



## **Single-Parenthood and Educational Challenges of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was carried out to determine the influence of single-parenthood Educational Challenges of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The correlational design was adopted for the study, and the population of the study comprised of 3,350 public senior secondary students from 245 public secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample size of 357 respondents was drawn from the study population by the use of Taro-Yamane's Formula, and the entire sample was studied using the census sampling techniques. The instrument from data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the influence of Single-Parenthood on Educational Challenges of Public Senior Secondary School Students (Q.I.S.E.C.P.S.). The instrument was designed on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA-4points), Agree (A-3points), Disagree (DA-2points) and Strongly Disagree (SDA-1point) respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation and two from the Department of Educational Foundation, all from Rivers State University. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.77. Out of 357 copies of questionnaires administered, 351 denoting 98% were completely filled and returned. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that respondents agreed that single parenthood affect punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State and that, single-parenthood affect enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The following recommendations were made: Parents should avoid unnecessary separation to give their children best education that will help them to live a better life, parents should give their children adequate training and education to avoid their involvement into prostitution and criminal activities that would endanger their lives.

**Keywords:** Single-Parenthood, Education, Public, Senior Secondary Schools

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training and research. A nation or society becomes progressive politically, socially, economically and morally through education, when there is continuity, and survival, of its posterity. For Nwabueze (2011) education is the industry that produces manpower for socio-economic, political and cultural development of the society.

Education is essential for everyone in the society. The level of educational attainment is one of the major factors that help people earn respect and recognition in the society. It is an indispensable part of life both

personally and socially. The importance of education is undeniable for every single person. It goes without saying that education has a positive effect on human life. It is through education that people are able to gain knowledge and enlarge their view over the world. For example, learning by watching TV or reading books give people a huge amount of information about anything they are interested in such as mathematics, current affairs, exchange rates, foreign news, cultures, among others. Apparently, people may become more useful and civilized if they are better educated. In areas where residents are not able to receive adequate education, life cannot be as thriving and prosperous as it is in societies where there is a high standard for education.

Education also plays a rudimentary role on society that one cannot imagine life without it. It is a determined element for the civilization of human society. Not only does it help people develop healthy surroundings but it also generates an advanced community. As a matter of fact, everything one creates today is based on the knowledge obtained throughout life by way of education. This assists scientists in inventing equipment and devices, resulting in technological advancement and growth. The more developed life becomes, the more necessary education is for everyone. Additionally, every child should be given equal opportunities to learn and study because the development of a country depends vastly on the standard of education. Though, the educational systems of different countries are not similar, they share a common goal which is to provide its citizens with adequate opportunities suitable for the development of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities.

The attitude of Parents towards education affects their children's interests in education and their level of academic achievement. Parents who show total disregard for education, literacy or other forms of social advancement are bound to have some adverse effect on their children's educational development. In line with the foregoing, Morrish (1972) expresses that it is the examples of parents, and not their precepts that affect their children.

Single-parenthood arises when one out of two people is responsible for a child's upbringing, and the work meant for two people is now being carried out by only one person (Oluwatosin & Joseph, 2011). Single-parenting is emotionally and psychologically destabilizing, considering the challenges of becoming the bread-winner and a single parent for the family. Weaver (2004) observes that raising children can be both rewarding and challenging; hence, it assumes an overwhelming task, sometimes. Single parenting, therefore is likely to be more difficult. In the process, one parent tries to do the work of two and issues may be complicated by other parents, or relatives as well as friends, all of who are likely to have their own different idea on how children should be raised.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Single parenting is a very important social issue that can have significant effects on a child's academic success. Children who are raised in a single family home are likely to be at risk of not reaching their full potential. Such students within Nigerian educational system encounter many challenges in their family lives and may carry these challenges into the classroom.

The family structure, ideally, provides a sense of security and stability that is necessary for children. When there is a breakdown in the family structure, it may have tremendous impact on the children, including their ability to function properly or achieve academic success. In many situations, the children no longer have two parents to depend on. Consequently, they rely on one parent to meet most, if not all their needs. With limited finances, time and availability, single parents are less likely to provide the needed adequate support for the children to perform to the best of their ability. This is not to say, necessarily, that the single parent raising them is not providing them with more than adequate love and attention; rather, the single parent model within itself comprises of many types that can affect his/her children's level of academic success.

However, there are many students within the school system who come from single-parent families. Due to many issues that stem from the single family model, some students are not likely to reach their full potential, as the single-parent model rapidly becomes the norm in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine single-parenthood and educational challenges of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine how single-parenthood affect punctuality of public senior secondary school male and female students in Rivers State.
2. Determine how single-parenthood affect enrolment age of public senior secondary school male and female students in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. How does single-parenthood affect punctuality of public senior secondary school male and female students in Rivers State?
2. How does single-parenthood affect enrolment age of public senior secondary school male and female students in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between single-parenthood and punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between single-parenthood and enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed the correlational research design to investigate the influence of single parenthood on academic achievement of public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed on a four (4) point type of rating scale of High Extent (4-points), Moderate Extent (3-points), Low Extent (2-points) and Very Low Extent (1-point) respectively. The questionnaire was validated by three experts and the internal consistency of the questionnaire items 0.86. The question was administered with the help of two trained research assistants. Mean and standard deviations were raised to answer the research questions, while PPMC statistics was used to test the null hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *How does single-parenthood affect punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Mean Responses on the Effect of Single-Parenthood on Punctuality of Public Senior Secondary School Male and Female Students in Rivers State (N = 351)**

S/No.	Item – Statement	Male (103)			Female (248)		
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Rmks	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Rmks
1.	Students from single parents come to school late because of their involvement in overloaded domestic activities.	3.00	0.63	Agreed	3.01	0.64	Agreed
2.	Students from single parents come to school late because of lack of affordable transportation fare to school.	2.72	1.15	Agreed	2.80	1.13	Agreed
3.	Students from single parents come to school late because the distance of school from home is not treckable	2.79	0.75	Agreed	2.81	0.75	Agreed
4.	Students from single parents come to school late due to serious engagement in small scale business to fend for the family.	2.69	0.84	Agreed	2.72	0.85	Agreed
5.	Students from single parents often serve as house servants/maids that is why they come to school late.	3.20	0.81	Agreed	3.14	0.84	Agreed
6.	Students from single parents come to school late because of the involvement in morning sales.	3.55	0.57	Agreed	3.25	0.70	Agreed
<b>Grand <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD</b>		<b>2.99</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Source: Field Survey (2022)**

Data in Table 4.1 above shows that all the items (1-6) had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean on the effect of single-parenthood on punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 2.99/2.96 that was above the criterion mean of 2.50, respondents agreed that single parenthood affect punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State by stating that: students from single parents come to school late because of their involvement in overloaded domestic activities, students from single-parents come to school lake because of lack of affordable transportation fare to school, students from single parents come to school late because the distance of school from home is not treckable, students from single-parents come to school late due to serious engagement in small scale business to fend for the family, students from single-parents often serve

as house servants/maids, that is why they come to school late and students from single-parents come to school late because of their involvement in morning sales.

**Research Question 2:** *How does single-parenthood affect enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Summary of Analysis of Mean Responses on the Effect of Single-Parenthood on Enrolment Age of Public Senior Secondary School Male and Female Students in Rivers State (N = 351)**

S/No.	Item – Statement	Male (103)			Female (248)		
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Rmks	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Rmks
7.	Students from single parents work harder to assist their lone parents to buy uniforms and textbooks for their enrolment.	2.70	0.02	Agreed	2.65	1.01	Agreed
8.	Students from single parents work harder to assist their lone parents pay for their enrolment levies.	3.11	0.74	Agreed	2.77	0.60	Agreed
9.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because of their low self-esteem.	2.97	0.92	Agreed	2.60	0.77	Agreed
10.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because of their negative feelings.	3.03	0.64	Agreed	3.06	0.63	Agreed
11.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because it is difficulty to instill discipline in them.	2.98	0.83	Agreed	3.20	0.81	Agreed
12.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they usually feel lonely among other students.	3.19	0.78	Agreed	3.41	0.70	Agreed
13.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they normally have behavioural problems.	3.00	0.77	Agreed	2.99	0.79	Agreed
14.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they feel guilty for late enrolment among others.	2.98	0.90	Agreed	3.04	0.88	Agreed
15.	Single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they have relationship problems.	3.41	0.58	Agreed	3.39	0.59	Agreed
<b>Grand <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD</b>		<b>3.04</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Data in Table 4.2 above shows that all the items (7-15) had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean on the effect of single-parenthood on enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 3.04/3.01 that was above the criterion mean of 2.50, respondents agreed that single-parenthood affect enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State by stating that: Students from single parents work harder to assist their lone parents to buy uniforms and textbooks for their enrolment, students from single parents work harder to assist their lone parents pay for their enrolment levies single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because of their low self-esteem, single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because of their negative feelings, single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because it is difficulty to instill discipline in them, single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they usually feel lonely among other students, single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they normally have behavioural problems, single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they feel guilty for late enrolment among others and single-parenthood fare worse on students enrolment age because they have relationship problems.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between single-parenthood and punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis of the Mean Responses on the Effect of Single-Parenthood on Punctuality of Public Senior Secondary School Students**

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	$\sum xy$	$\alpha$	Df	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Single Parenthood	2.99	0.79						
			88,078	0.05	349	-0.3162	$\pm 0.1946$	Accepted
Punctuality	2.96	0.82						

The data in Table 3 showed that Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) r-calculated value of -0.316 at 346 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, while the r-critical table value is  $\pm 0.1946$ . Since the calculated r-value of -0.3162 is less than the r-critical table value of  $\pm 0.1946$ , the hypothesis was upheld. This implies that respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the relationship single-parenthood and punctuality of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between single-parenthood and enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Table 4: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis of the Mean Responses on the Effect of Single-Parenthood on Enrolment Age of Public Senior Secondary School Students**

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	$\sum xy$	$\alpha$	Df	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Single Parenthood	3.04	0.79						
			77,281	0.05	349	-0.13	$\pm 0.1946$	Accepted
Enrolment Age	3.01	0.75						

Information in Table 4 showed the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) r-calculated value of -0.13 at 349 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, while the r-critical table value is  $\pm 0.1946$ . Since the calculated r-value of -0.13 is less than the r-critical table value of  $\pm 0.1946$ , the hypothesis was upheld. This implies that respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the relationship single-parenthood and enrolment age of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Single-Parenthood and Punctuality of Public Senior Secondary School Students**

The finding of this study revealed that single-parenthood influence students punctuality because, students from single-parents come to school late because of their involvement in overloaded domestic activities, lack of affordable transportation fare to school, distance of school from home, serious engagement in small scale business to fend for the family, serve as house servants or maids and because of their involvement in morning sales amongst others.

### **Single-Parenthood and Students Enrolment Age**

The finding of this study also revealed that single-parenthood influence students enrolment age because students from single parents work harder to assist their lone parents to buy uniforms and textbooks for their enrolment, pay for their enrolment levies, single parenthood fare wore on students enrolment age because of their low esteem, negative feelings, because it is difficult to instill descriptive in them, they usually feel lonely among other students, normally have behavioural problems, feel guilty for late enrolment among others, they have relationship problems amongst others.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it was revealed that students who dropped out or withdraw from school prematurely end up not obtaining any certificate of graduation as well as contributing their quota towards nation building. The parents should avoid family separation and send their children to school for better improvement in life. Hence, drop-out rates among students can be minimized by making education free for all, awarding scholarship to those who cannot pay school fees and literary campaign/vocational counseling.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should avoid unnecessary separation to give their children best education that will help them to live a better life.
2. Parents should give their children adequate training and education to avoid their involvement into prostitution and criminal activities that would endanger their lives.

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