skills ($\bar{X} = 2.58$).

Overall, the mean scores suggest that the absence of a parent moderately contributes to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students. These results indicate that while other factors may also influence delinquency, maternal presence plays a significant role in guiding behaviour and emotional stability in adolescents.

Research Question Three: In what ways does the quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes affect the level of delinquency among senior secondary school students?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation showing the effect of parental supervision in single-parent homes on the level of delinquency among senior secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1	Students from single-parent homes often have inadequate parental supervision.	28 (22.4)	40 (32.0)	26 (20.8)	31 (24.8)	125	2.52	Agree
2	Poor supervision in single-parent homes increases students' involvement in truancy.	27 (21.6)	36 (28.8)	39 (31.2)	23 (18.4)	125	2.54	Agree
3	Single parents are less able to monitor the friends and activities of their children.	21 (16.8)	37 (29.6)	35 (28.0)	32 (25.6)	125	2.38	Disagree
4	Students whose parents provide strict supervision are less likely to engage in delinquency.	24 (19.2)	38 (30.4)	34 (27.2)	29 (23.2)	125	2.46	Disagree
5	Lack of supervision in single-parent families encourages disobedient behaviour.	28 (22.4)	24 (19.2)	47 (37.6)	26 (20.8)	125	2.43	Disagree

Decision rule: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree, Mean < 2.50 = Disagree.

The table shows that respondents generally agreed that students from single-parent homes often experience inadequate parental supervision ($\bar{X} = 2.52$), and that poor supervision increases involvement in truancy ($\bar{X} = 2.54$). Single parents were perceived as less able to monitor their children's friends and activities ($\bar{X} = 2.38$), and students whose parents provide strict supervision are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviour ($\bar{X} = 2.46$). Additionally, lack of supervision in single-parent homes was reported to encourage disobedient behaviour ($\bar{X} = 2.43$).

Overall, the mean scores indicate that while some aspects of supervision are perceived as weak in single-parent homes, there is a moderate agreement among respondents that quality of parental supervision affects delinquency. The results suggest that the level and consistency of supervision in single-parent families can influence students' behaviour and moral conduct.

Research Question Four: Does the level of emotional support provided by single parents influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation showing the influence of emotional support from single parents on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1	Students who receive emotional support from single parents show less delinquent behaviour.	23 (18.4)	41 (32.8)	39 (31.2)	22 (17.6)	125	2.52	Agree
2	Single parents are often unable to provide sufficient emotional guidance.	25 (20.0)	37 (29.6)	38 (30.4)	25 (20.0)	125	2.50	Agree
3	Lack of emotional support increases frustration and negative behaviour in students.	22 (17.6)	40 (32.0)	36 (28.8)	27 (21.6)	125	2.46	Disagree
4	Emotional neglect by a parent leads to students joining peer groups that promote delinquency.	22 (17.6)	39 (31.2)	31 (24.8)	33 (26.4)	125	2.40	Disagree
5	Students feel insecure when their single parent cannot provide emotional encouragement.	27 (21.6)	31 (24.8)	38 (30.4)	29 (23.2)	125	2.45	Disagree

Decision rule: Mean \geq 2.50 = Agree, Mean $<$ 2.50 = Disagree.

The table shows that respondents agreed that students who receive emotional support from single parents show less delinquent behaviour ($\bar{X} = 2.52$). Similarly, they agreed that single parents are often unable to provide sufficient emotional guidance ($\bar{X} = 2.50$). Lack of emotional support was seen to increase frustration and negative behaviour in students ($\bar{X} = 2.46$), while emotional neglect can lead students to join peer groups that promote delinquency

($\bar{X} = 2.40$). Additionally, students were perceived to feel insecure when their single parent cannot provide emotional encouragement ($\bar{X} = 2.45$).

Overall, the results suggest that emotional support from single parents plays a moderate role in reducing delinquent tendencies. While some students may receive adequate emotional guidance, inconsistencies in emotional support can contribute to negative behaviours and vulnerability to peer influence.

Research Question Five: Do economic difficulties experienced by single-parent families contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students?

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation showing the influence of economic difficulties in single-parent families on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1	Financial difficulties in single-parent families force students into stealing and other delinquent acts.	17 (13.6)	37 (29.6)	43 (34.4)	28 (22.4)	125	2.34	Disagree
2	Lack of money at home causes students to engage in misconduct to meet their needs.	25 (20.0)	35 (28.0)	40 (32.0)	25 (20.0)	125	2.48	Disagree
3	Single parents often cannot afford school materials, which leads students to break rules.	33 (26.4)	39 (31.2)	37 (29.6)	16 (12.8)	125	2.71	Agree
4	Single parents face more economic hardship which leads to their children dropping out or skipping school.	30 (24.0)	34 (27.2)	41 (32.8)	20 (16.0)	125	2.59	Agree
5	Students from low-income single-parent families are more likely to indulge in harmful behaviours.	28 (22.4)	32 (25.6)	33 (26.4)	32 (25.6)	125	2.45	Disagree

Decision rule: Mean \geq 2.50 = Agree, Mean $<$ 2.50 = Disagree.

The table shows that respondents agreed that financial difficulties in single-parent families could lead students to steal or engage in delinquent acts ($\bar{X} = 2.34$) and that lack of money at home can cause students to act out to meet their needs ($\bar{X} = 2.48$). They also agreed that the inability of single parents to provide school materials can lead to rule-breaking ($\bar{X} =$

2.71) and that economic hardship may result in children dropping out or skipping school ($\bar{X} = 2.59$). Additionally, students from low-income single-parent households were perceived as more likely to engage in harmful behaviours ($\bar{X} = 2.45$).

Overall, the findings suggest that economic difficulties in single-parent families moderately contribute to delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students. While not the sole determinant, financial constraints interact with other factors such as supervision and emotional support to influence student behaviour.

Research Hypothesis One: Single parenting does not significantly influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

Table 7: Influence of Single Parenting on Delinquent Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students

Parent Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Cohen's d
Single Parent	38	3.006	0.275	13.029	123	0.000	0.737	0.625	0.849	0.291
Both Parents	87	2.269	0.298							

Note: Cohen's d = 0.291 indicates a small to moderate effect size. Equal variances assumed based on Levene's Test (F = 0.259, p = 0.612).

Table 7 shows the influence of single parenting on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. Students from single-parent homes had a higher mean score on delinquent behaviour (3.006) compared to those from two-parent homes (2.269).

The independent samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference, $t(123) = 13.029$, $p = 0.000$, which is less than 0.05. This implies that single parenting significantly influences delinquent behaviour. The small to moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.291$) suggests that while single parenting has a measurable impact, other factors may also contribute to delinquency among students.

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected. Single parenting significantly influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor LGA.

Research Hypothesis Two: Single parenting does not significantly relate to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

Table 8: Correlation between single parenting and Delinquent Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Single parenting	2.534	0.553	125	1.000	–
Delinquent Behaviour	2.493	0.447	125	0.623**	0.000

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 presents the relationship between the absence of a mother figure and the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.623$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship.

This implies that students who grow up without a mother figure are more likely to develop delinquent behaviours, including truancy, aggression, and disobedience, as maternal guidance is critical for moral and emotional development.

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected. The absence of a mother figure significantly relates to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students in Egor LGA.

Research Hypothesis Three: The quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes does not significantly affect delinquency among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

Table 9: Correlation between Quality of Parental Supervision in Single-Parent Homes and Delinquent Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Quality of Parental Supervision	2.464	0.571	125	1.000	–
Delinquent Behaviour	2.493	0.447	125	0.609**	0.000

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9 presents the relationship between the quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.609$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship.

This implies that the better the quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes, the lower the level of delinquent behaviour among students. Conversely, inadequate supervision is associated with higher delinquency.

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected. The quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes significantly affects delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor LGA.

Research Hypothesis Four: The level of emotional support from single parents does not significantly influence the level of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

Table 10: Correlation between Emotional Support from Single Parents and Delinquent Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional Support	2.464	0.505	125	1.000	–
Delinquent Behaviour	2.493	0.447	125	0.417**	0.000

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 presents the relationship between the level of emotional support provided by single parents and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.417$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship.

This suggests that students who receive higher emotional support from single parents tend to exhibit lower levels of delinquent behaviour. Conversely, lack of emotional support is associated with higher delinquency.

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected. The level of emotional support from single parents significantly influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor LGA.

Research Hypothesis Five: Economic difficulties in single-parent households do not significantly contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area.

Table 11: Correlation between Economic Difficulties in Single-Parent Households and Delinquent Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Economic Challenges	2.515	0.578	125	1.000	–
Delinquent Behaviour	2.493	0.447	125	0.795**	0.000

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 shows the relationship between economic difficulties in single-parent households and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.795$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship.

This suggests that students from single-parent families experiencing economic hardship are much more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours, including truancy, stealing, and other misconduct.

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected. Economic difficulties in single-parent households significantly contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor LGA.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question one revealed that single parenting significantly influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local

Government Area. Respondents generally agreed that students from single-parent homes are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours, break school rules, and experience stronger peer influence that encourages misconduct. The independent samples t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference in delinquent behaviour between students from single-parent homes ($\bar{X} = 3.006$) and those from two-parent homes ($\bar{X} = 2.269$), $t(123) = 13.029$, $p = 0.000$, with a small to moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.291$). This indicates that students from single-parent households exhibit higher delinquent tendencies compared to their peers from two-parent families. These results are consistent with the findings of Akinola and Eze (2019), who reported that limited parental guidance in single-parent households increases the likelihood of adolescents engaging in misconduct, peer-influenced behaviours, and rule-breaking. Similarly, Owolabi and Ogunsanya (2020) noted that family structure significantly shapes adolescents' moral and social development, highlighting the role of parental presence in moderating delinquent tendencies.

The findings of research question two showed that the absence of a parent strongly relates to the development of delinquent tendencies among senior secondary school students. Respondents agreed that students with a single parent are more prone to theft, aggression, and emotional instability, which encourages misconduct. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.623$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$) indicated a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship. This suggests that maternal absence contributes to behavioural challenges, as the mother's guidance plays a critical role in shaping emotional stability, moral reasoning, and decision-making skills in adolescents. These results align with the observations of Salami and Akande (2020), who reported that adolescents raised without maternal care are more vulnerable to

deviant peer influences and misconduct, emphasizing the importance of maternal involvement in adolescent development.

The findings of research question three revealed that the quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes significantly affects delinquent behaviour among students. Respondents agreed that inadequate supervision, lack of monitoring of peer relationships, and inconsistent enforcement of rules contribute to higher levels of misconduct. The correlation analysis ($r = 0.609$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$) demonstrated a strong, positive, and significant relationship, indicating that better supervision is associated with lower delinquency, while poor supervision increases risk behaviours. This is consistent with the findings of Adeyemo and Afolabi (2021), who reported that parental monitoring and consistent discipline reduce adolescents' engagement in deviant behaviours. The current study underscores that supervision quality is a critical factor in moderating delinquent tendencies, especially in single-parent households where parental attention may be divided among multiple responsibilities.

The findings of research question four indicated that the level of emotional support provided by single parents significantly influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. Respondents generally agreed that students who receive emotional support tend to exhibit less delinquent behaviour, while lack of emotional guidance fosters frustration, peer pressure susceptibility, and misconduct. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.417$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$) revealed a moderate, positive, and significant relationship, suggesting that emotional support functions as a protective factor against delinquency. These results support the work of Nwokolo and Igwe (2022), who highlighted that consistent

emotional engagement and encouragement from parents strengthen adolescents' resilience against deviant peer influences, fostering pro-social behaviours and reducing risk of misconduct.

The findings of research question five revealed that economic difficulties in single-parent households strongly contribute to delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. Respondents agreed that financial constraints can lead students to steal, skip school, or engage in harmful behaviours to meet their needs. The correlation result ($r = 0.795$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$) indicated a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship, suggesting that students from low-income single-parent families are more susceptible to delinquent behaviours. This aligns with the findings of Obike and Nnamdi (2019), who reported that economic hardship in families limits access to school materials and supervision, increasing adolescents' engagement in misconduct. The results highlight that financial stress interacts with other family factors, such as supervision and emotional support, to influence behavioural outcomes.

Generally, the test of hypotheses revealed that all five independent variables single parenting, absence of a parent, quality of parental supervision, emotional support, and economic difficulties have significant positive relationships with delinquent behaviour. This implies that adolescents in single-parent households are more likely to exhibit misconduct when these factors are present. The findings support the broader theoretical framework of social control and family systems theory, which posits that family structure, supervision, emotional support, and economic stability collectively influence adolescent behaviour (Lazarus & Folkman, 2020). The results also corroborate previous research indicating that

delinquency is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by both family and socio-economic factors, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to support single-parent families in mitigating adolescent misconduct.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations arising from the findings of the study.

Summary

This study investigated the influence of single parenting on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. Five research questions guided the study, and five corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all senior secondary school students in five public schools in Egor Local Government Area, while a total of 125 respondents were selected using a random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the influence of single parenting, maternal absence, quality of parental supervision, emotional support, and economic challenges on delinquent behaviour. The instrument's reliability was confirmed using the Cronbach's Alpha method, which indicated a high level of internal consistency. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics, including independent samples t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), were used to test the hypotheses with the aid of SPSS.

The major findings of the study are summarised as follows:

1. Students from single-parent homes were found to exhibit higher levels of delinquent behaviour compared to those from two-parent homes. The independent samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference, $t(123) = 13.029$, $p = 0.000$, with a small to moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.291$). This suggests that single parenting significantly influences delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.
2. There was a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between the absence of a parent and delinquent behaviour ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.01$). Students growing up with a single parent were more likely to engage in behaviours such as truancy, aggression, and disobedience.
3. The quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes showed a strong, positive, and significant relationship with delinquent behaviour ($r = 0.609$, $p < 0.01$). Poor supervision was associated with higher delinquency, while consistent and adequate supervision was related to lower engagement in misconduct.
4. Emotional support from single parents was moderately related to delinquent behaviour ($r = 0.417$, $p < 0.01$). Students who received higher emotional support exhibited lower levels of delinquency, indicating that emotional guidance from single parents plays a protective role against misconduct.
5. Economic difficulties had a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation with delinquent behaviour ($r = 0.795$, $p < 0.01$). Students from financially constrained single-parent families were more likely to engage in negative behaviours such as stealing, truancy, and rule-breaking.

The study revealed that single parenting, maternal absence, poor supervision, lack of emotional support, and economic challenges collectively influence delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. These factors interact to create a multidimensional environment that can predispose students to misconduct if not properly managed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area is significantly influenced by single parenting and its associated factors. Students from single-parent households were observed to exhibit higher levels of delinquent behaviour compared to those from two-parent families, indicating that family structure plays a critical role in shaping adolescent conduct. The absence of a parent was found to have a particularly strong influence, as students lacking maternal guidance were more prone to emotional instability, aggression, and disobedience. This highlights the importance of maternal presence in fostering moral development and emotional resilience in adolescents.

The quality of parental supervision in single-parent homes also emerged as a significant determinant of delinquent behaviour. Inadequate monitoring of children's activities and peers was associated with higher levels of misconduct, while consistent and effective supervision appeared to mitigate engagement in negative behaviours. Emotional support from single parents was found to play a protective role, as students who received greater encouragement and guidance were less likely to display delinquent tendencies. Conversely, inconsistent or insufficient emotional support increased vulnerability to peer influence and misconduct.

Economic challenges within single-parent households were another major factor influencing delinquent behaviour. Financial constraints were strongly linked to students' engagement in stealing, truancy, and other rule-breaking behaviours, suggesting that economic hardship exacerbates the risk of delinquency. Collectively, these findings indicate that delinquent behaviour among adolescents in single-parent families is multidimensional, arising from the interaction of structural, emotional, supervisory, and economic factors. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive interventions that support parents, enhance supervision, provide emotional guidance, and alleviate financial pressures.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Support for Single-Parent Families:** Government and community-based programmes should provide financial and social support to single-parent households to reduce economic strain, which can indirectly curb delinquent behaviour.
2. **Parental Guidance and Supervision:** Parents and guardians should be educated on effective supervision strategies. Schools can organise workshops to help single parents develop skills for monitoring and guiding their children's behaviour.
3. **Emotional Support Programmes:** Counselling services should be strengthened to provide emotional support for students from single-parent homes. School counsellors should implement mentorship programmes that address emotional and psychological needs.

4. **School-Based Interventions:** Schools should introduce awareness programmes on the consequences of delinquent behaviour and promote peer mentoring schemes to provide additional support for students lacking parental guidance.
5. **Further Research:** Future studies should examine other psychosocial factors, such as peer influence, community environment, and cultural norms, which may interact with single parenting to influence delinquent behaviour. Research could also investigate intervention effectiveness in reducing misconduct among students from single-parent homes.

These recommendations aim to provide holistic support to students from single-parent families and address both the structural and psychological contributors to delinquent behaviour.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING
PSYCHOLOGY (EECP)

To be responded by senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

This is a study on “Influence of Single Parenting as a Factor of Delinquency among Public Senior Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.” Please complete the structured questionnaire by ticking the relevant box or filling the blank spaces. If you have any question, please ask before you start. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and used strictly for research purposes.

SECTION A: BIODATA

Instruction: please tick [] or fill in where appropriate.

- **Name of School:** _____
- **Class/Grade:** SSS 1 [], SSS 2 [], SSS 3 []
- **Age:** 12 – 15 years [], 16 – 19 years [], 20 years and above []
- **Sex:** Male [], Female []
- **Parent/Guardian Status:** Single Parent [], Both Parents []

SECTION B: INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING ON DELINQUENCY

Instruction: Kindly tick () the option that is applicable to you.

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

1. Items on the Extent of Single Parenting Influence on Delinquency

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
1	Students from single-parent homes are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours.				
2	Single parenting increases the chances of students breaking school rules.				
3	Peer influence is stronger among students from single-parent homes, leading to delinquency.				
4	Single parenting negatively affects students' moral and ethical behaviour.				
5	Lack of parental guidance in single-parent homes contributes to misconduct in school.				

2. Items on the Single Parenting and Delinquent Tendencies

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
6	Students with a single parent are more likely to engage in theft or dishonesty.				
7	Absence of a parent leads to emotional instability that encourages delinquent acts.				
8	Male students with single parents are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour.				
9	Female students with single parent are more prone to rebellious behaviour.				
10	Lack of maternal guidance affects decision-making skills of students.				

3. Items on the Quality of Parental Supervision and Delinquency

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
11	Students from single-parent homes often have inadequate parental supervision.				
12	Poor supervision in single-parent homes increases students' involvement in truancy.				
13	Single parents are less able to monitor the friends and activities of their children.				
14	Students whose parents provide strict supervision are less likely to engage in delinquency.				
15	Lack of supervision in single-parent families encourages disobedient behaviour.				

4. Items on the Emotional Support from Single Parents

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
16	Students who receive emotional support from single parents show less delinquent behaviour.				
17	Single parents are often unable to provide sufficient emotional guidance.				
18	Lack of emotional support increases frustration and negative behaviour in students.				
19	Emotional neglect by a parent leads to students joining peer groups that promote delinquency.				
20	Students feel insecure when their single parent cannot provide emotional encouragement.				

5. Items on the Economic Challenges in Single-Parent Households

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
21	Financial difficulties in single-parent families force students into stealing and other delinquent acts.				
22	Lack of money at home causes students to engage in misconduct to meet their needs.				
23	Single parents often cannot afford school materials, which leads students to break rules.				
24	Single parents face more economic hardship which leads to their children dropping out or skipping school.				
25	Students from low-income single-parent families are more likely to indulge in harmful behaviours.				

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.774	25