



## SINGLE PARENTHOOD AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES IN CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract:**

Single parenthood is a social phenomenon that has always been in existence since time immemorial and it cuts across all social strata, the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate. According to Pollit (2009), it is a household in which only one parent lives with the child or children. Single parenthood as viewed by Achakpa (2014) is the taking of family responsibility which includes caring for children without the father's or mother's contribution. Recently, the number of single-parent families has increased drastically and it is gaining a global dimension. In Nigeria, the existence of single parents is formerly unknown and where they existed, they were ignored as exceptional cases. The thrust of this study was to examine "single parenthood and support strategies in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State". Social learning and psychological theory were adopted as theoretical frameworks. A total of 200 respondents were used for the study. The survey design was adopted while the cluster approach and stratified random sampling were also adopted to obtain the samples for the study. A structured questionnaire served as the major instrument to generate data from the respondents. The simple percentage statistical tool was used to analyse the personal characteristics of respondents with table illustration while Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the formulated hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings were income support, employment guarantees, free and compulsory education, and free healthcare significantly enhanced the well-being of single parenthood. Therefore, the study recommended among others that the government should institute a special scholarship to assist students of poor single parents who are presently enrolled in school to caution against the effect of their financial strength. Also, public enlightenment on issues of parental skills, family values, and child discipline should be done regularly as this would make for an intact family.

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## 1. Background to the study

Single parenthood is a social phenomenon that has always been in existence since time immemorial and it cuts across all social strata, the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate. According to Pollit (2009), it is a household in which only one parent lives with the child or children. Single parenthood as viewed by Achakpa (2014) is the taking of family responsibility which includes caring for children without the father's or mother's contribution. Recently, the number of single-parent families has increased drastically and it is gaining a global dimension. In Nigeria, the existence of single parents is formerly unknown and where they existed, they were ignored as exceptional cases.

According to Harria (2010), the percentage of women with some level of education who have become mothers without marrying has more than doubled in the last decade. Among women with professional or managerial jobs, it has almost tripled. The suggestion, therefore, is that maybe marriage no longer serves women's interests. If women can support themselves, they do not need to marry. They feel they are secure economically. If a single parent can have sex at will with any man she fancies, have her own house, and gain the respect of friends and co-workers, she does not see any need to tie herself to the apron string of any man in bondage called marriage. A significant proportion of adults in Nigerian society are unmarried.

According to Linsel and Roth (2008), about 58 million Americans are single. In Nigeria, there is a dearth of information on the statistics of single parenthood. Kibel and Wagstatt (2015) affirmed that the prevalence of single parenting is increasing and the pool is a composite of unmarried mothers including many teenagers, divorced, and families separated by migrant labour arrangements.

Burge (2007) observed that the vast majority of single-parent, families and low-income families consisting of a mother and her young children are characterised by a high percentage of minority representation and relatively little formal education. Burge (2007) also identified three major groups of one-parent families. These are displaced homemakers (divorcees), adolescent mothers, and single fathers. There are two main routes of entry into single parenthood. These include relationship breakdown and children outside marriage.

In Nigeria, there are widespread cases of single parenthood across all regions and tribes which has become a major source of concern to socio-economic and socio-cultural development. According to Nwachukwu (2008), children from single-parent homes are likely to suffer deprivation, and denial of some rights and opportunities they are exposed to anti-social behaviours and poor academic records. Divorce and separation of various kinds or the death of one spouse may leave a child with no option but to have a single parent. The benefits of a two-parent family far outweigh that of a single-parent family, as a mother plays the traditional role of child care and home-making while the father's role is that of economic responsibilities and discipline of children. But in single-parent families, double responsibilities are required of time, attention, and money of the parent,

hence, less attention is given to the education of the child. Invariably, the cost of receiving education today is high to be financed only by a single parent who may be financially handicapped. In the case of the few healthy single parents in the locality of the research study, the task is more with the nature of their job which affects adequate supervision of a child's growth and development.

Teachers commonly describe children from single parents as more hostile, aggressive, anxious, fearful, hyperactive, and distractible than children from intact families Nwachukwu (2008). The school curriculum is well-designed as the situation demands will become helpful in addressing the situation of single-parenthood as well as the support strategies for single parenthood in Nigeria. Although there are no available statistics on single-parent families in Nigeria, practical experience and tabloid reports show that it is increasing on a daily basis, on the contrary, Western countries have a geometric progression in the percentage of adults and children living in single-parent households (Nwachukwu, 2008).

The conditions are not palatable and conducive to effective parenting of a child in most single-parent families. This was because when the parents are overburdened by responsibilities and by their own emotional reactions to the environmental situation, they often become irritable, impatient, and insensitive to their children's plight. It is against this backdrop that this study was carried out to investigate single parenthood and support strategies in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Several problems have been known to be associated with single parenthood. It has been pointed out that in addition to having fewer financial resources, a single mother may be less able to supervise adolescent children. There is evidence that an adolescent in a single-parent family is susceptible to delinquent behavior and substance abuse as the situation is not conducive to successful child-rearing. It has been observed that 55% of children living in single-headed families are poor and are five times poorer than children in other families (Ogionwo, 2008).

Hamberg (2012) reported that single parents who get pregnant are not allowed the benefit of maternity leave simply because they are not married. But the Beijing conference of 1996 solved this problem. Single parents commonly experience difficulty with role identity. Some form of social stigma is still attached to single-parent status regardless of how it was acquired. It is in response to these problems that this study was motivated to examine single parenthood and support strategies in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **1.2 Research questions**

This study sought to provide answers to the following research questions which were formulated to guide the present investigation.

- 1) How does income support affect single parent(s) and their children?
- 2) Are there any significant effects of employment guarantees on the social well-being of single parenthood?

- 3) Does free and compulsory education relate to support strategies?
- 4) To what extent does free healthcare relate to support strategies?

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

The main objective of this research was to examine the effect of single parenthood and support strategies in Calabar Cross River State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- 1) Find out the extent to which income support affects single parent(s) and their children
- 2) Investigate how employment guarantees have contributed to the social well-being of single parenthood.
- 3) Assess the relationship between free and compulsory education and support strategies.
- 4) Ascertain free health care and support strategies.

### **1.4 Statement of hypothesis**

The following statement of hypotheses was formulated to direct the study:

- 1) There is no significant relationship between income support and single parenthood
- 2) There is no significant relationship between employment guarantees and single parenthood.
- 3) There is no significant relationship between free and compulsory education and support strategies.
- 4) There is no significant relationship between free healthcare and support strategies.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study examines single parenthood and support strategies in Calabar South Local Government area. Therefore, the findings of this study would be of great benefit to all stakeholders (parents, students, curriculum planners, policymakers, and the government) to mention but a few of the roles expected of them.

First, it would empower single parents and others alike to have a renewal orientation and be equipped with the information to have an invisible family as it will help parents to build a better future for their wards and the society at large.

Secondly, the outcome of this study would serve as input for legislation on policies relating to parenting. It is expected that the study recommendations will assist the nation's lawmakers to have a deeper horizon of single parenting and the need to act fast because of its consequences on the nation. Also, the outcome of this study would not exempt students in the scheme of importance it would benefit them. It would enable students to understand even over a long period of time, that a crisis is imminent everywhere they find themselves but should rather allow their conscious to guide their daily conduct and strive to achieve hard work.

Finally, the social workers would be better equipped with the necessary tools to guide and counsel students from such homes. Such would offer them the zeal and

courage to forge ahead in life, especially with their studies aimed at discouraging any form of distraction.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study would be limited to five (5) randomly selected wards in Calabar South Local Government Area; following the trend of the variables of the study such as income support, employment guarantees, free and compulsory education, and free healthcare. The study area is divided into twelve political wards, these political wards include ward 1, ward 2, ward 3, ward 4, ward 5 and ward 6 and 7 wards, ward 8, ward 9, ward 10, ward 11 and ward 12. The study population was estimated at about 191, 630 (Source National Population Projection, 2017).

### **1.7 Operationalization of concepts**

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions were used:

*Single parenthood:* This can be defined as a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is being responsible for the upbringing of the child.

*Support strategies:* This is a means of helping the individual to improve and achieve his/her goals.

*Free and compulsory education:* This is education funded through government spending or charitable organizations in which children and young people are entitled to an education that is free of tuition fees.

*Free child healthcare:* This is healthcare services funded through government spending or charitable organizations to which individuals are entitled to free healthcare services.

*Employment guarantees:* This is a way in which, government or non-governmental organization provides jobs available to the individual who is ready and willing to work.

*Income support:* This is money that government or non-government organizations give regularly to people with no income or very low incomes.

## **2. Conceptual framework**

Literarily, parenting connotes the care, responses, and control that parents make on their children, in other words, the rearing/training which parents give to their children. It could be single male or female parenting depending on the type of family type. Single parenting is a product of marital separation with a deleterious effect on the child exemplified by fluctuation in parental attention and a weakening social bond. The situation is the worst hit by male-dominated single parenting (Otite and Ogionwo, 2008). They argued that children who are reared under this type of condition rarely do well in school because of the lack of care, love, and attention that they received from their parenting fathers.

Most children who are reared by single male parents are reported to be having weak academic records. Kelly & Denga (2010), in adducing reasons for such low

achievement, agreed that such children's progress is never monitored by the parent as well as their school attendance. Children from these homes have been aware that their movement and activities are not being monitored and as such get involved in anti-social behaviours like partying, truancy, hooliganism, etc. which give no room for any good behavior (Denga, 2008).

Cooper and Dehat (2013) observed that a lot of differences exist in behavior between children brought up by one of the two parents and those brought up by both parents. Female-headed families are simply those families headed by mothers as single parents. These could be single unmarried mothers, divorced or separated, and widows. Eshleman (2008) conducted that children from single female parents are likely to have good social adjustment, good self-esteem, and intellectual development compared to others in the same socio-economic status. However, the major problems in these types of families stem from poverty and stagnation. In Nigeria, the traditional belief was that having female-headed families is forbidden and creates unnecessary stigmatization from the societies. Also, the negative effect of stigmatization is associated with lower self-esteem in such children at school and within their communities. Furstenberg and Kusick (2012) observed that children born to teenage mothers seem to do their best academically if their mother finishes high school, receives adequate and emotional support, and reaches a high level of cognitive development. Dodds (2009) suggest that with the existence of violence in the family, especially physical abuse of the mother prior to divorce/separation. It is invariably associated with a variety of children's development problems including aggression and academic withdrawal syndrome additional findings portray children of female-headed families are at greater risk of behavioural problems, drug and alcohol use, and poor school performance even when income level is controlled (Steinberg, 2008).

## **2.1 Income support and single parenthood**

The European Union has been advising governments to reform income support systems to facilitate greater activation of outbreak claimants alongside enabling single parenthood or job seekers to find work through activation programmes. Income support provided to single parenthood as a strategy to support their family income level can be linked with activation at an administrative level through greater integration and coordination between social security benefits systems and public employment services. For single-parenthood families, the link can be strengthened through better coverage of income support and greater access to activation services, which may or may not be conditional on the receipt of income support (Immervoll and Scapetta, 2012).

A recent review of approaches to income support strategies policies highlighted that the impact of individual income support programmes can be fairly modest at an aggregate level, the support of individual policies is strengthened if they are part of a coherent activation strategy in which income support is combined with effective re-employment service tailored to meet the needs of different beneficiaries of single parenthood. Martin (2015) also highlighted that the rise of policies determines whether income support strategies are effective or not. The interactions between the generosity of

income support, the scale and suitability of active labour market programmes. The degree to which entitlement to income support is conditional on job-seekers' single parenthood activity and participation in activation programmes are clearly important elements in understanding the effectiveness of different approaches to help single-parenthood families.

Martin (2015) notes that some countries (such as Australia and the US) have adopted a lean welfare mood with low levels of income support available for only a short duration and very limited expenditure on activation. Macro-level labour market performance measures appear to suggest that this model can produce comparable outcomes to those obtained in countries that have adopted more generous income support payments coupled with a greater amount of activation. Most European countries have a stronger social model of welfare protection and under Europe 2020 (The European Union Ten-year Jobs and Growth Strategy) are seeking to improve employment rates alongside protecting single parents' households from poverty and social exclusion. Current evidence suggests that in order to do this, they will need to ensure that single parents' households who are not out of work have sufficient income support, this is an evolving policy area with an evidence base that is growing but not always in agreement on the best policies and strategy to adopt.

## **2.2 Employment guarantees and single parenthood**

Single parents and their families lack the additional resources of a partner who lives in the household. The lack of a potential second earner makes it more difficult for single-parent households to have adequate earnings, but also makes the single-parent household more vulnerable to the consequences of (temporary) unemployment without a second caregiver in the household to fall back on, even if it is in the form of tag-term parenting, work-family conflict can be more pressing for single-parent families. In short, the absence of a partner living in the household limits care, income, time, and flexibility (Thomson and Mclanahan, 2012).

Millar (2009) affirms that employment guarantees are associated with many beneficial outcomes, including reduced risks of poverty and material deprivation investment in future employability, access to insurance-based social security and pensions; self-realisation; self-efficacy, social network, and health. According to Rawlinson (2009), employment guarantees among single parents tend to be fairly high across countries. Yet, in addition to their limited resources, there are at least two important reasons to believe that employment is less adequate for single parents than for other workers. Gornick & Jantti (2012) opined that a variety of social policies have been documented to benefit the well-being of single parenthood. Many studies have examined the impact of redistributive social policies on reducing the economic insecurity of single-parent families, child benefits were found to be effective in reducing single-parent poverty particularly when their design is targeted towards single parenthood. Kilkey & Bradshaw (2009) stress that policies can help compensate for some of these costs. Poverty reduction can also be achieved by private transfers, such as alimonies, and by policies regulating and ensuring child support payments.

Skinner (2011) averted that financial transfers are by no means the only way to support single parenthood. A policy reform to expand public childcare subsidies in the US increased employment by single mothers. Single mothers receiving childcare subsidies were also more satisfied with the quality of the care their children received. Berger & Black (2010) facilitating employment, childcare reduces single parenthood poverty, parental leave may facilitate the employment guarantees of both current single parents of young children and of mothers prior to becoming a single parent by helping them to maintain gainful employment later in life.

### **2.3 Free and compulsory education and support strategies**

Education is an investment in human beings, the investment and characteristics of education given by society can easily be assessed by the quality of its products. Over the years, education has been ranked as the best legacy any conscientious leader, government, or parent could leave for his/her people. This is increasingly important because the quality of education given to people determines the standard of growth achieved. This anchors the federal government's statement that education has been adopted as an instrument of excellence for effective national development (FRN, 2008). Education not only eliminates ignorance and superstition from those who pursue it but also frees their minds for a quicker perception of issues, it inspires the spirit of inquiry and experimentation and stimulates creativity and innovation (Otu & Charles, 2009).

Amake (2010) asserted that free and compulsory education means the establishment of various kinds of schools and the expansion of school curriculum to make each child develop according to his or her ability, age, and interest. It includes the establishment and provision of library facilities and technical and vocational equipment. It means tuition fees, free feeding, free books, free accommodation, uniform, and other personal needs of the learners. Free and compulsory education entails the removal of every socio-cultural impediment to education. The sum total of this makes education free for single parenthood. Atanda (2008) opined that the popular assumption in Nigeria today is that there is free and compulsory education at least up to the junior secondary level. The above assumption was built on the launching of the Universal Basic Education schemes in 1999. The scheme aims at providing free, compulsory Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age. The essence of any programme is its workability and of course, education is about functionality.

Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2008) identified three main subsystems of education which are policy formulations, management, and implementation. The concept of free education re-echoes in almost every education-related document in Nigeria. For instance, section 18 (3) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria states. Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end, the government and non-governmental organizations shall and when practicable provide free and compulsory education for single parenthood from primary to secondary school and a free adult literacy programme. Salami (2009) the launching of the universal basic education programme was strong evidence of Nigeria's commitment to different international conventions for the promotion of basic education for the vulnerable individual and single



parenthood in the country. These include the Jomtien Declaration of 1999 on the promotion of free basic education for all, and the new Delhi Declaration of 1991 requiring stringent efforts by the E-9 countries to drastically reduce illiteracy within the shortest time frame.

#### **2.4 Free healthcare and support strategies**

Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has had a very limited scope of legal coverage for social protection. Besides 90% of the Nigerian population is without health insurance coverage. The Nigeria health system has been evolving over the years through health care reforms aiming to address the public health challenges confronting it (Eze, Zaki, & Oche, 2015).

Eze (2009) affirms that the inability to effectively address the country's numerous public health challenges has contributed to the persistent and high level of poverty and the weakness of the health system, political instability, corruption, limited institutional capacity, and an unstable economy are major factors responsible for the poor development of health services in Nigeria. Households and individuals in Nigeria bear the burdens of a dysfunctional and inequitable health system delaying or not seeking healthcare and having to pay out of pocket for healthcare services that are not affordable.

According to Nigeria, Demographic Health Survey (NDHS, 2013) over 60% of single parenthoods have no access to healthcare services due to the cost of healthcare services in Nigeria and this is responsible for the over-reliance on out-of-pocket payments for healthcare services. This means the most vulnerable populations in Nigeria are not provided with social and financial risk protection. Poor people constitute about 70% of the Nigerian population, they lack access to basic health services which social and financial risk protection should provide because they cannot afford it.

NDHS (2013) the quality of healthcare services delivered in Nigeria is poor and remains a huge source of concern, most of the PHC facilities that are supposed to meet the health needs of the poor and rural dwellers are in a poor state due to poor budgetary allocation. Nigeria is yet to adopt innovative ways to protect single parenthood and vulnerable populations against the financial risk of ill health. It is important to guarantee by law the right to healthcare for all citizens in Nigeria. The National Health Act (NHA) that was signed into law in 2014 stated that all Nigerians are entitled to a basic minimum package of healthcare services as a strategy to provide free healthcare services to single parenthood and vulnerable populations.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

The researcher used the social learning theory and psychosocial theory to anchor the research work.

#### **3.1 Social learning theory**

The proponent of the social learning theory was Albert Bandura. This theory was propounded in 1977. The main focus of social learning theory is to observe and imitate

the behaviour, emotions, and attitude of others. Hence, it focuses on learning by means of observing and modeling. Children do their initial interaction with their families and observe and learn the actions of caregivers. In single parenting, the child has only one parent to look at and copy their actions. It is very important and vital to have both parents so that children may not fall into the Oedipus complex.

According to Bandura (1977), children learn behaviour from their families. Its parents are irresponsible in some manner. The child will learn the same. If parents have not built a trustworthy relationship with their children, there are higher probabilities that children will face difficulties in forming a good relationship with their surroundings. Thus, a positive result can be accomplished only if parents demonstrate the kind of behaviour which they want their children to learn. The relevance of the theory to this study is that it has helped to link the desired interdisciplinary cooperation and cross-fertilization of knowledge to the understanding of single parenthood and support strategies.

Social learning theory has helped to explain the consequences faced by children of single parenthood and support strategies to overcome their challenges. Children of single-parent may spend quite a stressful life as compared to those children that live with two parents that are both a mother and father. Therefore, this theory is relevant to this study in the sense that single parenting has many effects on the child's academic performance, economic hardship, social interaction and it negatively influences the child's health.

### **3.2 Psychological theory Erik Erikson (1963)**

Psychological theory was given by famous psychologist Erik Erikson (1963) this theory consists of eight stages that cover all the stages of individual's life, i.e., from infancy to late adulthood, these stages are trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame/doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation and integrity versus despair. All these stages contain conflict that leaves positive and negative impacts on individuals' personalities. Erikson called these conflicts crises that need to be resolved before moving to the next stage. There is a chance that the child of a single parent experiences a crisis in all stages. For instance, in the initial stage of infancy, the child wants their caregivers to be approachable to feed them, relieve their anxiety and make them laugh. However, single parents cannot fulfil their needs and expose them to the crisis. All these dissatisfactions may lead to hopelessness and other psychological problems like depression.

The relevance of this theory to the study, psychosocial theory has a lot of relevance to deviance and social control. All psychologists agree that social control mechanisms are necessary to keep deviance in control, so as to avoid anaemia but many also maintain that a certain amount of deviance has a positive function and could contribute to the maintenance of the well-being of society.

#### **4. Research design**

The research design adopted for this study is a survey design. This was because the researcher was interested in observing simultaneously what happened to sample subjects or variables without any attempt to manipulate or control them. The surveying method helped in minimizing sampling bias and ensured equal representation of the sampled population. Also, this research work being quantitative in nature, the use of survey design facilitated the determination of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable in a population.

##### **4.1 Study area**

This research was conducted in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. Calabar South Local Government Area is in the southern senatorial district of Cross River State, Nigeria. It has its administrative headquarters located in Anantigha town. It is bounded by Akpabuyo and Calabar Municipal local government areas. There are twelve political council wards in the local government area with a total population of 191,630 (source, NPP 2017) it has an area of 264km<sup>2</sup>. It comprises three (3) ethnic groups quas, Efik and Efuts with two major languages; Ejagham and Efik. The major occupation of the people is petty trading, subsistence farming and fishing. English and Efik languages are also widely used for commercial and other social interactions while Christianity is the predominant religion in the area.

Educationally, there are many primary and secondary schools, College of Health Technology, Cross River State University (Unicross) in the area. The local government area is serviced by Health centres spread over the entire area, general hospital and several private health clinics.

##### **4.2 Population of the study**

The population of the study stood at 191,630 (2017 National Population Projection). Therefore, those studied were basically single parents from the age bracket of 25-60 years. This formed the target population. It also focused on both male and female folks.

##### **4.3 Sampling technique**

The researcher used a cluster sampling technique in the course of the study. The cluster sampling was used in the first instance by grouping the population into categories of persons. This was made up of male adults and female adults in the respective wards. This technique retains the advantage of random selection while selecting respondents from specific areas to reduce the cost of interviewing or administering questionnaires.

After the clustering, the stratified random sampling technique was applied in the second instance to further divide the cluster into strata, so that from each stratum, subjects were selected for the sample stratified sampling technique was used to ensure that certain groups in the population were not under presented or other presented in the sample. The choice of stratified sampling method afforded every member of the

population an equal opportunity of being selected for the study and ensured fair representation of the research population.

#### 4.5 Sample

The sample size used for the study was two hundred (200) respondents drawn from five (5) selected wards in the local government area under study. Forty males and females adults within the age range of 25 to 60 years were randomly selected from each ward. The sample distribution is shown in the table below.

**Table 1:** The sample distribution

S/N	Names of Ward	Type	No. of Male Respondents	No. of Female Respondents	Total
1	Ward 2	Mixed	14	26	40
2	Ward 4	Mixed	10	30	40
3	Ward 8	Mixed	19	21	40
4	Ward 12	Mixed	28	12	40
5	Ward 6	Mixed	25	15	40
<b>Total</b>			<b>96</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>200</b>

#### 4.6 Instrumentation

A research instrument: single parenthood and support strategies (SPSS) demographic data questionnaire was used as Instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is divided into two (2) sections (A and B). The first section 'A' deals with personal data while section 'B' elicits information on the variable under study. The questionnaires were structured in line with the variables. It is a four-point Likert questionnaire that contains twenty (20) items of questions designed for the respondents to tick strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD) respectively.

#### 4.7 Validity of the instrument

Validity is the extent to which an instrument, say a test, is really measuring what the investigator designs it to measure. Before the administration of the research instrument, the items developed were vetted by experts in research and statistics and finally to the supervisor who screened them for validity. The relevant items were retained and used for the study while the irrelevant items were expunged. The validity was also ensured because the questionnaire was collected from respondents after filling and information given by the respondents was presented and analyzed.

#### 4.8 Procedure for data collection

The data collected were sorted out and coded accordingly, all positively worded items on the question were scored 4 points for strongly agree, 3 points for agree, 2 points for disagree, and 1 point for strongly disagree options respectively for all negatively worded items, the scoring technique was reversed. The data for each hypothesis was analyzed using the following statistical techniques.

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant relationship between income support and single parenthood.

Independent variables: Income support

Dependent variable: Single parenthood

Statistical test: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis.

**Hypothesis two:** There is no significant relationship between employment guarantees and single parenthood.

Independent variables: Employment guarantees

Dependent variable: Single parenthood

Statistical test: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis

### **Hypothesis three**

There is no significant relationship between free and compulsory education and single parenthood.

Independent variables: Free and compulsory education

Dependent variable: Support strategies

Statistical test: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis.

### **Hypothesis four**

There is no significant relationship between free healthcare and support strategies.

Independent variables: Free healthcare

Dependent variable: Support strategies

Statistical test: Pearson moment correlation coefficient analysis.

## **5. Classification of respondents on the basis of demographic characteristics**

The frequency and percentage distribution of all the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in the table below:

**Table 4.1:** Classification of respondents on the basis of demographic characteristics

	<b>Personal variable</b>	<b>Classification/number</b>	<b>Proportion/percentage (%)</b>
1	Sex	1. Male = 80 2. Female =120	53.7 80.6
2	Age	1. 25-30 = 39 2. 31-40 = 42 3. 41-50 = 35 4. 51-60 = 50 5. 61 and above = 33	26.0 27.6 23.3 32.3 22.0
3	Marital status	1. Single = 30 2. Married = 5 3. Widow = 42 4. Widower = 39 5. Divorce = 54	20.4 28.2 27.6 26.0 31.2
4	Educational qualification	1. FSLC = 45	28.2

		2. SSCE = 55	31.7
		3. OND/NCE = 57	33.0
		4. First degree = 43	28.1
5	Employment status	1. Employed = 68	36.2
		2. Unemployed= 132	82.1

As shown in Table 4.1, out of the 200 respondents sampled in this study, 180 (53.7 percent) were male while 120 (80.6 percent) were female. This indicates that the female folk were the most respondents of the study. With respect to the age of the subjects, 39 (26.0 percent) were between the ages of 25-30 years. 42 (27.6 percent) were within the age bracket of 41-40 years, 35 (23.3 percent) were within the age bracket of 41-50 years, 50 (32.3 percent) were within the age bracket of 51-60 years while 33 (22.0 percent) were between the age bracket of 61 and above. This means that most respondents of the study were within the age bracket of 51-60.

Taking marital status into consideration, 30 (20.4 percent) were said to be single, 45 (28.2 percent) were married, 42 (27.6 percent) were found to be widows, 39 (26.0 percent) were widowers while 54 (31.2 percent) were found to be divorce. This indicates that for this study, divorces respondents constitute the majority.

With respect to educational qualification, 45 (28.2 percent) had a first school leaving certificate, 55 (31.7 percent) said they had obtained SSCE, 57 (33.0 percent) were holders of OND/NCE and 43 (28.1 percent) were holders of 1<sup>st</sup> degree. With this, those with OND/NCE constituted the highest number of respondents in the study. Based on employment status, it revealed that 68 (36.2 percent) were employed while a greater number of the respondents totaling 132 (82.1 percent) were unemployed. This indicates that the majority of the respondents for the study were unemployed.

## 5.2 Test of hypotheses

In this part of the report, the hypotheses formulated to give direction to the study were stated. Before analysis of each of the hypotheses, the variables involved in each hypothesis were identified. Also, the nature of the data collected on each hypothesis was described. This is to justify the choice of the statistics employed for analysis for clarity in doing this, the analysis was done on a hypothesis-by-hypothesis basis.

### 4.2.1 Hypothesis one

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between income support and single parenthood. The result of the analysis carried out using Pearson product-moment correlations statistics is presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2:** Correlational analysis of the relationship  
between income support and single parenthood (n=200)

Variables	X	SD	R
Income support	15.35	3.65	0.54
Single parenthood	13.78	3.92	

P<0.05, df = 198, critical r = 0.195

As shown in Table 4.2, the calculated r-value of 0.54 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at a 0.05 level of significance and 158 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was therefore upheld. This means that there was a significant relationship between income support on the well-being of single parenthood.

### 5.2.2 Hypothesis two

The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between employment guarantees and single parenthood. To do this, the mean scores (x) and standard deviation were computed. Pearson product-moment correlation statistics were used in this regard. The result obtained from the test is presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3:** Correlational analysis of the relationship between employment guarantee and single parenthood (n=200)

Variables	X	SD	R
Employment guarantee	11.80	4.70	9.45
Single parenthood	13.78	3.92	

$P < 0.05$ ,  $df = 198$ , critical  $r = 0.195$

Table 4.3 reveals that the observed r-value of 0.45 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at a 0.05 level of significance and 158 degree of freedom. This result shows that the calculated correlation coefficient (r) 0.045 was statistically significant. Given this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was therefore retained. This implies that there is a significant relationship between employment guarantees on the social well-being of single parenthood.

### 5.2.3 Hypothesis three

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between free and compulsory education and Pearson product-moment correlation statistics is presented in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4:** Correlational analysis of the relationship between free and compulsory education and support strategies (n=200)

Variables	X	SD	R
Free and compulsory education	16.55	3.80	0.30
Support strategies	13.78	3.92	

$P < 0.05$ ,  $df = 198$ , critical  $r = 0.195$

Table 4.4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.30 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at a 0.05 level of significance and 158 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was therefore upheld. This means that there is a significant relationship between free and compulsory education and support strategies for the well-being of single parenthood.

#### 5.2.4 Hypothesis four

This hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between free healthcare and support strategies. The applicable test statistics to carry out this analysis is Pearson product-moment correlation statistics. The result is presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5:** Correlational analysis of the relationship between free healthcare and support strategies (n=200)

Variables	X	SD	R
Free healthcare	14.57	3.62	0.40
Support strategies	13.78	3.92	

$P < 0.05$ ,  $df = 198$ , critical  $r = 0.195$

As shown in table 4, the calculated  $r$ -value of 0.40 was found to be greater than the critical  $r$ -value of 0.195 at 0.05 level of significance with 1980 degree of freedom. On the basis of this, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative which states inter alia that there is a significant relationship between free healthcare on the well-being of single parenthood is accepted.

### 5.3 Discussion of findings

#### 5.3.1 Income support and single parenthood

From the data collected on the first hypothesis of this study and analyzed, it was gathered that there is a significant effect of income support on the well-being of single parenthood. The implication of the above is that income support for single parenthood strengthened their livelihood through better coverage of income support and greater access to opportunity. This finding lends credence to the objectives of income support as captured by Martin (2005), who stated that income support for single parenthood aim is to sustainably empower single parents economically, sociably, and educationally, which can help reduce their vulnerability to domestic violence and other vices that may disrupt their peace and that of people around them. The research finding of Immervoll and Scapetta (2012) of this study revealed that a significant difference exists among the respondents on the influence of income of poor single-parenthood homes on the academic performance of students even when compared with their counterparts. It is worthy of note that income is the conducting pipe to decision-making in anything one does. In fact, this had remained the root cause of family conflict and finally separation of homes.

#### 5.3.2 Employment guarantees and single parenthood

The result of this analysis of the data collected showed that employment guarantees significantly improve the social well-being of single parenthood. The result of this study was in line with the findings of Miller (2009) who asserted that employment guarantees is associated with many beneficial outcomes which reduce risks of poverty and material deprivation investment in future employability, access to insurance-based, social security and pension, self-realization; self-efficacy, social network, and health. Govnick and Jantti (2012) opined that a variety of social policies have been documented to benefit the well-



being of single parenthood. Many studies have examined the impact of redistributive social policies on reducing the economic insecurity of single-parent families. Child benefits were found to be effective in reducing single-parent poverty particularly when their design is targeted towards single parenthood.

### **5.3.3 Free and compulsory education and support strategies**

From the data collected on the hypothesis of this study, it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between free and compulsory education and support strategies. The findings were in line with the finding of Otu & Charles (2009) who posited that education is an investment in human beings, education has been ranked as the best legacy any conscientious leader, government, or parent could leave for his/her people. This is important because the quality of education given to people determines the standard of growth achieved. In line with the result of this finding, Amaeke (2010) posited that the educational attainment of wealthy single-parent homes is incomparable with that of poor single homes. Research studies have shown that children from poor single-parent households do not perform well in school as children from wealthy single-parent households. It indicates that respondents were in high support that artificial causes of single parenting are more natural ones. Similarly, it was expressed that women being the most affected gender of single parenting in the locality are at the receiving end.

### **5.3.4 Free health care and support strategies**

Finally, the last hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between free healthcare and support strategies. Free health care is a much-appreciated initiative to address the public health challenges faced by single-parent households and vulnerable people in society. The respondents argue that poor single parents and their children have no access to healthcare services due to the cost of healthcare services in Nigeria. On the whole, single parenting has a negative effect on the well-being of adolescents, such that their talents, abilities may not be fully developed to allow them to achieve self-actualization in life.

## **6. Summary**

The main thrust of this study was to examine the effect of single parenthood and support strategies in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State. In order to accomplish this study, the literature review was done based on the variables of the study. In view of the prevalence of single parenthood, the social learning theory as propounded by Albert Bandura, and the psychosocial theory by Erik Erikson were used to anchor the study.

The methodology used for the study is presented and a research sample of 200 respondents was drawn clustering sampling and stratified random sampling technique was used. The structured questionnaire formed the major instrument for data collection. For the purpose of data analysis, simple percentages and Pearson product-moment correlation statistics were used. The simple percentages serve to analyze the data with

the use of table illustration while the Pearson product-moment correlation serves for testing of hypotheses. From the analyzed data, the major findings are:

- 1) There is a significant effect of income support on single parenthood.
- 2) There is a significant relationship between employment guarantees on the social well-being of single parenthood
- 3) There is a significant relationship between free and compulsory education and support strategies
- 4) There is a significant relationship between free healthcare services and support strategies.

### **6.1 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was deduced that there is a significant relationship between single parenthood and support strategies. The researcher concludes that single parenting has an adverse effect on children's upbringing. Government and non-governmental organizations should provide free health care and education without family support for single parenthood and help them with financial support by empowering them as a means of support strategies.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations put forward as a result of the outcome of this study.

- 1) Government should institute a specific scholarship to assist students of poor single parents who are presently enrolled in school to caution against the effect of their financial strength.
- 2) Stigmatization of single parents and their children should be discouraged forthwith by enacting all relevant laws.
- 3) The government should provide the necessary framework for curriculum experts to address the needs of students from divorce homes during the curriculum planning and development
- 4) Public enlightenment on issues of parental skills, family planning, family values, and child discipline should be done regularly as this would make for an intact family
- 5) Government should provide free healthcare services without social family support for single parenthood and help with financial support by empowering them.

### **6.3 Suggestions for further studies**

The following suggestions are made:

On the basis of this, the researcher suggests a study to be carried out on how stringent conditions can be attached to family separation and access to funds for the children's upkeep. An investigation into the remote causes of the separation of homes from the viewpoint of tradition and religion should be carried out.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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