



**THE EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON EDUCATIONAL  
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS  
OF ACK CATHEDRAL ARCHDEACONRY DIOCESE  
OF MT. KENYA CENTRAL, KENYA**

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**Abstract:**

Single parenthood has greatly influenced the educational and psychological development of many adolescents, more so in developed nations. The purpose of this paper was to establish the effects of single parenthood on educational and psychological development among adolescents of ACK Cathedral Archdeaconry Diocese of Mt. Kenya Central. This paper was guided by two objectives namely: to determine the relationship between adolescent educational achievement and the single parenthood in Cathedral Archdeaconry, and to assess the impact of single parenthood on the adolescent's psychological development in Cathedral Archdeaconry. The study utilised descriptive research design to collect quantitative data from 75 adolescents and 75 parents which was analysed descriptively and inferentially. The study found out that majority of the adolescents were coming from single parent households with grandmothers as household heads with few households headed by their biological mothers who are rarely available for the youths. The study further established that this structure of households negatively influences the educational and psychological development of the adolescents. The study recommends that single parents must be proactive in the manner they handle and parent their adolescents by creating time to properly up bring them to avoid lapses in their educational and psychological development.

**Keywords:** single parents, adolescents, educational and psychological development

**1. Introduction**

Theories of family deficit model and risk and protective factor models are going to guide the study especially since to find out the effect on academic performance of the

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children. Family environment comprises of essential background where youngsters conduct is expressed, erudite, stimulated and inhibited ([Blum et al., 2000](#)). This is because close relatives perform a significant part in preparation of the youngsters for adulthood through directions and discipline. During adolescence, there is a lot of influence of children from their peers especially on areas of socialization. Even with this new development, research shows the importance of parenting since they account for externalized behaviour in adolescence ([Blumenthal, 2015](#)). The rising number of single parent families has not been matched by an increase in the understanding of their best functioning ([Kinga, Kimani, & Muriithi, 2014](#)).

In USA a third of the youngsters are staying in single parent family with a majority of them headed by the mother (83percent). In most cases families of single parents do not use a reduced amount of period as one since they have responsibility that nurture youngsters consume in absenteeism of extra custodian ([Blum et al., 2000](#)). These challenges faced by the family members may have a negative impact on different individuals in the family. Therefore, single parents' family unit present exposure to countless of undesirable outcome for youngsters because the children are at high risk of internalising and externalising problems ([Manning & Lamb, 2003](#)).

## 2. Literature Review

On the other hand, adolescence is a stage in the human development which is also known as puberty period. It is the period between childhood and adulthood. According to World Health Organization ([Fisher & de Mello, 2011](#)) adolescent is the second span of life which is a period that one undergoes major physical and psychological changes. It is also seen as period when one gets opportunities which can also be risky. Steinberg (2014) notes that this is a precarious growing stage which is adventurously assumed, since it is a time for the adolescence to discover and founding of societal individuality. It could start as early as 10 years to 20 years of age grounded on the gender of the specific uneasy. In some cases the feminine is about one year after the male gender in getting to teenage ([Lee, Kushner, & Cho, 2007](#)). Psychological development in teenagers is promoted by physical, social, emotional, cognitive and moral development. The physical growth is realised through spurt growth, public and body hair, growth and maturation of reproductive organs.

Social and emotional growth can be seen through emotional separation from parents, greater sense of personal identity, identification with peer group, exploration of romantic relations. The concept of ego has several dimensions such as physical, social, cognitive and academic ([Igra & Irwin, 1996](#)). An important part of the concept of ego, the body image, involves conscious and unconscious emotions, thoughts and perceptions. Body image is a dynamic concept that starts to developed in infancy, becomes more important during adolescence, keeps developing and changing throughout life and involves individual's subjective perception of his/her body ([Puffer et al., 2012](#)). Changes and developments in body and sexual organs, intrinsic

enthusiasm and developmental issues in adolescence affect the development of sense of identity ([Kinga et al., 2014](#)). Identity development and self-acceptance are among the most important features of this period. Identity development varies depending on physical, cognitive and social elements ([Makewa, Role, & Otewa, 2012](#)). Sexual identity is defined as the process during which the adolescent perceives himself/herself as a male or female and internalize social gender roles with the influence of environmental attitudes.

During the adolescent developmental transition, it requires one to reorganize the specific and the setting influencing the thought, emotion, behaviour and relationships. Families are seen as agents of socialization ([Puffer et al., 2012](#)). Education on the other hand is seen as the option of intelligent growth, preparing ones understanding and discovery variety of responsible methods to deal with status quo. Hence children learn from different agents of life as presented from either home or school ([Taffa & Matthews, 2003](#)). Geidd (2011) notes that an individual contextual evolution may present multisystem experiments instituting the foundation of menace, resiliency and chances in adolescent. This means, as the individual is internalising the evolution that is taking place within the self, then he/she is bound to have confusion that would result to either attaining their goals or damaging their goals.

Anyakoha (2016) found out that although the single parents are able to maintain their children through school since they have the money because it did not matter whether they had male or female in of their educational status. Single parents support their children fully when it comes to education. Single parents also take their time to encourage and motivate their children despite their commitment, work and businesses. According to Jacob (2011) commitment shows the capacity shows the readiness of parents on quality education. He also notes that educational attainment depends mainly on the value of instructing and inspiration. Optimistic inspiration from home would help these children dedicate their time in education when in school.

In Kenya the rate of single parenting has increased and it has also embraced. Children from single parents have also achieved different things in life. A study carried out in Taita Taveta by [Kerubo \(2013\)](#) found out that single parent educational status had a correlation with their children academic attainment. The study revealed that single parents consumed slight or no time to monitor children's educational performance and it also found out that a large family had an impact on student's performance negatively. Since the parent did not have time to monitor and supervise their children's performance.

Another study carried out in Nyeri showed that both single and dual parents believed that their involvement in their children school activities was beneficial hence would want to get more involved ([Kimani & Kombo, 2010](#); [Taffa & Matthews, 2003](#)). The study also found out that there was a serious deficiency where parents did not visit the school at all (Ndirangu & Kibaara, 2014). Although Murang'a shares a lot in common with Nyeri, studies carried in Murang'a show different factors other than the single parenting factor ([Kinga et al., 2014](#)). Hence the results from Nyeri may not be

generalised in Murang'a. Factors such as socio economic and how they affect students' achievement in school, as well as alcoholism have been studied in Murang'a, no study however, has been carried out on the effects of single parenting on student's academic achievement. Hence, the need to conduct this study in Murang'a to establish the effects of single parenting on students' academic achievement.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Statement of the Problem

Recent studies shows that the number of single parent families In Kenya are rising at an alarming rate ([Blumenthal, 2015](#)). The problems facing single parenting are similar to those of dual parenting but they are difficult since they are to be managed single handily ([Fisher & de Mello, 2011](#); [Kimani & Kombo, 2010](#); [Lee et al., 2007](#)) in a study on single mothers and parenting a case study of Zimmerman in Nairobi County, Kenya found that parenting is more than just giving birth. This is because single parent face different challenges with nurturing children and their future and solving their problems. The study identified that though there are challenges among single mothers, they have devised coping strategies which in turn have helped in their children achievement in school.

There are many children living in single parent homes more than any other time in history of Kenya ([Taffa & Matthews, 2003](#)). Single parent families are an outcome on many challenges such as teenage pregnancies, one parent working far from home, separation, broken marriages and death. They may result into different challenges when it comes to educating their children especially adolescents who are now in secondary schools. Children may turn to be hostile towards their parents especially in adolescence as they are manoeuvring the stage because of the many biological changes happening in their bodies ([Patterson, 2002](#)). Hence this general behaviour of the teenagers lean towards certain level of separate alterations amid which can also affect their educational objectives. It is worth noting there has not been such research carried out in Murang'a Archdeaconry showing the effects of single parenthood on adolescents' educational achievement, hence the need for the study.

### 2.2 Research Objectives

- 1) To determine the relationship between adolescent educational achievement and the single parenthood in Cathedral Archdeaconry.
- 2) To assess the impact of single parenthood on the adolescent's psychological development in Cathedral Archdeaconry.

### 2.3 Instrumentation and Data Analysis

The study utilized the questionnaire and interview schedules to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially in SPSS version 23, while descriptive data was analyzed thematically. Prior

to the study, a pilot study was carried out to ascertain the reliability of the instruments, which was found to be sufficient (Cronbach alpha value of 0.76). Findings were reported in line with the stated objectives and relevant hypothesis were also tested. The rejection of the Null hypothesis was done at a P-Value of less 0.05(95% confidence interval).

### **3. Findings and Discussions**

The study was able to capture a question return rate of 86.7 percent adolescents and 100 percent parents. There was gender parity since the difference in percentages was not large that is 53.8 percent male and 46.2 percent female. The adolescents were aged between 13-21 years of age. They attended both single sex and mixed schools. The study revealed that 92.3 percent of the adolescents were from single parent families. About 61.5 percent of the adolescents' performance in school was average and their performance trend was stagnant. A majority of the students attained a grade C+ and C- (53.9 percent) and 63.1 percent indicated that they had improved their grades from those of the previous term (year). On the other hand 63.1 percent of the students said that their parents did not attend school activities and 75.4 percent of them said they were not assisted by the parents with their homework.

With regards to the study objectives, the study made several key findings. However, many of the recommendations may contravene some of the cultural orientations which define the households and families within the study. First in line with the first objective i.e., the relationship between adolescents' education achievement and the type of parents revealed that 92.3 percent of the adolescents were from single parent families and their performance in the national examinations was 53.9%. The Pearson Product moment correlation to test the research hypothesis which tried to establish if there was relationship between adolescent educational achievement and whether or not they belonged to single parent homes was rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted that there is a significance difference between adolescents psychological development and grades achieved and the type of family.

The second objective which tried to establish the impact of single parenthood on adolescent's psychological development, revealed that 55.4 percent of the adolescents sometimes did their homework without supervision and 53.8 percent of the adolescents most of the time had many positive qualities. The study concluded that the relationship between adolescents' education achievement and the type of parenthood did not matter since there are other factors that would influence adolescents' performance. Parents influence on adolescents' performance was found to be moderate hence the students' performance may have been influenced by other factors but not their parents. Adolescent psychological development would mean they are able to take on responsibilities without necessarily having someone to follow them up.

The best practices in addressing single parenthood challenges among the adolescents were to have more seminars, camps which would have talks that would

equip the adolescents with skills and knowledge on issues that affect their daily lives. The study recommends; need to fully support adolescents at school since single parent family have no or less influence on students' performance; need for adolescents to be guided in emotional respect for themselves and for others as this made them more competent in all responsibilities accorded to them and the government, school and the church to work together in equipping the adolescents with information, skills, and knowledge that would help them become all rounded human being when they are in school and at home.

#### **4. Conclusions and Suggestions**

On the relationship between adolescents' education achievement and the type of parenthood we can conclude that there other factors that would influence adolescents performance but not their family background. Parents influence on adolescents' performance was found to be moderate hence the students' performance may have been influenced by other factors but not their parents. Adolescent psychological development would mean they are able to take on responsibilities without necessarily having supervision. This means the support accorded from school as well at home have helped the students to development positively skills. The best practices in addressing single parenthood challenges among the adolescents were to have more seminars, camps which would have talks that would equip the adolescents with skills and knowledge on issues that affect their daily lives. *Ceteris paribus*, this paper makes the following recommendations:

- 1) There is need to fully support adolescents at school since single parent family have no or less influence on students' performance.
- 2) There are other factors such as school factors that would have had an influence on adolescent's performance.
- 3) There is need for adolescents to be guided in emotional respect for themselves and for others as this will make them more compete in all responsibilities accorded to them.
- 4) There is need for the government, school and the church to work together in equipping the adolescents with information, skills, and knowledge that would help them become all rounded human being when they are in school and at home.

#### **Declaration for Funding and Ethical Standards**

I wish to declare that this study was purely funded by myself and there is no conflict of interest with any organization or individual pertaining the process of the study and the findings of the study. I also wish to state that all ethical standards were taken care off during the study.

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