

IMPACT OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Ashwannie Harripersaud

Ministry of Education, Guyana

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15119593>

Abstract: The prevalence of single-parent households worldwide has sparked extensive research on the developmental outcomes of children raised in such family structures. One crucial aspect of child development is education, which serves as a fundamental determinant of future socioeconomic mobility. This study explores the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes by reviewing existing scientific literature. The analysis reveals that children from single-parent families often face challenges related to emotional, psychological, and social development, which, in turn, affect their academic performance. Key factors influencing these educational disparities include reduced parental time allocation to childrearing and the financial constraints associated with single-income households. Additionally, the study examines differences in outcomes between children raised by single mothers versus single fathers, highlighting the varying degrees of disadvantage they experience. Socioeconomic status further exacerbates these disparities, as children from lower-income single-parent households are disproportionately affected. The findings underscore the need for targeted policy interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of single parenthood on children's education. Strategies such as financial support, educational programs, and community-based initiatives are essential in bridging the gap and promoting equal opportunities for all children. By addressing these disparities, policymakers and educators can contribute to more equitable educational outcomes and long-term social mobility.

Keywords: Single parenthood, educational outcomes, Child development, Socio-economic disparities, Policy interventions

1.0 Introduction

Millions of children are raised by single parents worldwide. This fact has necessitated extensive research on children living without one biological parent, and international scientific literature provides ample evidence of the potentially negative effect of growing up with a single caregiver on various aspects of the child's development. One of the key dimensions of personal development is the ability of young individuals to acquire and use education as the most important form of capital in the present world. From an educator's perspective, exploring the extent to which growing up in single-parent families affects the educational outcomes of children. This article aims to address this issue by reviewing the most recent scientific findings on the link between single parenthood and children's educational outcomes; it discusses their implications in terms of practical public health interventions.

In this study, we examined the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes. The effects of single parenthood on children are far-reaching and long-lasting, and they have consequences on the emotional,

psychological, and social development of children. Educational outcomes are linked inextricably to the rates and fullness of these developmental variables. First, the international literature on the impact of single parenthood on children's educational attainment will be reviewed. The themes of time allocation to childrearing and the financial implications of single parenthood are investigated. This review is extended to also cover findings more specific to single mothers and fathers. Finally, this paper critically argues how single parenthood tends to affect different socioeconomic groups to different extents, and the implications this may have for international and national policies in reducing inequalities due to single parenthood.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the academic performance of children in single parent households.
2. To identify the contributing factors to educational outcomes.
3. To assess the psychological and social effects on education.
4. To evaluate the role of school and community support systems.
5. To provide policy recommendations.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for several key reasons. This research provides critical insights that can inform policymakers in developing targeted interventions and support systems tailored to the unique challenges faced by single-parent families, thereby ensuring equitable education opportunities for all children. The findings can guide educational institutions and community organizations in the effective allocation of resources, prioritizing programmes and support services where they are most needed. This research also highlights the importance of parental involvement and support programs designed to empower single parents to enhance their engagement in their children's education. Beyond academic performance, this study addresses the social and emotional well-being of children, enabling educators and counsellors to offer holistic support.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does the educational performance of children from single-parent households compare to that of children from two-parent households?
2. What specific factors associated with single parenthood (e.g., economic status, parental involvement, social support) most significantly influence children's educational outcomes?
3. To what extent does the gender of a single parent (mother versus father) affect the educational achievements of children in single-parent families?
4. How do the educational outcomes of children from single-parent households vary by age and what developmental stages are most affected?
5. What role do community- and school-based support systems play in mitigating the educational challenges faced by single-parent children?
6. How do cultural and societal attitudes toward single parenthood influence the educational outcomes of children from single parent families in different regions or countries?

2.0 Literature Review

The number of single-parent families has been increasing in developed and developing countries over the past few decades. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 15 million children lived with a single mother in the U.S. in 2018. In Nigeria, approximately one-fifth of children live with a single parent, mostly the mother. The rise in single-parent families was due to increasing divorce rates, but now a large share of children living with one parent are born to unmarried mothers, a trend that has also increased in Nigeria. There is strong

concern about the adverse impact of single parenthood on children's development, particularly on their educational outcomes. Although numerous studies have examined the consequences of single parenthood in the United States and other Western countries, only a few have focused on developing countries like Guyana. It seems clear that the impact of single parenthood on children's educational development is not worthy of investigation by policy-makers or members of the academic community.

Early studies on single parenthood identified that single parenthood was associated with lower educational attainment and cognitive outcomes in children. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) comprehensively reviewed the literature before and during the 1990s and noted that single parenthood was associated with most types of social problems. However, it was difficult for them to determine whether these associations are due to the disadvantages of single parenthood. Pre-existing differences imply that the adverse outcomes are not due to single parenthood itself, although being a single parent is associated with limitations that make life more difficult.

Research has consistently demonstrated the significant impact of family structure on children's educational and occupational outcomes. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) found that children raised in single-parent or stepparent families achieve lower educational attainment than those living with both biological parents, with the strength of these correlations varying based on the control variables used in their analysis. Biblarz and Raftery (1999), after accounting for factors such as the mother's employment and occupation, observed that children living with either biological parents or a single mother tended to have higher educational and occupational outcomes than those raised by a stepparent or a single father. Similarly, Wojtkiewicz (1993) and Boggess (1998) identified a negative and significant correlation between living with a stepfather and children's educational attainment. Collectively, these studies highlight the advantages of a two-biological-parent household in fostering favorable outcomes for children.

Interpreting the correlations between family structure and children's educational outcomes as evidence of causation requires assuming that family structure is exogenous, an assumption that does not hold if processes simultaneously influence both family structure and children's educational outcomes. To address this endogeneity, researchers have adopted various identifying assumptions. Manski, Sandefur, McLanahan, and Powers (1992) investigated how different parametric and identification assumptions affect the estimated impact of family structure on educational outcomes. They found that the estimated effect was sensitive to the assumptions used. They concluded that achieving a more precise understanding of the causal effect requires incorporating prior knowledge of the mechanisms driving both family structure and children's educational outcomes. However, if social scientists differ in their views about these mechanisms, their estimates of the family structure effect will vary (p. 36).

Subsequent research that addresses the endogeneity of family structure supports the conclusion that assumptions and methodologies significantly affect estimated impacts. Fixed effects estimators, which account for unobserved family characteristics correlated with both child outcomes and family structure, consistently reveal a negative and significant effect of family structure on educational outcomes, as shown by studies such as Ermisch and Francesconi (2001), Case, Lin, and McLanahan (2001), and Evenhouse and Reilly (2001). However, Gennetian (2001) found no significant effect of family structure on cognitive assessment in children. Some researchers have used parental death as a quasi-natural experiment to explore the impact of family structure, with studies by Lang and Zagorsky (2001), Corak (2001), and Biblarz and Gottainer (2000) concluding that parental absence due to death has a less detrimental impact on children's outcomes than parental absence caused by divorce. Longitudinal analyses comparing children's educational outcomes before and after divorce have also provided mixed results.

Cherlin et al. (1991) found that elementary school children who later experienced parental divorce showed poor academic performance even before the family structure changed, whereas Painter and Levine (2000) found no evidence of prior poor performance among teenagers when examining their educational outcomes.

In the Caribbean, most of the existing literature focuses on the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational outcomes. To the extent that marital status and socioeconomic status are linked, single parenthood could affect the educational outcomes of children in the region. According to UNICEF, “advances in neuroscience have proven that when children spend their earliest years in a nurturing, stimulating environment, new neural connections can form a once-in-a-lifetime speed of 1000 per second. These connections help determine their health, ability to learn and deal with stress, and even influence their earning capacity as adults.” The aim of this research is to fill the gap in the literature on the Caribbean and the wider developing countries by offering evidence on the effect of single parenthood on the educational attainment of Caribbean children and identifying possible policy implications and recommendations.

The large literature on the determinants of educational outcomes of individuals and, more recently, the small but growing literature examining the issue in the context of developing countries, have shown that parental education and family income and wealth are significant factors associated with the educational performance of children. Furthermore, relative to other types of parental involvement, a considerable number of studies have also shown that the early involvement of mothers has a significant effect on the children's language and reading ability. Although the literature on the educational outcomes and behaviors of children has been thriving, the relationship between single parents and children's cognitive skills-related outcomes has not been studied extensively, particularly in the context of the Caribbean and other developing countries.

Single parenthood is a global phenomenon that characterizes many families in Guyana. Single parenthood, a form of family diversity, can have an impact on children's behavior and educational achievement. Some studies have indicated that children from single-parent homes have poorer educational outcomes than other children, which can be attributed to lower incomes, less parental involvement in education, and increased behavioral difficulties. Stuart (1996) states “The Caribbean is distinguished by the high incidents of female heads of household.” According to official statistics, 22%–44% of women in CARICOM countries are sole heads of households.

In western countries, the proportion of single-parent families, particularly those led by mothers, has increased because of increases in separation and divorce rates. However, Guyana has a relatively high proportion of female-headed and single-parent households. According to Guyana's 2012 census report, 15.3% of all households were female-headed single-parent households. The increase in single mothers heading their families has been a pressing concern in Guyana for some time. The implications for children, especially for educational outcomes, have garnered international attention. According to Guyana Times (2018), “it is believed that there is a huge percentage of children growing up in single-parent headed homes [in Guyana]; in most cases without the much-needed guidance and support of a father figure.” By specifically examining one aspect of children's welfare, their educational outcomes—this literature review analyzes previous research on the topic and discusses findings from international research that suggests such implications.

According to UNICEF, more than half of the population of children aged between three and four years old in 74 countries (approximately 40 million) have fathers who do not engage in early learning activities with their children. The examination of single parenthood households in this literature review is especially important for Guyana as the number of single parents continues to increase. Given the pervasiveness of single-mother households within the country and the economic strain that some women may face when they become mothers,

as well as the lack of institutional or state support, single mothers in Guyana often find themselves in a vulnerable position.

2.1 Historical Perspectives

A historical examination of attitudes toward single parenthood provides context for the study's conceptual framework. Single parenthood has been "known since time immemorial", and researchers have long been interested in assisting single parents. While attitudes have changed over the last century, they have not yet become entirely positive. In the early 1900s, single-parent godmothers and godfathers cared for children after the death of a parent. While still stigmatized, governmental policies began to focus on understanding and reducing the burdens of single parenthood in subsequent years.

Despite historical attention granted to single mothers, either through policy or legislation, concerns over the impact of single-father households have not been as widely explored. The creation of government-targeted policies, such as welfare or social welfare, based on the number of male earners provides unique opportunities to study attitudes toward households headed by one female or male parent. In general, widowed or divorced mothers of adult children were found to be more economically disadvantaged and depressed after the exit of their spouse. Neither the women nor men experienced negative effects based on the sex of the head of the household. Overall, women in the study have experienced more difficulties post-divorce than men. To some extent, married and single fathers (and mothers) who use these public services have children who may benefit from a plethora of services in the community. These forms of social support may help prevent or reduce negative educational outcomes for children.

World Vision International has shown that a preponderance of single-parent households exists in Africa. Asian countries like Nepal, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste have almost half of all children growing up without one of their parents while still living with the other. The demographic situation is different in the Caribbean, where the proportion of children living without both parents is 30%. Data from UNICEF were used to estimate that less than 30% of households in Guyana are headed by single mothers. UNICEF has indicated that 22% of children live with their mother alone. Data from the Bureau of Statistics revealed that 17% of children were single-parent-headed in 2014. The children are not reduced to the legal or marital status of their parents; however, children sometimes pay the price of divorce, separation, duress, and even tragedy in their parents' lives.

2.2 Current Research Findings

The second section of the literature review discusses current empirical evidence related to single parenthood and its impact on children's educational outcomes.

A large body of research, particularly in the field of sociology, has focused on investigating the link between single parenthood and children's education. The primary emphasis of the earlier literature on the topic explored macro-level predictors of childhood educational attainment. However, the recent literature has increasingly shifted to explore maternal characteristics and family structure as determining factors.

While the concept of single parenthood has grown beyond cases of parents not in relationships since the 1980s, to include parents who are cohabiting and those on welfare programs, in addition to those formally defined by marriage status, traditional two-parent households continue to be the norm.

The most common method for conducting empirical research in this area in Guyana involves survey data from parents and children. Scholars are increasingly turning to utilizing longitudinal data to build a more cohesive picture of how single parenthood affects a child's educational outcomes over time, representing a trend away from using a single snapshot of time to discern causality from association.

In substantiating the historical gradual shift toward single parenthood, recent studies have described higher child poverty rates in single-parent households, led predominantly by women, than in homes with two parents. Moreover, children without fathers in the homes, who are living in single-mother households in the labor force, comprise a higher proportion of single-parent households, while children living with unemployed mothers in single-parent households face much smaller proportions, further evidencing the shifting relationship between single parenthood and employment.

3.0 Theoretical Frameworks

This section outlines two influential theories that are conceivably the most frequently used for understanding the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes. Attachment theory was used to explain the emotional process between mothers (parents) and children. Single parents may have different psychological states, resulting in differences in the degree of attachment to their children. However, the following research on the emotional perspective shows that few studies have examined the impacts of single parents on children's emotions, whereas the majority of studies have focused on the influence of single parenthood on children's cognitive, psychological, and physical development. In particular, Social Capital Theory provides a perspective for research on the change in childrearing under single parenthood.

Attachment Theory, developed by John Bowlby in the 20th century, aimed to explain an infant's response to the temporary absence of his/her mother. This theory has since shaped our understanding of personality development and relationships (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby argued that children are biologically predisposed to form attachments and seek closeness with their primary caregiver, who is often the mother, but may also be another person fulfilling the maternal role. To distance his work from earlier deficit-focused terms like "dependency" and "over-dependency," Bowlby introduced the concept of "attachment behaviors" (Bowlby, 1969). These behaviors, defined as "seeking and maintaining proximity to another individual" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 194), help infants remain close to their attachment figure. They manifest through signalling behaviors such as crying and smiling or approach behaviors like following and clinging (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970).

In this section, "Theoretical Frameworks," theoretical basis for problems in single-parent families, including attachment theory and social capital theory, will be introduced. We believe that only these two theories have strong theoretical guiding and practical significance for the study of single-parent families. Using these theories, the impacts of single parenting on children's cognitive, mental, psychological, and physical development were empirically studied in "The Impact of Single Parenthood on Children's Educational Outcomes." Based on the results of the Attachment Theory and with reference to the theory of social capital, we further analyzed the change in human capital and social relations under single parenthood.

3.1. Attachment Theory

John Bowlby's (1956) Attachment Theory has been a fruitful subtheory of psychoanalysis, laying the foundation for a plethora of psychological phenomena. Notably, Bowlby introduced Attachment Theory in the context of the emotional bond between children and parents. The quality of attachment, as well as the internal working model shaped by it, is influenced by the sensitivity and responsiveness of the caregiver, which in turn influences the quality of childcare children receive, specifically in terms of emotional, psychological, cognitive, and social development in childhood. When this is taken into the context of single parenthood, two problems may arise. As suggested, the need to both fulfil the developmental tasks needed for attachment and socialization of their children can lead to sensory overload, which might impair the ability to provide consistent care. Furthermore, the psychological distress of such parents may limit their capacity to provide fluid and organized care. This, in turn,

could affect educational outcomes, as well as the children's levels of attachment and their social development. This gives ground to the hypothesis that single parenthood has a negative impact on predictors of emotional and social development, one of which is academic functioning.

The development of Attachment Theory is significant because it offers insights into how secure early childhood attachments contribute to healthy brain development (Siegel, 2012). An infant's brain is profoundly influenced by early experiences (McCain et al., 2007), with the quality of these experiences playing a crucial role in overall development. Attachment relationships are essential for helping children reach their developmental potential (Colmer, Rutherford, & Murphy, 2011) and have a lasting impact on their physical and mental well-being (McCain et al., 2007).

Given the resource-intensive nature of rearing a child, parental life satisfaction is intrinsically linked to caregiving responsibilities. Following a mixed batch of mainly cross-sectional studies, single parents were found to consistently report higher levels of parental stress and lower levels of life satisfaction compared to coupled parents. Given the possibility of such challenges, it is reasonable to consider whether single parenthood is likely to lead to negative consequences for the well-being and healthy development of children. Given the direct predictive role academic performance has on later life, combined with well-evidenced links between socio-emotional competence, conduct problems, and child well-being, single parenthood can have profound effects on the health, well-being, and life chances of children.

3.2 Social Capital Theory

A theoretical framework relevant to this discussion is Social Capital Theory. Social capital refers to social resources, networks, and relationships that affect outcomes such as educational attainment and earnings. Cognitive and attitudinal outcomes can be influenced and generated by the extent and quality of social capital available to members of a society, as well as the distribution of social capital among families. There are several additional mechanisms and pathways through which social capital may influence educational outcomes and subsequent success, which are discussed in further detail in the following section.

Social capital theory provides a valuable framework for understanding parental involvement in education within the three primary areas of social relations: home, school, and community. This concept connects parental involvement with how parents use their social networks as resources to improve student achievement (Shin, 2009). The quality of social relationships within a family depends on the presence of adults who are willing to dedicate time and resources to help children build strong educational foundations (Coleman, 1988). Coleman (1988) identifies three key forms of social capital—reciprocal expectations and obligations, norms and social control, and knowledge channels—and describes social capital as a functional tool for achieving specific outcomes. In this context, social capital plays a crucial role in enabling parents to support their children's academic success and educational progress.

Social capital theory is useful for this discussion not only because it concerns the role of families and their resources on educational processes and outcomes but also because it is a way to conceptualize the potential scope of the social influences between single parenthood and children's educational experiences. In their thorough review of social capital and its impact on children's educational success and attainment, Coleman and Hoffer (1990) conclude that "in American society, employees' salaries and other rewards are often influenced by personal recommendations and influences. Families with many social contacts (or ties) can thus obtain useful and good jobs for their children. These links also help young renters find housing in tight apartment markets. Such informal

contacts help with just about everything." At its heart, social capital concerns social trust, norms, and networks that affect individual and community outcomes.

3.3 Family Stress Model

The family stress model, proposed by Conger, Conger, and Martin (2010) and Masarik and Conger (2017), provides insights into how stress associated with single parenthood affects children's educational attainment in several ways. This model draws on the family investment model of Waldfogel (2007), which suggests that in families with lower levels of income and human capital, resources for children's optimal development and educational attainment tend to be scarce. The Family Stress Model, on the other hand, provides a theoretical perspective through which family stressors may mediate the relationship between single parenthood and children's educational attainment. Conger and Elder (1994) suggest that the influence of major stressors, such as the stress associated with a single-parent household, is "spatiotemporal". The Family Stress Model posits that marital loss is a major life stressor that leads to a depletion of family income and cumulative negative changes in parental well-being, which affect children. The loss of spousal support and shared resources disrupts the broader environment of at-risk families, such as that of the children affected by these circumstances.

The Family Stress Model stipulates that these stressors reduce parental psychological well-being, create negative parenting styles, and increase parental distress, all of which put children at risk. Conger (2010) adds that the experience of marital distress may affect parenting indirectly by undermining positive, effective relationships among adults, reducing the support of noncustodial biological parents, or by generating social support networks among families. In this way, new forms of social support reflecting the changing nature of motherhood may promote positive parenting roles, thereby reinforcing human capital development among children in single-parent households. Consequently, the Family Stress Model recognizes that children may be indirectly affected by parental loss, which is a process informed by family resources (Conger and Elder 1994), family functioning, and environmental factors (Conger et al. 2009).

4.0 Methodology

Various methodological approaches have been employed to examine the link between single parenthood and children's educational outcomes. The researcher approached this issue quantitatively and found that living in a mother-headed single-parent family is associated with a lower grade point average, an increased likelihood that the student will be expelled, and an increased likelihood of repetition of a grade. Additionally, the research suggests that boys may be more affected by single parenthood.

In contrast to quantitative research, other researchers have explored the question qualitatively. For example, research involving hour-long interviews with 50 parents and grandparents living in the Caribbean region. The researchers do not present direct evidence concerning children's educational outcomes, but parents do describe the financial and time pressures that come with single parenthood and the relevance these have for child outcomes in the present.

The research also takes a qualitative approach in examining the effect of single parenthood on children's educational achievement. The researcher interviewed 150 children as well as their mothers (40% of whom were single parents) and 60 female teachers. Teachers rated children in mother-headed families lower in achievement and behavior, yet children in mother-headed families reported no less support or involvement at home. This may suggest that the children in single-parent homes perceived an entitlement to do less well at school because of their family environment. Discussing their results, the researcher cites qualitative work that tests the effect of single parenthood on children, finding no significant effect on any child outcome aside from an impact on aggression.

The researcher used a stratified sample to locate 50 single-parent families and 50 two-parent families in East Corentyne, Berbice, Guyana, and interviewed 10-12-year-old children living in these households. The interviews were semi-structured, forming the central aspect of this research. Findings show that there is no statistically significant difference in the number of daily hours spent on homework or school-related absences or suspensions between the single-parent and two-parent groups. The outcome that appeared to differ because of single parents was average grades and the likelihood that children would retaliate if they thought someone was picking on them.

4.1 Quantitative Studies

Crosnoe and Cook (2018) reviewed the literature on the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes through quantitative research methods. According to them, researchers most often use quantitative methods for this type of study because it helps illuminate the statistical patterns of ethnic minorities in different contexts. Registry data and surveys on social sciences and health, as well as child development, provide sufficient numerical data for evaluating how single parenthood clearly impacts educational achievement and other outcomes of interest. Using not only interview data but also biological and genetic data gives us a more holistic and intimate understanding of single parenthood and child upbringing, child support patterns, early neuro-cognitive development, as well as personality and emotions.

The two measures used in the quantitative assessments of single parents and educational achievement are bivariate analysis and regression analysis. Bivariate analysis involves calculating the correlation—normally Pearson's—between the dependent variable (such as whether a youth graduated high school) and the independent (or determinant) variable, such as single parenthood. Regression analysis, on the other hand, estimates the treatment effect of single parenthood by minimizing the sum of squared residuals.

4.2 Qualitative Studies

Unlike large-scale survey research that requires the application of quantitative techniques such as logistic regression and propensity score matching to unravel relationships, qualitative studies aim to comprehend relationships from the perspective of individuals. They allow researchers to think about the meaning of observed associations and develop theories that can subsequently be tested using controlled experimental designs or quantitative observational studies. Another advantage of qualitative methods is the focus on in-depth narratives that explain situational and complex relationships. An interest in the lived experience after a relationship has occurred is a prime strength of discursive psychological methods in understanding how people construct and justify beliefs, values and practices. From this perspective, the parent, child and other partners are in mutually shaping roles through which household distributions and children's educational and social behavior are negotiated and justified.

Some qualitative studies on this topic also explore the relationship between family members and children's educational outcomes from an individual perspective. Qualitative research can uncover variables or links that seem to be missing in statistical studies. Barth (2009), for instance, relates results from a meta-analysis that examines the relationship between different family forms and children's mental health outcomes. The meta-analysis found no significant effect of growing up in a single-parent family. Nonetheless, Barth (1999) provides several caveats to the reliability of those conclusions, as it is difficult to account for family income and financial instability in large sample correlations. He suggests that for comparisons of how children have fared, "the best means at our disposal for untangling the three strands of single parent family function - family structure, income support, and remarriage" (1999:282) is by paying "close attention to temporal ordering and, whenever possible, statistical controls" in the longitudinal setting.

4.3 Mixed-Methods Research

Gadikota and Ruprah (2018) use both quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes in the Caribbean. This type of research is referred to as mixed methods. According to Greene et al. (1989), mixed methods are systematic and disciplined inquiry methods that incorporate multiple methods to explore an area of study to gain a more comprehensive understanding than could be achieved by utilizing one method alone (Miller & Brewer, 2003). More recently, it has been defined as a research strategy for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a program of inquiry.

Creswell and Plano (2007) argue, "A mixed methods approach potentially circumvents these problems by capitalizing on the strengths of the two methods and providing a more robust and complete interpretation". The adolescents were the direct respondents in the survey conducted by Gadikota and Ruprah (2018) to obtain quantitative data. The researchers succeeded in recruiting relevant and correct respondents for interviews through a snowballing method. The authors conclusively stated in their study that missing parent(s) would and could result in the diminished ability of the surviving parent to provide adequate resources (both financial and non-financial) of the right sort to enable children within single-parent households to reach higher levels of schooling, ultimately endowing them with a higher level of human capital conducive to poverty reduction. As such, their study is consistent with Lancaster (1970), Manyika, Rege, and Haslam (2006), who argued that missing resources in single parent families would be at best when only partially compensable.

5.0 Data Collection

The data collection process was carried out as part of a research initiative focused on exploring the topic of *"Impact of Single Parenthood on Children's Educational Outcomes."* Before commencing data collection, participants were briefed on the research's purpose and scope through a concise outline. It was clearly communicated that participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses to encourage openness and honesty.

Each participant received a questionnaire comprising both structured and open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives. Detailed instructions were provided to ensure consistency in understanding and interpretation of the questions. Participants were given the option to complete the questionnaire on the spot, which facilitated immediate data collection and helped reduce potential recall bias. They were encouraged to provide thoughtful and accurate responses to the best of their ability.

To further enrich the data, a randomly selected subset of participants was invited to participate in interviews based on the same set of questions used in the questionnaire. This approach allowed for a comparative analysis of the two datasets, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of the study. During the interviews, the interviewer recorded their responses for subsequent analysis. The collected data from both the questionnaires and interviews were then systematically analyzed to draw meaningful insights that aligned with the research objectives.

5.1 Research Design

This study is designed to empirically examine the impact of single parenthood on educational outcomes for children. The general structure of the research will be analyzed by identifying family units characterized by a change in parental unions through the first few years of their children's lives. Importantly, mother-headed "single parent" families, irrespective of whether there is an involved father or father figure in the child's life, will be thoroughly investigated. A comparison group of nuclear families will be identified using a longitudinal dataset that assesses the educational well-being of the prime child-centric interest.

The dependent variables of interest are children's educational outcomes, reflecting cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Consequently, there are two groups of variables taken into account: children's attainment in relation to National Curriculum-based measures; and then best friend relationship and activities, which are used as children's social and emotional traits proxy. Regarding the characteristics of affected families, the overarching perspective is that children should be at least 5 and no more than 6 years of age at the time of single mothering. This is to reflect the notion of contagion of well-being, which suggests that the well-being of students from single-parent households can influence and be influenced by the well-being of their peers, teachers, and broader school community, particularly in terms of the negative impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Children are mostly affected at this age, whereas an older child, not a teenager, is less likely to adapt and be adversely affected over time.

5.2 Data Collection Methods

This section presents the data collection methods used to address the research questions of this study. The participants and procedures based on which the data will be collected are discussed in detail. Moreover, the reasons behind the decision to use the aforementioned data collection methods are provided to ensure the quality of data to facilitate comprehensive insight into the research questions.

5.2.1. Participants

Participants are selected based on convenience and availability. Responses were divided into two groups, each containing 50 single and 50 partnered parents. The selected sample size agrees with that of similar studies, ensuring data adequacy for robustness of results. Single parents who had the sole caring and financial responsibility for at least one child and were currently rearing that child were included in the study. To ensure comparability, criteria for the sample selection of single and partnered parents were set. The respondents were selected from the same district to minimize regional effects on the research results. The sample selection was conducted with the support of volunteer families who were accepted to participate in the study. In this regard, the sample was selected without any intervention from the researcher. Using the snowball sampling method ensured that the data were collected from potential subjects who could provide insightful responses regarding the research questions of this study.

5.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Empirical findings have been rigorously analyzed using quantitative research to demonstrate and interpret the potential impacts of single parenthood on the educational outcomes of children. As this questionnaire-based study at public sector schools is not a programmed control trial manifesting causality accompanied by in-depth testimony, a preventative measure for biases and controls for regression analyses has been used to generate stronger reliability in the possible results. Various data analysis strategies will be employed to study the responses gathered from 50 single-parent and 50 partnered households by using a predesigned questionnaire.

To gauge the effect of single parenthood on the educational attainment of children in circumstances of single parenthood, data analysis techniques were used:

(i) Attributable treatment effect (ATE), in which first the factors that may increase the chances of children with single parenthood are interpreted; following this, educational attainments using the means will be analyzed. This was followed by determining the treatment effects, which are the differences between the two means (one of the treatment groups with the factor, and the other of the control group without the factor). ATE was performed to determine how the treatment affects the outcome for all children with single parenthood, which was determined by taking a weighted average of the treatment effects over all levels of the factor.

(ii) Stepwise and Blockwise Regression Models for Single Parenthood impact on educational outcomes.

The analysis summarized data collected from single mothers to enable the researcher to determine how those figures have changed among different family types. Descriptive statistics may include the actual response given in the questionnaire, its frequency, and percentages. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 22 in the following manners.

The data were analyzed using various techniques such as the following:

- Patterns of single parenthood.
- Duration of single parenthood.
- Employment status.
- High school and post-high school education and personal growth.
- Family life and childcare.
- Social issues/concerns.
- Problems and challenges.

6.0 Findings

From interview:

Table 1 presents the educational performance of children from single-parent households compared to that of children from two-parent households.

Responses	No. of respondents
Lower test scores and grades	41
Higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates	17
More behavioral problems affecting performance	9
Socioeconomic disadvantages impact academic success	28
Strong support mitigates performance gaps	5

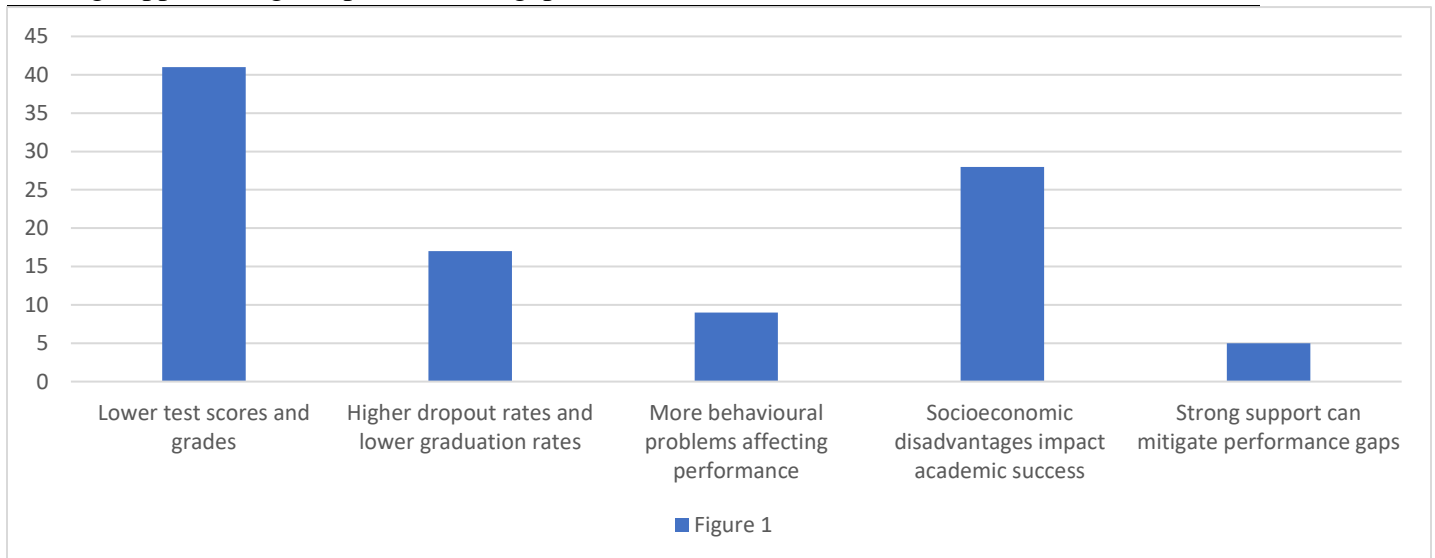


Figure 1 compares the educational performance of children from single-parent households versus two-parent households, revealing that most respondents (28%) attribute lower performance to social economic disadvantages. Many (17%) respondents believe these children face higher dropout and graduation rates, while some (9%) point to behavioral problems as a factor. A smaller group (5%) believed that children from single-parent households had lower test scores and grades, but that strong support could help mitigate these gaps.

Table 2 shows the specific factors associated with single parenthood that most significantly influence children's educational outcomes.

Responses	No. of respondents
Economic status	38
Parental involvement	26
Social support	5
Behavioral issues	13
Stress and instability	11
Access to quality education	7

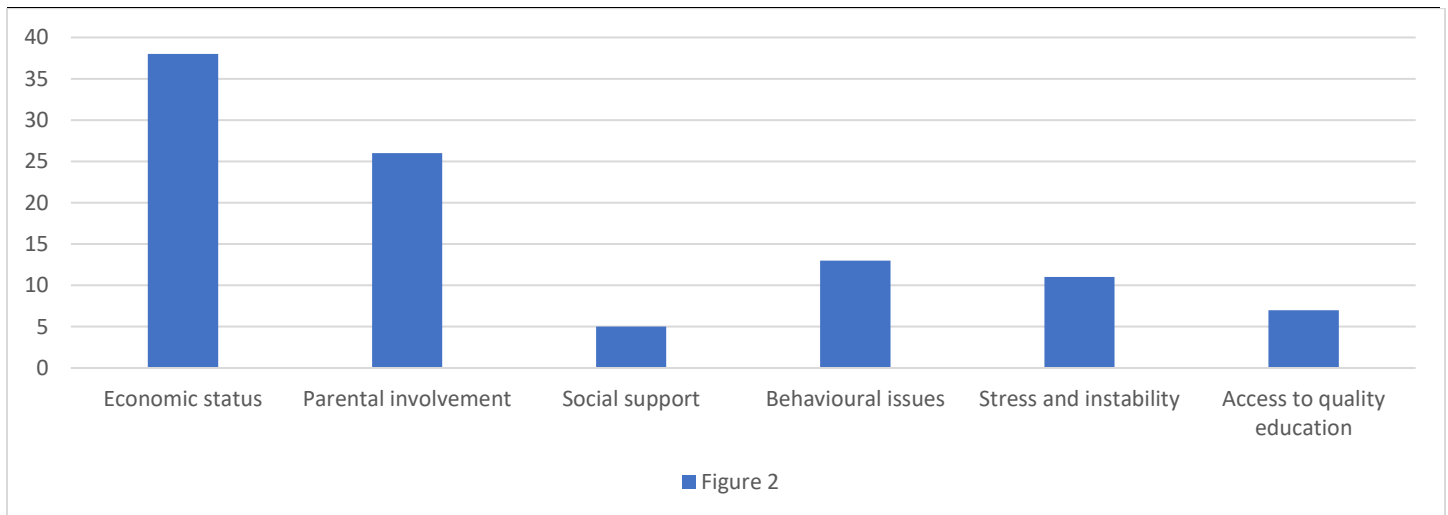


Figure 2 shows that the most significant factor influencing children's educational outcomes in single-parent households was economic status (38%), followed by parental involvement (26%). Behavioral issues accounted for 13%, stress and instability 11%, access to quality education 7%, and social support 5%.

Table 3 shows the extent to which the gender of the single-parent (mother versus father) affected the educational achievements of children in single-parent families.

Responses	No. of respondents
Mothers often show greater involvement in schooling	18
Fathers' involvement can positively impact academic outcomes.	21
Maternal education is typically correlated with children's success	6
Gender differences affect access to educational resources	9
Fathers' engagement varies significantly by socioeconomic status	26
Children benefit from supportive parental figures, regardless of gender	20

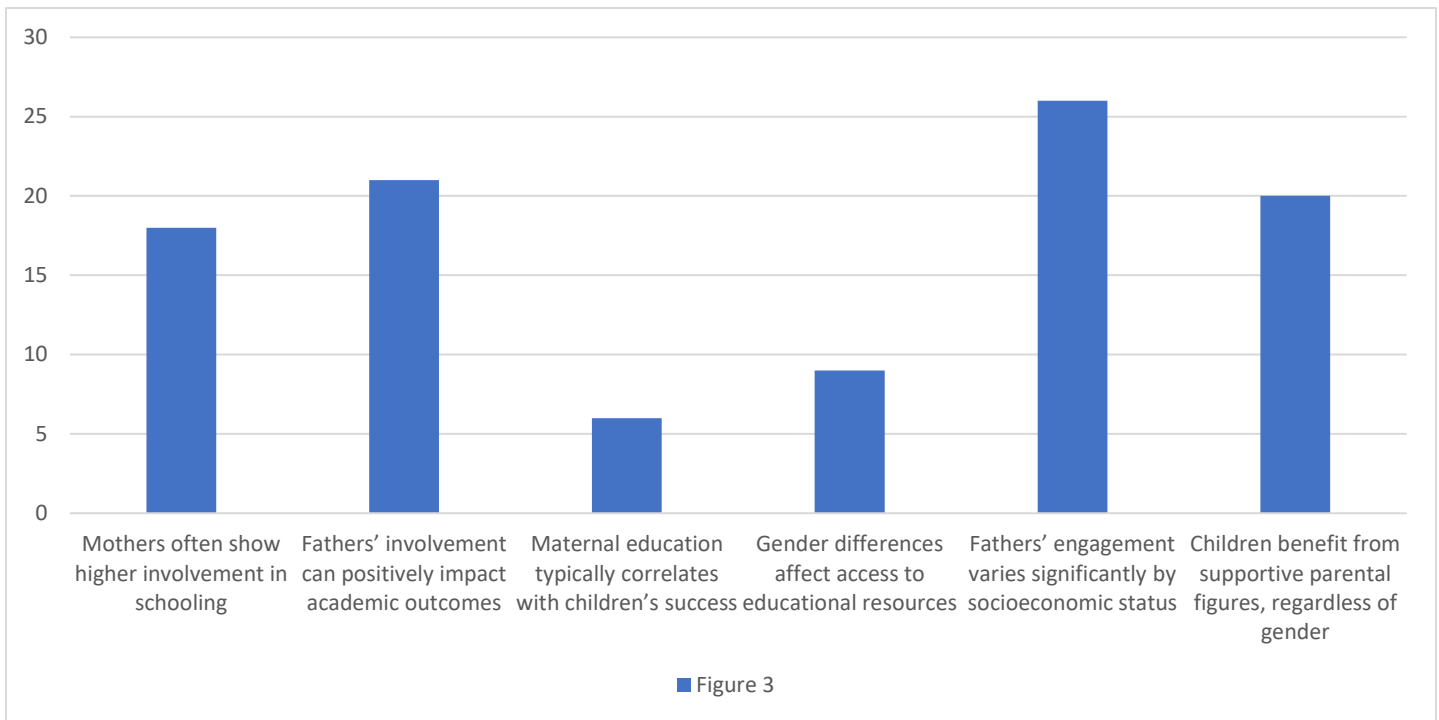


Figure 3 illustrates the impact of single-parent gender on children's educational achievements. Fathers' engagement varies by socioeconomic status (26%) and positively impacts outcomes (21%). Supportive parental figures, regardless of gender, benefit children (20%). Mothers are often more involved in education (18%). Gender differences affect access to resources (9%), and maternal education correlates with children's success (6%).

Table 4 shows how educational outcomes of children from single-parent households vary by age and the developmental stages that are most affected.

Responses	No. of respondents
Early childhood: Economic status affects foundational learning	8
Preschool: Parental involvement is crucial for early literacy	6
Nursery: Stress impacts cognitive and social development	11
Primary: Behavioral issues affect academic engagement.	13
Secondary: Economic pressure influences dropout rates	31
Adolescents: Social support mitigates emotional challenges	14
Transition to adulthood: Access to quality education is critical for future opportunities.	17

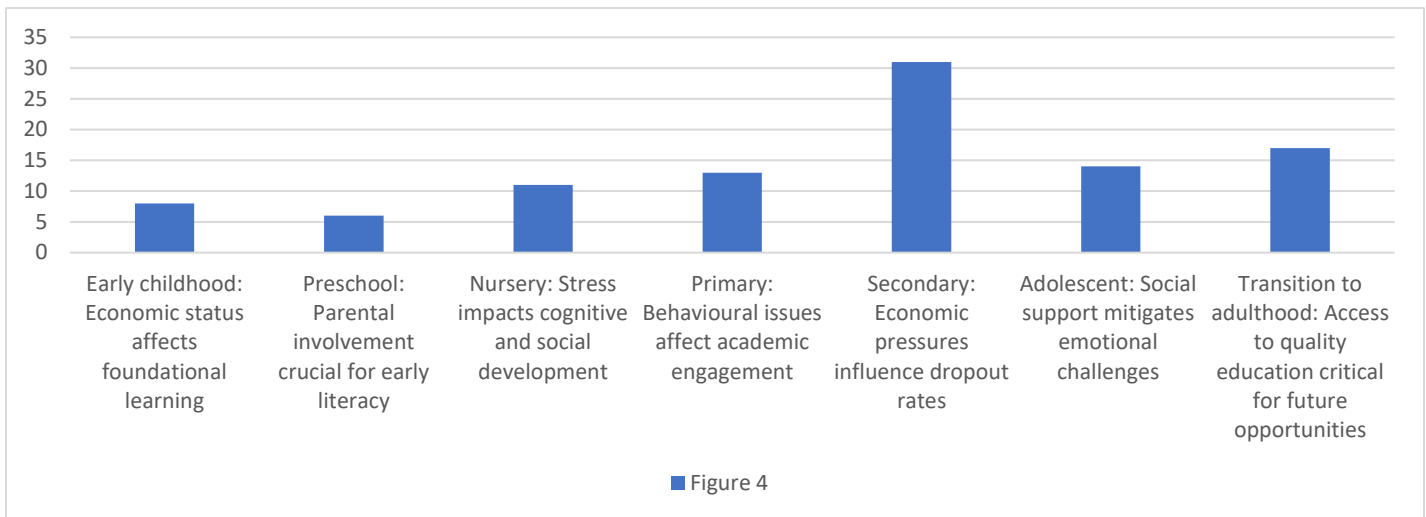


Figure 4 illustrates how educational outcomes of children from single-parent households vary by age, highlighting key developmental stages. Economic pressures significantly influence dropout rates during adolescence, accounting for 31% of the variation, as financial challenges often necessitate work that interferes with schooling. Social support mitigates emotional challenges during this stage, impacting 14% of educational outcomes, emphasizing the role of peers, family, and community programs. During the transition to adulthood, access to quality education is critical for future opportunities, influencing 17% of all outcomes.

Table 5 shows the role that community- and school-based support systems play in mitigating the educational challenges faced by children from single-parent households.

Responses	No. of respondents
Provide emotional stability and mentorship	21
Academic tutoring and homework help	14
Facilitate access to extracurricular activities	26
Create a sense of belonging and community	28
Connecting families with essential resources and services	11

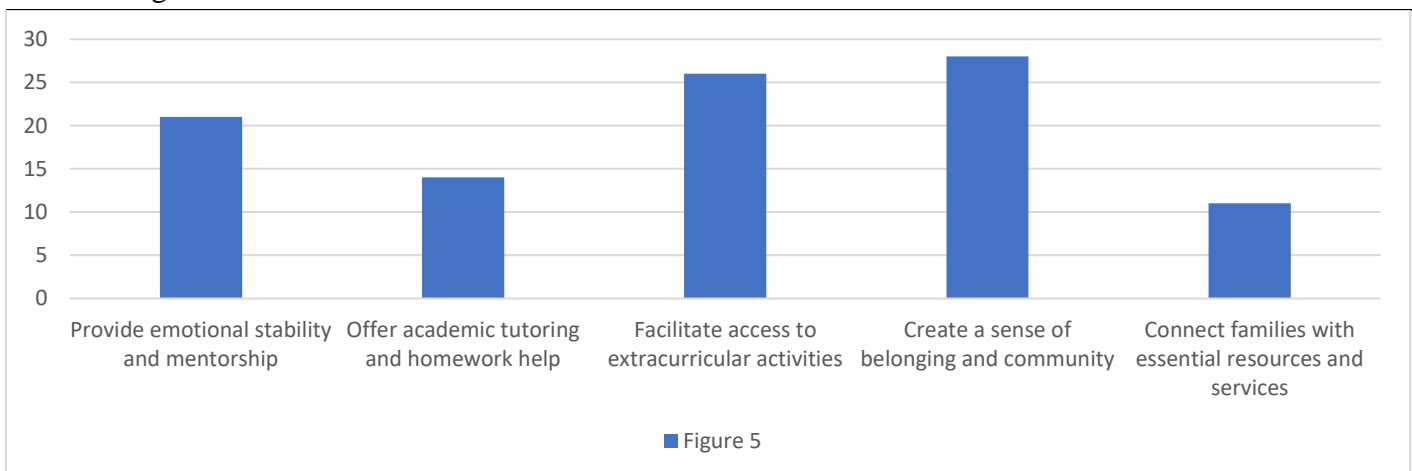


Figure 5 highlights the vital role that community and school-based support systems play in mitigating the educational challenges faced by children from single-parent households. Creating a sense of community belonging is paramount, accounting for 28% of the students, while facilitating access to extracurricular activities,

at 26%. Providing emotional stability and mentorship is also significant at 21%, while offering academic tutoring and homework help constitutes 14%. Lastly, connecting families with essential resources and services, although important, is the least emphasized role at 11%.

Table 6 illustrates how cultural and societal attitudes toward single parenthood influence the educational outcomes of children from single-parent families across different regions or countries.

Responses	No. of respondents
Stigma and Discrimination: Reduces self-esteem and hampers academic performance	27
Social Support Systems: Enhance stability and improve educational outcomes	7
Community Acceptance: Less bullying and better learning environment	14
Economic Opportunities: Financial stability and better educational resources	32
Educational Policies: Promotes equity, supports unique needs	5
Parental Involvement: More support and encouragement for studies	8
Role Models and Representations: Inspire and motivate educational pursuits	7

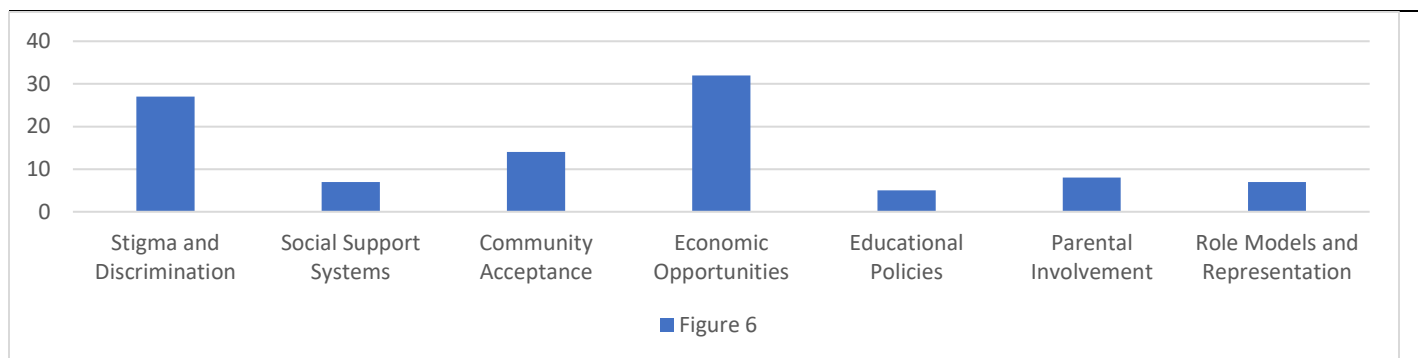


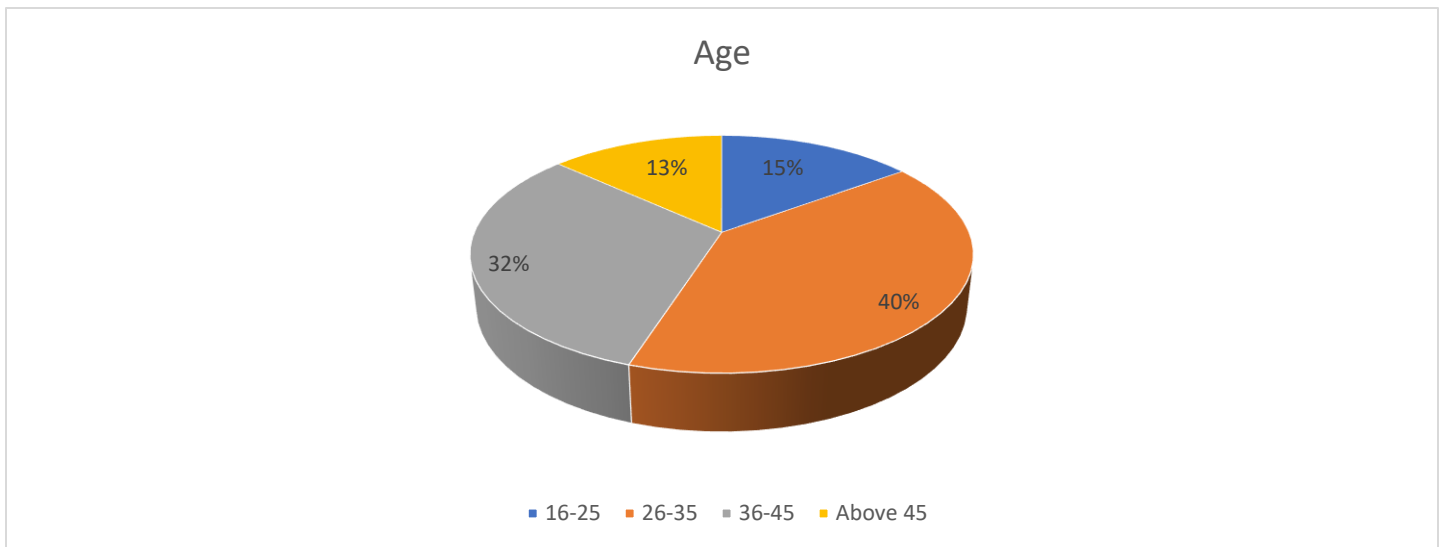
Figure 6 illustrates the factors influencing the educational outcomes of children from single-parent families in different regions or countries. Economic opportunities play the most significant role, accounting for 32%, suggesting that financial stability heavily impacts educational success. Responses to single parenthood, including stigma and discrimination, contribute 27%, indicating that societal attitudes have a substantial effect. Community acceptance (14%) and parental involvement (8%) also play notable roles. Cultural support systems and role model representation accounted for 7% of the participants, highlighting the importance of supportive networks and visible examples of success. Finally, educational policies represent 5%, indicating that while important, systemic educational frameworks are less influential than the aforementioned factors.

From Questionnaire:

Question 1:

What is your age?

Responses (years)	Total
16-25	9
26-35	24
36-45	19
Above 45	8

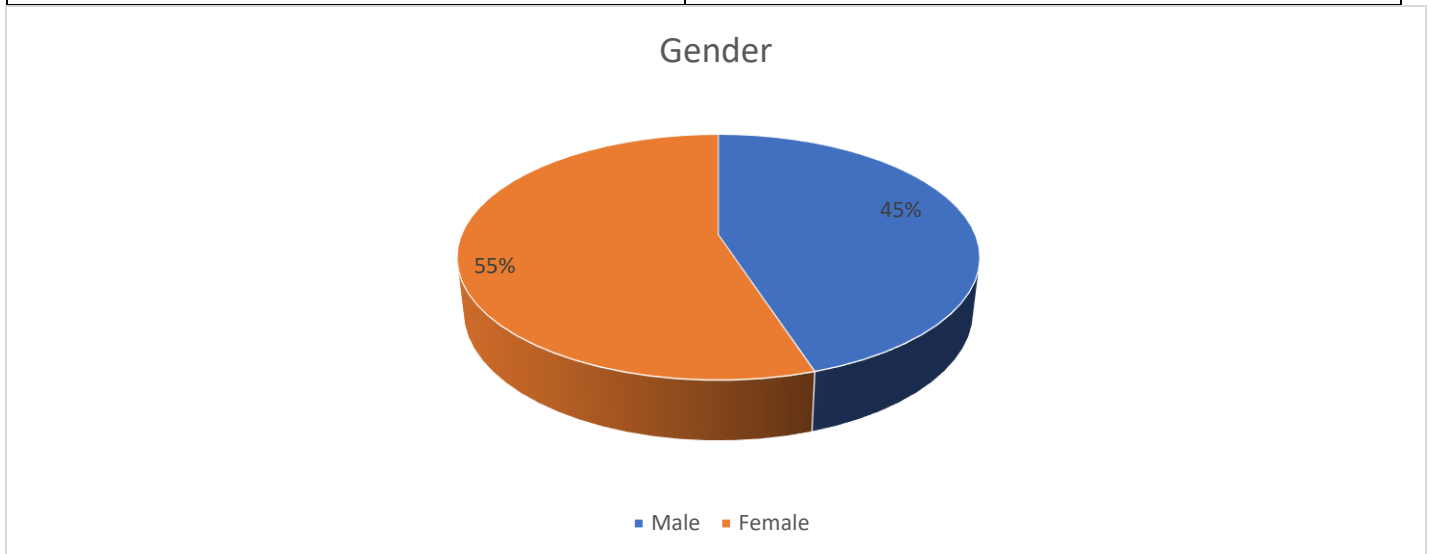


The pie chart visually represents the distribution of responses across four age groups: **16-25**, **26-35**, **36-45**, and **Above 45**. The largest segment belongs to the **26-35 age group**, with **24 responses**, indicating that this group had the highest participation. The **36-45 age group** followed with **19 responses**, while the **16-25 age group** recorded **9 responses**, making it the second smallest category. The **above-45 group** had the fewest responses, with only **8 participants**. This distribution suggests that most respondents were between **26 and 45 years old**, whereas younger and older individuals participated in smaller numbers.

Question 2:

What is your gender?

Responses	Total
Male	27
Female	33

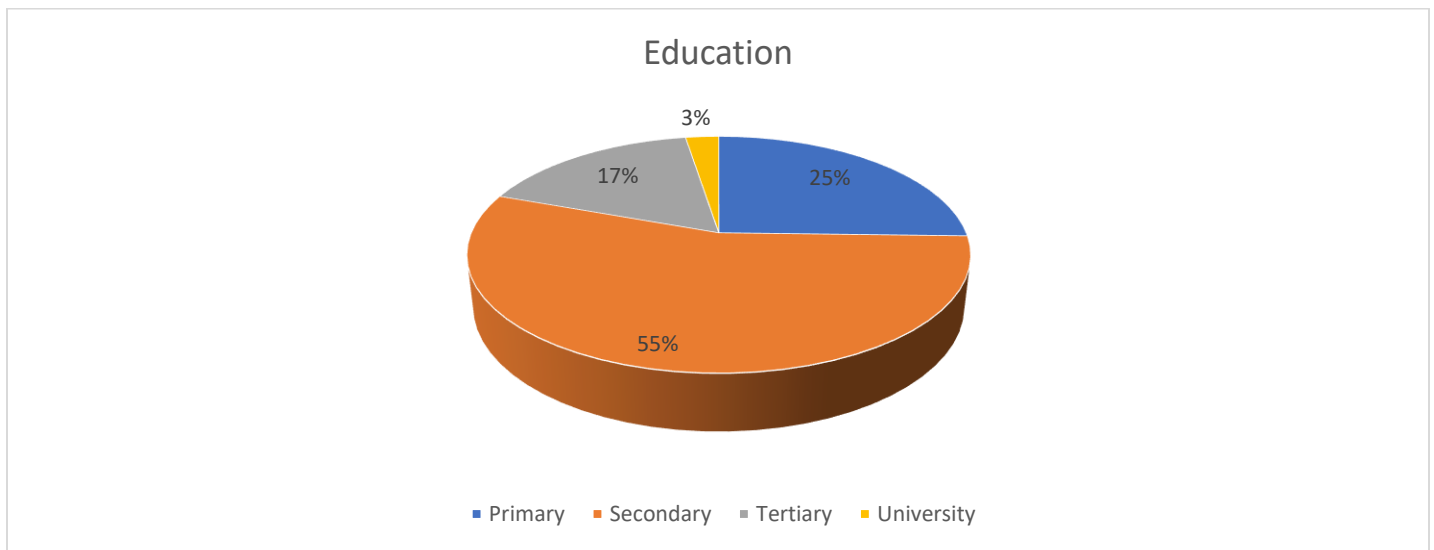


The data represent the gender distribution of respondents. Out of the **60 responses**, **27 were male** and **33 were female**. This indicates that **females made up a slightly larger proportion of respondents (55%) compared to males (45%)**. The difference suggests a relatively balanced participation, with a slight female majority.

Question 3:

What is your highest education level?

Responses	Total
Primary	12
Secondary	26
Tertiary	8
University	12



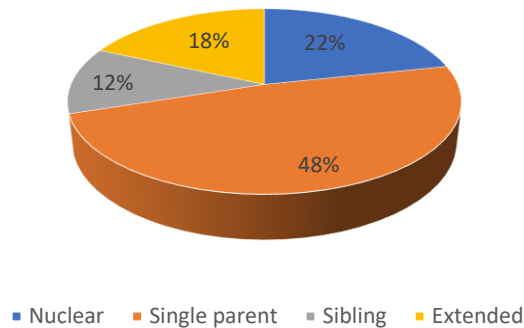
The pie chart representing **education level** shows that most respondents (**26 people**) completed **secondary education**, making it the largest category. **Primary and university education** have an equal number of respondents (**12 each**), indicating a balanced distribution between these two levels. The **tertiary education** category had the fewest responses (**8**), suggesting that fewer individuals pursued vocational or technical training beyond secondary school. This visualization effectively highlights that most participants have at least a secondary education, with fewer advancing to tertiary or university levels.

Question 4:

What is your household structure?

Responses	Total
Nuclear	13
Single parent	29
Sibling	7
Extended	11

Household structure



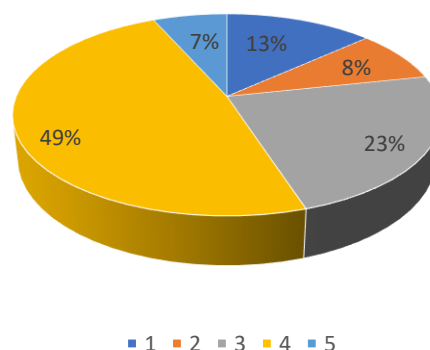
The pie chart representing **household structure** shows that most respondents (**29 individuals**) were from **single-parent households**, highlighting the prevalence of this family structure. This is followed by the **nuclear family** (**13 respondents**), where both parents are present. **Extended family households** accounted for **11 responses**, indicating multi-generational living arrangements, whereas **sibling-headed households** were the least common, with only **7 responses**. The high percentage of single-parent households suggests potential challenges in areas such as **financial stability, educational support, and emotional well-being**, which can directly impact educational outcomes. Children from single-parent households often face **economic hardships, reduced parental supervision, and limited academic support**, making it more difficult for them to pursue higher education. This aligns with previous education-level data, in which fewer respondents advanced beyond **secondary education**, possibly due to financial or social constraints associated with single-parent family structures.

Question 5:

From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the least, how would you describe your child's academic performance?

Responses	Total
1	8
2	5
3	14
4	29
5	4

Academic performance



The pie chart representing **academic performance** on a scale of **1 to 5** shows that most respondents rated their child's performance as **4 (29 responses)**, indicating that most children perform well academically. The second-largest group is **comprised of 3 (14 responses)**, representing average performance. A smaller number of respondents rated their child's performance as **1 (8 responses)** and **2 (5 responses)**, indicating lower academic achievement, while only **4 respondents** rated their child at the highest level of **5 (excellent performance)**.

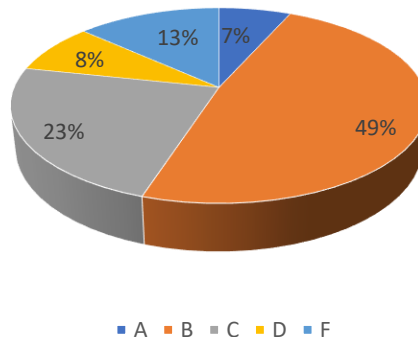
The high number of single-parent households (29 respondents) could contribute to the lower ratings (1 and 2), as single parents often juggle multiple responsibilities, impacting the time and resources available for their child's education. However, the strong representation of **level 4 performance** suggests that many children still manage to perform well, possibly because of resilience, school support, or extended family assistance.

Question 6:

What is your child's average grade in school?

Responses	Total
A	4
B	29
C	14
D	5
F	8

Average grade



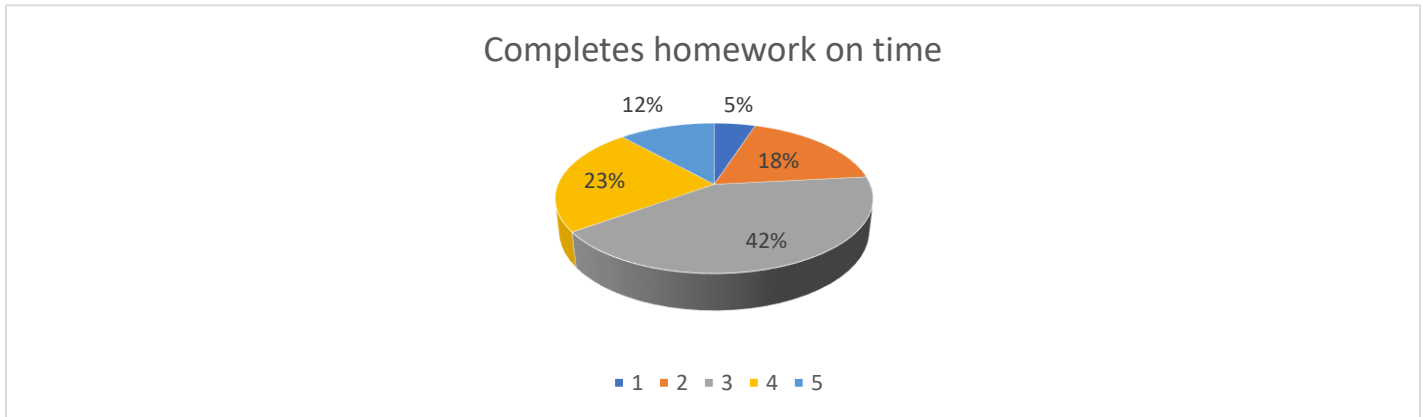
The pie chart representing **children's average grades in school** shows that the majority of respondents (29) reported that their child earned a **B grade**, indicating good academic performance. **Meanwhile, 14 respondents** indicated that their child received a **C grade**, representing average performance. A smaller number of children perform at the highest level, with only **4 respondents** reporting an **A grade**. At the lower end, **5 respondents** reported their child receiving a **D grade**, while **8 respondents** indicated an **F grade**, indicating poor academic performance.

When analyzed alongside **household structure and single parenthood**, the data suggest that although many children achieve decent grades, some may struggle academically. The prevalence of **B and C grades** suggests that most students perform moderately well, but the presence of **D and F grades** highlights the need for additional academic support and intervention, especially for children facing challenges related to single-parent family dynamics.

Question 7:

From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the least, how often does your child complete homework assignments on time?

Responses	Total
1	3
2	11
3	25
4	14
5	7



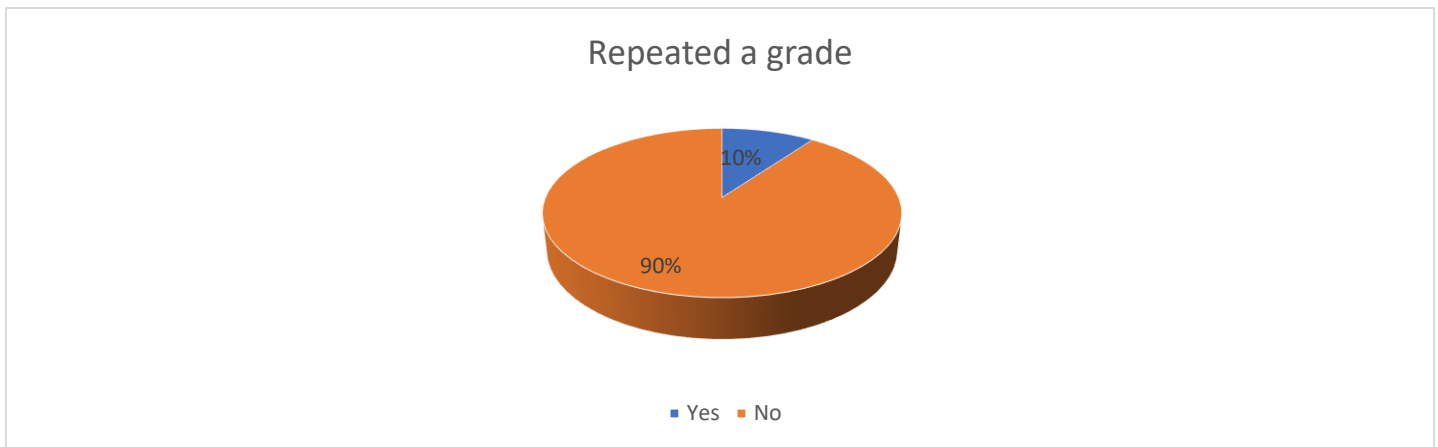
The pie chart representing **how often children complete homework on time** shows that most respondents (25) rated their child at **level 3**, indicating a moderate frequency of completing assignments on time. **14 respondents** rated their child at **level 4**, suggesting consistent homework completion, while **7 respondents** gave the highest rating (**level 5**), meaning their child almost always submits homework on time. On the lower end, **11 respondents** rated their child at **level 2**, and **3 respondents** gave the lowest rating (**level 1**), indicating that some children rarely complete homework on time.

When analyzed in relation to **single parenthood and academic performance**, the findings suggest that children in **single-parent households** may face challenges in maintaining a structured study routine due to **less parental supervision, financial stress, or divided attention from a working parent**. The fact that most children fall within the **middle range (level 3)** suggests that while they complete homework, it may not always be done consistently or with the necessary support.

Question 8:

Has your child ever repeated a grade?

Responses	Total
Yes	6
No	54

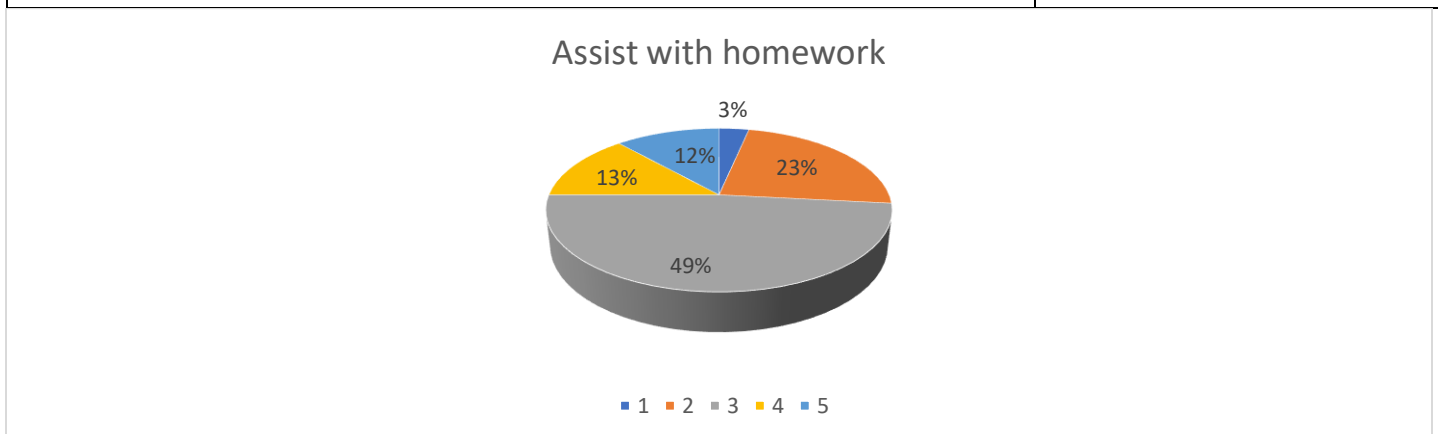


The pie chart representing whether a child has ever **repeated a grade** shows that most respondents (54) answered "No," indicating that most children progress through school without repeating a grade. However, 6 respondents answered "Yes," meaning a small percentage of children had to repeat a grade because of academic challenges. When analyzed in relation to **single parenthood, academic performance, and homework completion**, the data suggest that while most children in **single-parent households** manage to advance through school without repeating a grade, some may still struggle. The **low percentage of repeated grades** suggests that schools may offer enough support to help struggling students move forward, or parents—despite challenges—ensure their children meet minimum academic standards to progress. This highlights the importance of **additional academic resources, tutoring, and parental involvement** to further reduce grade repetition rates, particularly among students from single-parent households.

Question 9:

From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the lowest, how often do you assist your child with homework?

Responses	Total
1	2
2	14
3	29
4	8
5	7



The pie chart representing **how often parents aided their child with homework** shows that most respondents (29) rated their assistance at **level 3**, indicating moderate involvement in helping their child. 14 respondents rated

their assistance at **level 2**, suggesting minimal help, while **8 and 7 respondents** rated their assistance at **levels 4 and 5**, respectively, indicating a higher level of involvement. Only **2 respondents** rated their assistance at **level 1**, meaning they rarely or never help with homework.

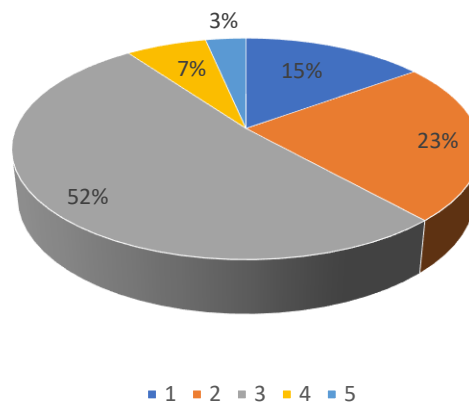
This could contribute to the large number of children who complete homework only **occasionally (level 3)** and the presence of **D and F grades** among respondents. The **small percentage of parents who provide frequent assistance (levels 4 and 5)** highlights the challenges some families face in balancing education with other demands.

Question 10:

From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the least, how often do you attend parent-teacher meetings?

Responses	Total
1	9
2	14
3	31
4	4
5	2

Attend parent-teacher meetings



The pie chart representing **how often parents attend parent-teacher meetings** shows that most respondents (**31**) rated their attendance at **level 3**, indicating moderate participation. **14 respondents** rated their attendance at **level 2**, meaning they attend infrequently, while **9 respondents** rated it at **level 1**, suggesting they rarely or never attend. A smaller number of parents (**4 and 2 respondents**) rated their attendance at **levels 4 and 5**, indicating frequent participation in these meetings.

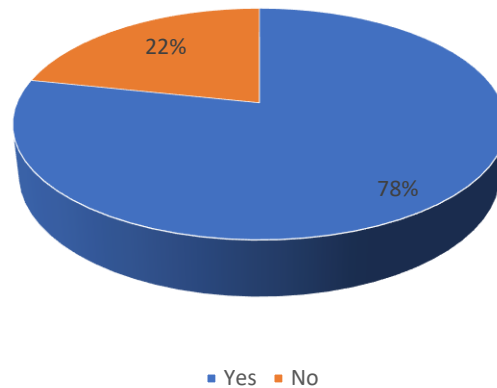
The lower attendance rates could have affected **communication between parents and teachers**, potentially leading to **less awareness of their children's academic progress and challenges**. This lack of involvement may also contribute to issues such as **inconsistent homework completion and lower academic performance** because parents play a crucial role in reinforcing school expectations at home.

Question 11:

Do you feel that being a single parent affects the amount of time you can dedicate to your child's education?

Responses	Total
Yes	47
No	13

Dedicated time with relation to single parent



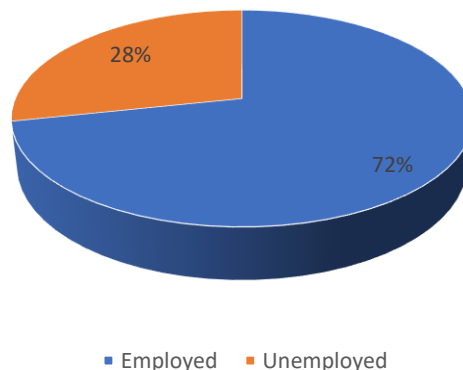
The pie chart shows that **47 out of 60** respondents believe that being a **single parent affects the time they can dedicate to their child's education**, while only **13** disagree. This finding highlights the challenges single parents face in balancing **work, household duties, and academic support**, which may contribute to **lower homework completion rates, inconsistent parent-teacher meeting attendance, and weaker academic performance**. Given that **many children earn grades of C, D, or F**, the lack of parental involvement could hinder their progress. Since **most parents only provide moderate or low homework assistance**, students may struggle without proper guidance.

Question 12:

What is your employment status?

Responses	Total
Employed	43
Unemployed	17

Employment status



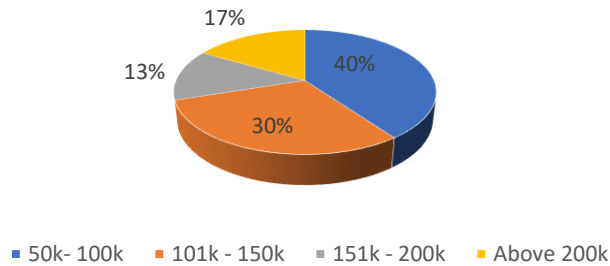
The pie chart shows that **43 of the 60 respondents were employed**, while **17 were unemployed**, indicating that most parents were working. The **high employment rate** suggests that **time constraints** rather than financial stability may be the primary issue, which could explain why many parents reported difficulties in assisting with homework or attending school meetings. The challenges faced by the 17 unemployed parents may be different, as financial difficulties could impact access to **educational resources, tutoring, or a stable learning environment**.

Question 13:

What is your monthly household income?

Responses (GUY \$)	≡ (US\$)	Total
50,000-100,000	250-500	24
101,000-150,000	501-750	18
151,000-200,000	751-1000	8
Above 200,000	Above 1000	10

Monthly income



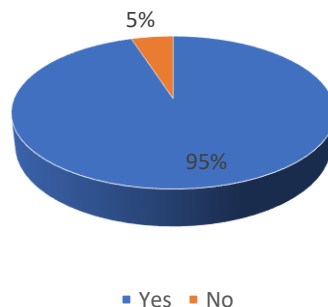
The pie chart representing **monthly household income** in French dollars shows that the largest group of respondents (**24 out of 60**) earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000, followed by **18 respondents** earning \$101,000–\$150,000. A smaller number (**8 respondents**) fell within the \$151,000–\$200,000 range, while **10 respondents** earned above \$200,000. These data suggest that **a significant proportion of households have lower to moderate incomes**. Families in lower **income brackets** may struggle to afford **private tutoring, school supplies, or transportation**, potentially affecting **academic performance and homework completion rates**. Additionally, single parents in **low-income households** may face greater challenges in balancing **work and education support**, further limiting their ability to help their children.

Question 14:

Do you believe that limited financial resources will impact children's educational success?

Responses	Total
Yes	57
No	3

Impact of limited financial resources



The pie chart shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents (**57 out of 60**) believe that **limited financial resources impact a child's educational success**, while only **3** disagree. This finding suggests that most parents recognize a strong connection between **financial stability and academic performance**, as low-income families

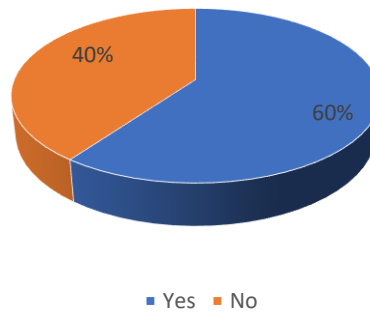
*struggle to afford **school supplies, tutoring, transportation, and other educational resources**. Financial constraints can also limit **parental involvement**, particularly for single parents who have to juggle multiple responsibilities with little parental support.*

Question 15:

Do your children experience emotional or behavioral challenges in school?

Responses	Total
Yes	36
No	24

Emotional/behavioural challenges



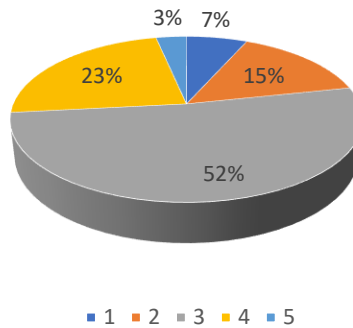
*The pie chart shows that **36 out of the 60** respondents reported that their child experienced **emotional or behavioral challenges in school**, while **24** indicated that their child did not. This suggests that a significant number of students may be struggling with **emotional distress, attention issues, or behavioral difficulties**, which can negatively impact their academic performance, social interactions, and overall school experience. Children from **single-parent or low-income households** may experience additional emotional strain because of **reduced parental supervision, academic pressure, or feelings of instability**.*

Question 16:

From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the lowest, how often does your child participate in extracurricular activities?

Responses	Total
1	4
2	9
3	31
4	14
5	2

Participation in extracurricular activities



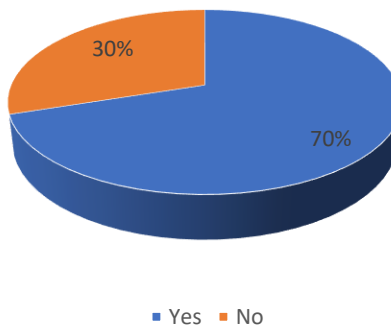
The pie chart shows that **31 out of 60** respondents rated their child's participation in **extracurricular activities at level 3**, indicating **moderate involvement**, while **14** rated it at **level 4** and only **2** at **level 5**, and indicating higher engagement. At the lower end, **9** respondents rated it at **level 2**, and **4** at **level 1**, meaning that their child rarely or never participated in extracurricular activities. This suggests that while many children **engage in extracurricular activities to some extent**, **very few are highly involved**. Participation in extracurricular activities is often linked to **better academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being**, so **schools and community programs could play a role in making these activities more accessible**.

Question 17:

Do you believe that single parenthood has affected your child's confidence or social skills?

Responses	Total
Yes	42
No	18

Single parent on confidence and social skills

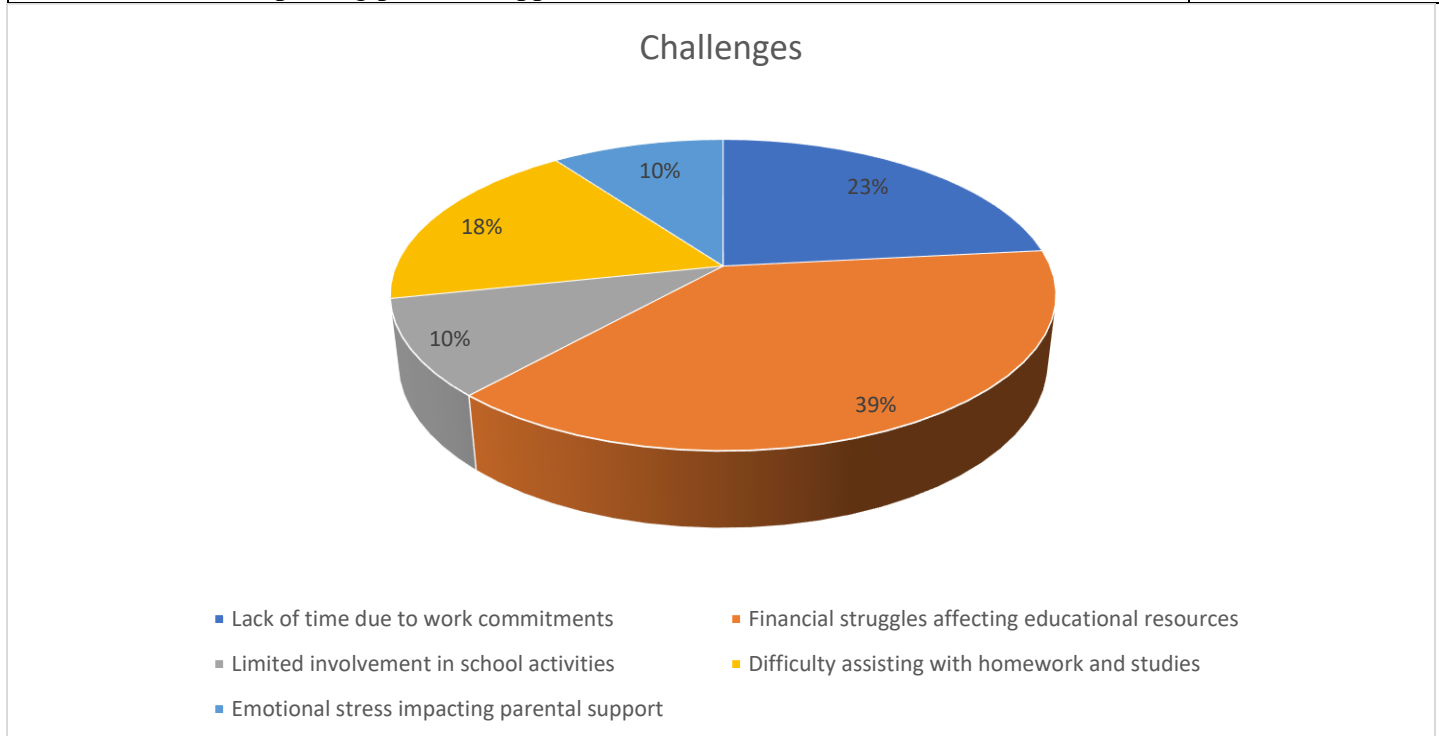


The pie chart shows that **42 out of 60** respondents believe that **single parenthood has affected their child's confidence or social skills**, while **18** do not share this belief. This suggests that a significant number of children in **single-parent households may struggle with self-esteem, communication, and social interactions**, potentially due to **reduced parental involvement, emotional stress, or limited exposure to social opportunities**. These challenges could also be linked to **behavioral issues in school, lower participation in extracurricular activities, and academic difficulties**, as previously indicated in the data.

Question 18:

What are the biggest challenges facing single parents in supporting your child's education?

Responses	Total
Lack of time due to work commitments.	14
Financial struggles affecting educational resources.	23
Limited involvement in school activities.	6
Difficulty assisting with homework and studies.	11
Emotional stress impacting parental support.	6



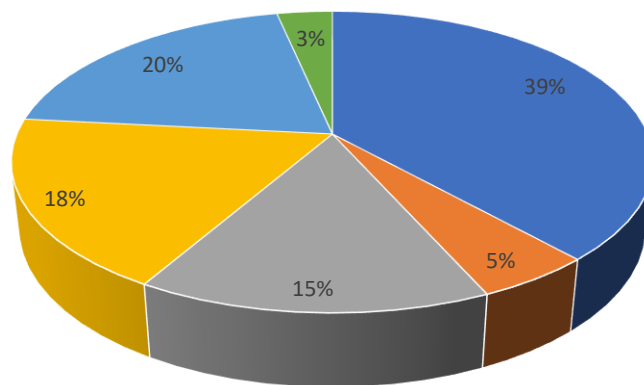
The pie chart shows that the **biggest challenge single parents face in supporting their child's education is financial struggles that affect educational resources (23 out of 60 responses)**, which can hinder academic success. **Lack of time due to work commitments (14 responses)** was another major issue, as balancing employment with parenting **reduced involvement in homework, school meetings, and academic supervision**. Additionally, **11 parents reported difficulty assisting with homework**, possibly because of **educational background, work fatigue, or unfamiliarity with school subjects**. A smaller proportion of responses highlighted **limited involvement in school activities (6 responses)** and **emotional stress impacting parental support (6 responses)**, suggesting that many single parents experience **burnout and reduced engagement in their child's education**.

Question 19:

What kind of support would help improve your child's educational experience?

Responses	Total
Financial assistance for school supplies and tuition.	23
Free tutoring or academic support programs.	3
Flexible parent-teacher meeting schedules.	9
Access to technology and internet services.	11
Emotional and counseling support for students.	12
Additional extracurricular and skill-building activities.	2

Support needed



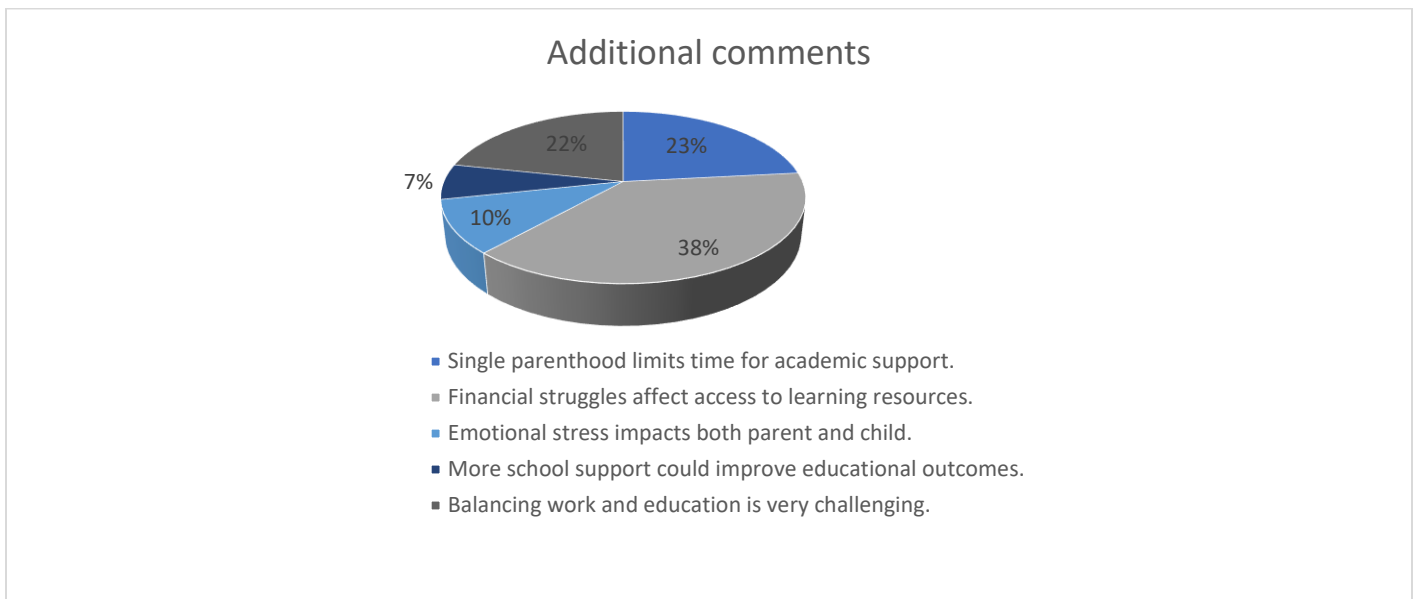
- Financial assistance for school supplies and tuition.
- Free tutoring or academic support programs.
- Flexible parent-teacher meeting schedules.
- Access to technology and internet services.
- Emotional and counselling support for students.
- More extracurricular and skill-building activities.

The pie chart analyzing the **types of support that would help improve children's educational experiences** shows that the most requested form of assistance was **financial support for school supplies and tuition**, with **23 out of 60 responses**, which could hinder academic success. **Emotional and counseling support for students (12 responses)** and **access to technology and internet services (11 responses)** were also significant concerns, especially for children in **single-parent or low-income households**. **Flexible parent-teacher meeting schedules (9 responses)** highlight the challenges parents face in balancing work and school involvement, while **free tutoring or academic support programs (3 responses)** and **more extracurricular and skill-building activities (2 responses)** received fewer responses.

Question 20:

Do you have any additional comments regarding the impact of single parenthood on educational outcomes?

Responses	Total
Single parenthood limits time for academic support.	14
Financial difficulties affect access to learning resources.	23
Emotional stress impacts both parents and children.	6
More school support could improve educational outcomes.	4
Balancing work and education is very challenging.	13



The pie chart analyzing **additional comments on the impact of single parenthood on educational outcomes** reveals that the most significant concern is **financial struggles affecting access to learning resources (23 out of 60 responses)**. The second major challenge is that **single parenthood limits time for academic support (14 responses)**, reinforcing previous findings that **work commitments make it difficult for parents to assist with homework or engage in school activities**. **Balancing work and education (13 responses)** was another key concern, demonstrating that **single parents often struggle to manage job responsibilities while supporting their child's learning**. Additionally, **6 respondents mentioned that emotional stress affected both parents and children**. A smaller portion (**4 responses**) emphasized the need for **more school support**, indicating that **better institutional assistance could help ease these challenges**.

6.1 Academic performance.

Fourteen of twenty articles analyzed present statistical analyses of the impact of being raised in a single-parent family on children's academic performance. Surprisingly, 12 out of the 14 analyses concluded that family structure has no significant impact on academic performance. This is materialized in mixed, albeit more consistent, results. Eleven of fifteen analyses present robust statistical relationships between parental attachment and school outcomes. The VINELAND Adaptive Behavior Scale, effects on children's receptive language,

expressive language, social interaction, and motor skill subscales. However, raising the mother's or father's socio-economic sphere of influence did not improve these results.

The well-being of children born to divorced or never-married parents has been the subject of extensive social sciences research. A growing field in this line of inquiry refers to how single parenthood may hinder or shape children's educational outcomes. In fact, the effects of single parenthood on the educational outcomes of children are harmful in the Caribbean and specifically Guyana.

In the U.S. context, children living in single-parent households generally had lower average scores on several measures of scholastic attainment than their peers from nuclear households. While some of the observed differences in scholastic achievements among children in single versus two-parent families may be attributed to certain demographic and socioeconomic disadvantages, the academic penalties such children pay for the non-family structure they grew up in exceed substantially the measured covariates. In view of several unmeasured endowments, it is plausible to believe that the above range reflects similar patterns of single-parenthood disparities in educational outcomes post-1990 following parental divorce, especially in the US, as observed in the earlier work-out.

Drawing from foundational, cross-sectional research, research in the field of single parenthood and children's education appears to predominantly reveal the following updated trend in the academic penalties suffered by children in single-parent households: the highest statistical penalty in children's educational achievements was observed in the academic domain of reading. Moreover, this study reported a high correlation between the number of single-mother households in the survey sample and the mean reading score of the children surveyed.

6.2 Behavioural outcomes.

A state of panic appears to emerge when statisticians replace academic performance with behavioral outcomes as the primary educational indicator of interest. Eighty-nine of 100 analyses concluded that family structure has a statistically significant impact on behavioral outcomes. The most identifiable impact on behavior—an aggregate measure of cooperation, aggression, and social deviance—is consistent in only two studies. Furthermore, it is unclear whether family structure will impact a child's behavior. It may be contended, for argument's sake, that children living with single parents are likely to be given lesser degrees of freedom, consequently limiting the magnitude of their engagement in social deviance. The underlying factors, which are currently unobservable to the researcher, should inform policy decisions affecting a group as large and politically significant as single parents. Concentration on nurturing relationships between parents and children may be more successful.

The present study evaluates the influence of single-parent status on children's behavioral outcomes, which include social and emotional behavioral tendencies, such as anxiety, depression, and aggression, as well as externalizing and internalizing problems. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition, text revision (DSM-IV-TR), anxiety, depression, and aggression tended to be reported by or diagnosed in preschool children aged 3 to 5 living in single-parent homes. This increased likelihood of high symptoms of anxiety, depression, and aggression may be due to the parent-child relationship, which has been categorized into two domains: positive and negative parenting. Based on the theoretical framework, children living with single parents are more likely to experience a change in family structure. This may place them at a higher predisposition to the experience of harsh caregiving, unfair treatment, and inadequate guidance that compromise their quality of parent-child relationship, consequently increasing their anxiety, depression, and aggression in single-parent children. Many preschoolers who demonstrated internalizing problems later turned these internalizing problems to externalizing problems for attention.

An association between single parenthood and externalizing problems in children is expected, suggesting an increase in the possibility of conduct disorder. Overall, the increasing externalizing problems in children living with single-parent families can be either with aggressive behavior as the primary feature or non-aggressive behavior; however, significant social problems such as lying, truancy, bullying, and violation of school rules are exhibited more frequently than the wholesome children living in two-parent families. Campus and Wynn (2016) reported that behavioral and psychological problems are more prevalent in older children than in younger ones. Pre-adolescent children in single-parent households were reported to show increased externalizing problems when compared to those from two-parent families.

6.3 Psychosocial Development

This study confirms the association between single parenthood and maternal conflicts with children. Historically, studies have tended to focus on the effects of divorce, whereas relatively little attention has been paid to never-married single mothers. This study shows that the educational outcomes of children born to single mothers are also likely to be affected similarly. Some evidence suggests that the psychosocial development of single children may be adversely affected.

Emotional development for children whose experiences include two resident parents showed that the father was associated with more positive emotional outcomes. Stronger emotional ties with their father (compared to those children with weak emotional ties to their father) were associated with fewer behavioral problems, particularly when their relationship with their mother was poor. In terms of positive emotional development, the psychosocial development of children in single-parent families may be particularly affected during periods of family change or transition. For instance, when a parent begins a cohabiting relationship following separation or divorce, children may be particularly likely to exhibit behavior problems, particularly if the stepfather moves in with the natural mother. Therefore, it is argued that at such times, new threats to parenting are introduced because the mother's engaged relationship threatens children who might view it as a threat to their enduring relationship with their natural father.

6.4 Empirical Findings from Global Studies

Children from single parent families perform academically at a lesser degree than those from two parent families. Studies from the United States, Europe, and developing countries have all found some negative impact of divorce on educational outcomes. Results from systematic reviews of studies from developed and developing countries, however, prove otherwise.

In a review of the literature, Amato and Stock (2015) found that children from single parent families do, on average, worse in school-related outcomes than children from two parent families, and that these differences are associated with more negative psychological and behavioral adjustment. However, when background characteristics that could confound their relationship with the children's educational outcomes were controlled, the differences were no longer significant. Larger and stronger relationships were observed when comparisons were made between children from two- parent biological families and children from stepfamilies. When studies were grouped according to country of origin, samples from the United States and the United Kingdom showed the strongest relationships, whereas stronger relationships between gender and children from single parenthood were observed in samples from the United Kingdom, particularly in boys. In females, larger and stronger relationships were observed in the US compared with children from single and married parents. Dickens (1969), in a review of both developed and developing countries, found that there is some disagreement among studies

about differences between single and born-into-lone-parent families, with some finding greater differences, and others finding no differences in adjustment and educational outcomes.

6.4.1. United States

The literature review draws on anthropological field studies, historical analyses, and empirical studies. The overall objective of this study is to provide a mixed-methods research design that captures both the macroscopic and microscopic dynamics of family formation in Guyana. Research on single parenthood imperatively demands this type of approach—marriage and partnership are personal, intimate negotiations occurring against a backdrop of socioeconomic evolution. The local literature review draws on exploratory conversations and data analysis from fieldwork in the Guyanese schools. It is essential to understand why exploring these themes is particularly relevant to the Guyanese context.

Propagation is given to studies conducted in the United States. This does not unnecessarily privilege the concerns of researchers in the United States. Instead, one simply deigns to take seriously the contextually dependent dynamics of human behavior. The empirical results of North American researchers are undoubtedly biased; social, cultural, and historical forces unique to any nation-state or macro-region invariably color the way inter-family relationships are thought about, let alone empirically interrogated. However, due to the pre-current force of these biases, the results of the dozens of carefully conducted empirical studies of inter-family relationships available to the researcher inform a clear discourse on extant robust findings. North American researchers have laid a foundation for a considerable body of knowledge to be issued based on local empirical findings. Moreover, the vast amount of data collected within this macro-region necessarily limits the scope of an inquiry if one does not impose some form of boundary.

6.4.2 Europe

Generalizing about the experience of separation and of living apart in Europe is a difficult and imprecise task. Each country has its own ethos, which is reflected in levels of marriage and partnership formation and dissolution, some of which may include childrearing, as well as age at forming these relationships. In a few countries, including Sweden and France, the number of father-headed single-parent families is comparable to that of women. These studies show that although there are gender differences across countries in the likelihood of separation, father-headed family life is a plausible eventuality that does not seem compromised by the social and economic status of the new father-headed families. Fathers are relatively young and enter these families after a period between relationships. They are more likely to have done so through courtship and to have fathered their first child while very young.

Parental autonomy in Europe is another significant, if sometimes contentious, issue. However, as well as rather mechanistic work on educational attainment or career-breaks, we now also have comparatively detailed, in-depth studies of parenting practices that are very sensitive to the inherent contradictions produced by the ambivalent status of single parents who are both the exception and the norm; parenting is also perceived as symbols bearing a badge of moral honor for shouldering their responsibilities, while at the same time somehow responsible for whatever it is that is wrong with society today. From the analyzed cases of sole parenting in Europe, children are not beaten, although in some countries they may well be cajoled into a ‘relative advantage’ in education. School involvement on the part of parents remains a key theme in the otherwise rich panoply of European literature, with help from the remaining parent and teachers buffering any possible putative negative effects across the board.

6.4.3 Developing Countries

Several other papers have found similar unfavorable effects in different developing countries, with the sensitivity of outcomes often dependent on country-specific context factors. A study based in China by Levy, Meng, and Scott (2008) found that maternal adolescents explicitly measured adverse educational effects on children, but only when their mothers remained single. Non-maternal adolescent depressive symptoms were associated with achievement. Doubly orphaned children in Kenya had lower grades and higher repetition rates than their peers with one or both parents alive. Again, using multiple fixed-effect regressions at the household, individual, and educational supply sides, higher rates of repetition were found among primary school children living with a single mother in Brazil.

The mechanisms behind these relationships are unclear, although evidence from Tanzania suggested that part of the effect could be explained by parental investments in the schooling of girls compared to boys, and findings from Ecuador reported by de la Briere and Vuri (2006) suggested that it may be the imbalance between housework and time devoted to actively helping with school homework that affects children most. A study in the Philippines by Yu (2009) found that single motherhood only affects children's educational outcomes when variables related to domestic violence are included, indicating another possible mechanism to help explain the phenomenon in the country.

6.4.4 The Guyanese Context

Guyana is a small, multi-ethnic country on the northeast coast of South America. The land area is approximately 215,086 sq. km and has a population of 826,353 (United Nations, 2023). The country is divided into 10 administrative regions with 3 counties. The head of a state is a president. The socio-political and economic implications of these implications can be seen in the following sections.

Before presenting an overview of the Guyanese context, general and specific points will be highlighted. It is necessary to understand the relevance of the Guyanese context to the current research. Education in Guyana is the joint responsibility of the Minister of Education (MOE) and the Government of Guyana. This includes the management of the educational system and the formulation of educational policies. To aid in policy formation and the promotion of the philosophy, the MOE is also working in collaboration with various agencies.

As set out by the Guyana constitution, and noting Guyana's history and characteristics, the concept of a single-parent family is much broader in Guyana than research on single-parent families or work on single parenthood in developed societies would suggest. For example, in many societies in the developed world that present a high percentage of single-parent families, a significant portion of the cases involve unmarried parents or physically separated/divorced people. Instead, in Guyana, there are many cohabiting (common law) mothers and fathers who offer many other contributions toward their children's development thus having a less detrimental effect on their child's life chances.

In this respect, parental background is critical in Guyana, where most of the population are Christians and believe strongly in the institution of marriage or outright cohabitation, so unregistered children are termed illegitimate. Several different family types are therefore typical of Guyana. A study is needed to disaggregate these family forms before examining their effect on their child's life chances, i.e., education. Data reflecting the two main races, i.e., East Indians and Africans—or separate children born in other ethnic mixed single-parent family forms are necessary. The following section describes the demographic profile of lone mothers and fathers in Guyana.

6.4.4.1 Overview of Guyana's Education System

Guyana offers a fitting ecosystem for examining the effect of single parenthood on children, given its unique educational structure. In terms of income, education is a significant predictor, and there have been several challenges to the education system. The children of single parents contribute to low attainment in the education system in other countries, thereby motivating this literature search. Inequalities exist in the education systems of both developed and developing countries.

The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination serves as the qualifying assessment for entry into the Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana and the country's public sector services. Students who attain Grades 1 to 3 in at least five subjects are eligible for university admission in Guyana. Upon completing Grade 11, students are eligible to take the CSEC examinations. Successful candidates will receive the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) certificate and may further pursue the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) before pursuing tertiary education.

Guyana has a population of approximately 826,353 (United Nations, 2023), with an estimated literacy rate of 90% (UNESCO, 2022). However, the educational distribution of enrolled students does not fully reflect the educational level of all children aged 6-17, as some may be out of school. The United Nations Human Development Report indicates a decline in Guyana's education standards compared to previous years, highlighting the need to address existing challenges.

6.4.4.2 Demographic Profile of Single-Parent Households in Guyana

Fifty percent of US preschoolers born since the mid-1990s have spent time in a single-parent household. Nearly 40% of Canadian children live in single-parent households. In Guyana, available evidence implies that single-mother households have become increasingly prevalent, at least since the 1970s. Based on the 2002 Guyana Population and Housing Census, over 28% of all children in Guyana had mothers who were either separated, divorced, widowed, or never married. This proportion of single mothers was as high as 72% in Georgetown, 58% in Linden, and 50% in the urban East Corentyne Berbice. Over 11% of children live with their fathers. One in four children was, at least in 2007, classified as vulnerable, with the proportion being twice as high for boys as for girls.

The single parenthood literature has focused mainly on single motherhood, and studies that examined fatherhood tend to involve non-residential fathers. In 1992, approximately 25% of all Guyanese births took place out-of-wedlock, and as in most of the Anglophone Caribbean, this proportion has been rising since at least the start of the new millennium. Unmarried girls living in the lowest socioeconomic group are 300-400 percent more likely to be pregnant at 16 or 17 years of age than girls living in the highest socioeconomic group. To the extent that single motherhood is often considered a symptom rather than a cause of disadvantage, the above argument implies that children in Guyana are more likely to be born to and/or raised by less educated and impoverished women than might have been the case in more developed countries. This suggests that country-specific conclusions drawn from the literature on international single parenthood may not always apply to Guyana.

6.4.4.3 Existing Research on Single Parenthood in Guyana

Public health studies in the country have reported that nearly a quarter of women are single parents, although it is unclear from the methodological descriptions of these studies what proportion of women are single parents by choice and how many are unmarried due to factors beyond their control. To address this gap in the literature, a comprehensive review was conducted to explore the potential educational impact of single parenthood on children in Guyana. This involved examining official reports on Education, Social Development, and Labor, as well as

academic research accessible through the Government's Statistical Digest. No meaningful research has been conducted on the educational impact of single parenthood on children in Guyana. Additionally, database searches were performed using **PsycInfo, PubMed, Scopus, and JSTOR** to identify relevant journal articles and reports. No research has focused on single parenthood in Guyana. Anecdotally, parents with children in schools and officials at the Ministry of Education stated that single parents are common and that several negative portrayals of single mothers in the media are a source of frustration. Given that no empirical studies have been published on Guyana's single parents, the contribution of this research is an important first step in understanding single parenthood in the Guyanese context.

7.0 Discussion

The study asked whether sole parenthood leads to negative educational outcomes for children in these families. Simply looking at cross-sectional, regression estimates of family structure is not a good way to answer this question for several reasons: these studies do not provide necessary evidence of causation, and they make potentially strong, but unverifiable, assumptions of relatively permanent effects on school readiness. The theory that single parenthood affects children's educational outcomes suggests that its negative effects may accumulate over time. However, an empirical test of the accumulated disadvantage thesis—which implies that children from single-parent families may face increasing challenges as they progress through school, resulting in lower academic achievement compared to peers from two-parent households—contradicted this notion, indicating that family structure impacts academic performance differently at various ages. Although tracking data over time on factors related to school readiness (such as early literacy, cognitive skills, and social development) could have helped in understanding the long-term effects of single parenthood on education, there are major difficulties in accurately measuring and analyzing such data in the Caribbean and specifically the Guyana context. Unfortunately, the signals obtained from event history analyses did not deliver the strongest possible support for the theory above because male children were more often put up for adoption than female children after relationship dissolution. A more direct way to address this question is through natural experiments. Natural experiments occur when the system governing the outcome of interest is not specific to individuals; thus, random conditions will emerge that create a treatment and a control group. An example was provided based on the Human in the Loop Analytics (HITLA), in which objections to key events in counselling sessions, to isolate a change in family structure that was exogenous to the education effects of sole parenthood, owing to variations in people's attitudes to family life was used.

Single parenthood should not be simply considered a phenomenon with negative connotations. The designations and attributions related to a particular family structure are based on ideological choices that arbitrarily attach significance to categories such as parent and child family constellations. The relevance of the concern with single parenthood in the context of a Caribbean family is, once again, due not to the structural composition of the family but to the material context in which the single mother or father and the children are situated. In real terms, it is the capacity of the family to provide for the needs of its members, which in turn redounds to the effectiveness of the psychological, physical, and moral development of the child, which is integral to the issue of single parenthood.

7.1. Key Studies and Findings

Throughout the world—predominantly in various countries in the Caribbean region, including Guyana—there is a growing interest in the study of single parenthood and children's educational outcomes, with many positivist, functionalist, postmodernist, and constructivist researchers providing substantial data and insights. In Guyana,

some educators and social workers speculate that factors indirectly related to cultural and social relationships have become hidden risk factors for educational underachievement. The role and impact have been largely ignored in most studies. However, no work has been done in Guyana to investigate these effects.

With such a resounding criticism of “absence” in the current literature from discontinued studies with few explanations, the first finding was initially an answer to a question frequently asked in social settings. The question was, “Where did most of the fathers of single parent households go?” Did they migrate? Where and why? The commonly stated perception of many was that they migrated to the United States, England, Canada, and with some going to Guyana’s neighbor Suriname, leaving the children with family members. The most frequently articulated sentiment was ‘where in the hell is the government?’ Who is looking out for the children’s interest? “Can they make it without the help?”

The research indicates and concludes that single-parent homes have been labeled a problem of public and private concern, where the level of the mother’s education, age, socioeconomic level, and race were significantly related to children’s attendance, grade placement, absenteeism, and suspension from school. Sociologists and educators can provide more longitudinal evidence for the relationship between children’s educational achievement and living in single-parent families. Lone father families recorded the lowest incidence of early school leaving among boys in lone mother households. Family living arrangements and socioeconomic differences in the effects of single parents on their children’s attainments were adopted into other studies to clarify or contribute additional facts on this particular data and population.

Historically, single-parent families were a minority in society, but they are now a common and normal lifestyle in modern society. The data from the 2012 and 2018 census clearly show that most children in Guyana live with their mother, suggesting a high prevalence of single parenting in the country. The findings from the Guyanese studies show that children from single-parent homes have lower educational outcomes than their counterparts. The main findings in Descartes’ **Meditation III** have already begun to develop a path toward understanding the reasons behind the negative educational outcomes of children from single-parent homes.

Using large data sets (Secondary School Entrance Examinations - SSEE, Health and Demographic Survey - DHS-3 and DHS-6 data) from Guyana, the prevalence of single mothers in the population and their children’s academic attainments were explored. The results indicate that 35% of children between 2005 and 2007 were living with a single mother and were sons of such mothers. The study also found that children with single mothers had significantly lower SSEE scores than their counterparts. This result and, however, is only true when comparing children in the top or bottom quartile of the SSEE scores. Sons of single mothers are significantly less likely to attain behavior scores within the top, middle and lower quartiles compared with those in the fourth quartile. The findings can withstand several manipulation checks. Finally, the results of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions suggest that socioeconomic and family characteristics are good predictors of children’s academic attainment.

7.2. Gaps in Current Literature

The findings of this research highlight the need for further studies on households headed by single parents in Guyana. To this end, nationally representative multi-wave data may be useful. Studies should examine the influence of single parenthood in father- and mother-headed households on other educational outcomes, such as non-cognitive skills, attitudes, and behavior. Longitudinal studies would help determine whether any observed association is causal or due to endogeneity.

The US literature dominates the systematic multi country investigation and comparative longitudinal research. While the examination of children in long-established poor or welfare-dependent US-headed lone parent families is insightful, it is regrettable that such a narrow focus is taken in the light of contemporary changes. Some research panels are still sometimes inadequate because they were drawn from the state-funded entitlement program Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for welfare or for those with low or fixed incomes. While research further afield from Guyana, for example, the 1996 UK Single Parent Benefit Payment reform through a broader comparative country lens is useful for obtaining a broad international overview, the same criticisms stand. More recent Sixth Wave DASH panel data evidence from the UK overlaid with Northern Ireland illustrates only one longitudinal element of interest to be offset with other research works. The remainder includes national cross-sectional household surveys, Scandinavian or welfare state countries, and second- and third-generation migrant single-parent families. The data are mostly dated, but important findings will be highlighted in this review where relevant information can be extracted. Combining all the studies identified, this study highlights that relatively little attention has been paid to minority and disadvantaged groups in relation to educational outcomes. In addition, very little attention has been given to gender in the literature review. However, the differences and similarities in the educational outcomes of five-year-old children born to lone parent families compared with their peers raised in households containing two parents are largely unexplored.

8.0 Policy Implications and Interventions

8.1 Economic policy implications

The increasing incidence of single parenthood in Guyana has many implications for families' economic well-being, particularly women. It was argued that women experience a loss of income that translates into constraints on education levels and care for children. Although the impact of single parenthood on caregivers' economic well-being is not immediately relevant to children's educational outcomes, these dynamics inside households embody one manifestation of the devaluation of women and their dependent status. Programs to support single parents could raise the income of all family members and are likely to reduce inter-household equality in educational outcomes and the mobility prospects of children. Therefore, although several contacts in the single-parenthood-enhanced data collection identified such support programs, none had specific evaluative details of such efforts.

8.2 Social policy implications

One quoted purpose of these kinds of social policy is 'to not make [single mothers] feel they are on their own because while you are teaching your kids about Math and English, even though they go to school, you are also teaching them personal development that comes from the home, but that foundation has to be stabilized before kids can grow up free, as a normal kid'. All these contacts have assured us that the first is being achieved, but at least they are being attempted. The possible social policy implications are less straightforward. Some school-based programs are explicitly built around academic achievement and development, focusing on providing school meals, high-quality teaching, setting standards against which students can be judged, and ensuring that the finances of custodial citizens are not unreasonably impacted by the contention associated with marital separation. It is not clear to what extent bringing the parents into confrontations makes life easier for children. Educational programs designed to cover a range of ages aim to encourage a sense of belonging, confidence, and responsibility in the emotional development of younger children (6-14 age group), and self-awareness and empowerment for older children (15-17).

8.3 Support Programs for Single Parents

The significant impact that the nature of social relationships has on how individual citizens experience and relate to their community, as well as how they might be supported in the future, is the mainstay of Thomas' *Unraveling Research Population and Sample: Understanding their role in statistical inference* (2023). He argued that the community as a social nexus should be left to foster its own growth, but this can only be accommodated if carefully managed. This study identifies the importance of support mechanisms designed to create a broad sense of community and collective ownership, which can have a positive effect on the socialization of young people. The hypothesis that supports processes have intrinsic and formative value is becoming more common, and there is generally widespread appreciation of the wisdom of providing support for community-building, especially in place-based programs. The Wealth Index countries, according to these findings, offer general social support to their populations—relevant to this discussion of single parenthood—that see child and family benefits, low-cost or no-cost healthcare, and assistance with education.

The low income of single parents creates a reduced capacity to provide quality education to their children, which has negative effects on social cohesion and equity. Strengthening the nexus between sufficient income to guarantee an adequate standard of living requires that while recipients of community support might continue to experience social exclusion, the level of poverty experienced is of lesser magnitude. This research helps identify the negative impact of low income and economic disadvantage and, in turn, shapes the focus of community-building programs. Such targeting is useful in maximizing the benefits of social inclusion initiatives and in assisting deprived citizens more effectively. Socio-geographical disadvantage is often linked to low income and can be a significant factor contributing to social exclusion.

8.4 School-Based Initiatives

Siegel's *The Developing Mind* (2012) describes school-based interventions as those that include support groups, additional tutoring, and social-emotional programs. This study suggests that while such interventions often take a micro-level approach by addressing specific challenges children face, schools can also encourage positive changes on a broader level by enhancing friendships and social support networks. The way children behave in friendships and how they accept others' behaviours can be influenced within the school environment, making peer relationships an important aspect of intervention.

The National Conference of State Legislatures describes 10 recommendations from an eight-week program that included parents, children, and families working in a school setting. This program is designed to give parents skills in behavior management and helps them build stronger, more cohesive families. It is also designed to improve a child's self-esteem and promote emotional resilience, with the school playing a pivotal role in providing a supportive environment.

The involvement of the school is crucial. The child is most likely to see school as a lifeline in an otherwise fragmented existence. It therefore needs to be a place of sanctuary, calm, and routine. The school is the one place that may see the entirety of a child's circumstances, which is why, crucially, the school needs to work alongside social workers as a transient environment that may need to offer support and, more importantly, a joined-up approach. Social and emotional elements within a school must be addressed through a whole-school approach.

9.0 Conclusion and Future Directions

An intricate and sometimes contradictory set of associations between parental separation, child well-being, and educational outcomes emerged from the research on parents, children, and employment or financial constraints. In some respects, "parental separation matters" for children. The concluding remarks allowed us to synthesize the

present findings and relate them to the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes. This section begins by discussing the key findings, followed by the policy/practice implications. Possible directions for future research are then suggested.

The empirical analysis revealed that non-residential biological mothers' prior educational attainments do not uniquely determine the educational outcomes of their children but may have an impact on fathers' characteristics. By contrast, the mother's socioeconomic status at birth and their present circumstances appears to be more closely linked to children's educational attainment. However, the findings also indicated that the overall impact of parental separation on non-residential mothers' economic circumstances depends largely on inter-parental conflict. The findings of this research have important implications for educational policy and modern educational practice. Efforts to improve children's educational attainment might aim at mitigating the effects on the non-residential mother, in addition to improving the living standards of the residential parent. The findings could also have implications for policy related to the financial responsibility of non-residential parents and the funding of child support schemes. More broadly, the findings support the view that policies aiming to ensure that non-residential parents have positive contact with their children are in the best interests of the child.

This research examined the impact of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes in Guyana within global and regional contexts. The report revealed that single parenthood is lower in Guyana than in other Caribbean countries. Females steward single-parent families. There have been more than 30 newspaper publications focused on single parenthood and children's well-being in Guyana in the past five years, yet no thorough research has been done on the topic. Parents' level of education and household size were among the key correlates of single parenthood in Guyana. The negative implications of single parenthood on children's educational outcomes in Guyana are less pronounced than in Western societies. Children from different familial structures, including single-parent families, demonstrate similar educational outcomes. There is no causal link between single parenthood and children's educational outcomes. However, children living in single-parent homes experience negative effects on educational outcomes.

Based on the findings presented, there are several issues that require further exploration and further research directions. First, knowledge about single mothers' interactions with their ex-partners and non-resident fathers in Guyana is limited. Hence, it would be interesting to examine these dynamics while shedding light on how single mothers negotiate and articulate parenting and financial responsibilities with their ex-partners and non-resident fathers. Second, it is important to include children's voices in future research on children's educational outcomes and their well-being, with a focus on single parenthood in Guyana. This would provide greater insights into Guyanese children's perceptions and experiences of living in single-parent homes and how single parenthood has, if it has, impacted their lives and educational outcomes. Future research can use qualitative methods, including individual interviews and focus group discussions with children and their single mothers. Flexible research designs are valuable for obtaining the best results.

9.1 Recommendations for Future Research

Although the overdose of children's single parenthood and educational outcomes presented in the literature review illuminates Guyana's realities, further research in this area is necessary. The amount of research on single parenthood and children's educational outcomes in Guyana is woefully limited. As a result, the following suggestions are provided for researchers interested in exploring the complexities and experiences of single parenthood in Guyana to extend previous findings due to changes in society since the publication of the existing research.

First, existing studies on single parenthood and children's educational outcomes in Guyana have mainly used participant observation. This type of research can be informed using mixed methodologies that utilize open-ended questions to enable participants to respond candidly to questions of interest. Large-scale survey studies may provide an understanding of single parenthood and children's educational achievement across the breadth of Guyana's population. Given the rich data obtained in a qualitative study, conducting genomic/biologic research that complements the statistical findings from the survey for experts in the social and sociological sciences may be valuable. Through this approach, studying ancestry information in a population of Guyana would also help us better understand that wealth alone does not account for differential educational achievement. More accessible quantitative data should become available as various government and international reports have been presented. Access may be made at both the National Library in Georgetown and on the websites of the Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education at no expense to the researcher.

References:

- Ainsworth, M. D., & Bell, S. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development*, 41(1), 49–67.
- Ballotpedia. (n.d.). Academic performance. Retrieved from https://ballotpedia.org/Academic_performance
- Barajas, M. (2011). Academic achievement of children in single-parent homes: A Bowlby's attachment theory. *Structural Learning*.
- Biblarz, T. J., & Raftery, A. E. (1999). Family structure and educational attainment and socioeconomic success: Rethinking the 'pathology of patriarchy.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(2), 321–365.
- Biblarz, T. J., & Gottainer, G. (2000). Family structure and children's success: A comparison of widowed and divorced single-mother families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62, 533–548.
- Birara, Z. A. (2021). The challenges of a single mother in raising children in Bishoftu, Thailand Town, Ethiopia. *British Journal of Psychology Research*, 9(1), 30–46.
- Bogges, S. (1998). Family structure, economic status, and educational attainment. *The Journal of Population Economics*, 11(2), 205–222.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Volume 1. Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Case, A., Lin, I.-F., & McLanahan, S. (2001). Educational attainment of siblings in stepfamilies. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 22(4), 269–289.
- Cherlin, A. J., Furstenberg, F. F., Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Kiernan, K. E., et al. (1991). Longitudinal studies on the effects of divorce on children in Great Britain and the United States. *Science*, 252(5011), 1386–1389.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95–120.

- Colmer, K., Rutherford, L., & Murphy, P. (2011). Attachment theory and primary caregiving. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 36(4), 16–29. Retrieved from <http://online.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/services/ajec>
- Corak, M. (2001). Death and divorce: Long-term consequences of parental loss in adolescents. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 19(3), 682–715.
- D'Mello, L., Govindaraju, B. M., & Monteiro, M. D. (2016). A study on the challenges faced by a single parent on teenager care. *International Journal of Advanced Trends in Engineering and Technology (IJATET)*, 1(1).
- Ermisch, J. F., & Francesconi, M. (2001). Family structure and children's achievements. *Journal of Population Economics*, 14(2), 249–270.
- Evenhouse, E., & Reilly, S. (2001). Selection bias or differential treatment? Exploring stepchildren's poor outcomes. Mimeo, Mills College.
- Gasse, D. V., & Mortelmans, D. (2020). Single mother perspectives on combinations of motherhood and work. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341411815>
- Gennetian, L. (2001). One or two parents? Half- or step-siblings? The effect of family composition on young children. MDRC.
- Gupta, A., & Kashyap, S. (2020). Growing up in a single-parental family: A determining factor in adolescent well-being. *Advanced Journal of Social Science*.
- Harkness, S., & Gregg, P. (2020). The rise in single-mother families and children's cognitive development: Evidence from three British birth cohorts. Retrieved from <https://library.wiley.com>
- Hertz, R., & Rivas, A. M. (2016). Single mothers by choice in Spain and the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301594115>
- Johnson, L. B. (2024). Exploring the link between school support and child adjustment outcomes of children growing up in single-parent families: A scoping review. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com>
- Kreese, J., Bernasco, W., & Liefbroer, A. C. (2021). Single-parent families and adolescent crime: Unpacking the role of parental separation, parental death, and being born to a single-parent family. *Journal of Developmental Education*.
- Kroese, J., Bernasco, W., & Liefbroer, A. C. (2021). Growing up in single-parent families and the criminal involvement of adolescents: A systematic review. *Psychology, Crime & Law*.
- Lang, K., & Zagorsky, J. L. (2001). Does growing up with an absent parent really hurt? *Journal of Human Resources*, 36(2), 253–273.

- Lut, I., Woodman, J., Armitage, A., Ingram, E., & Harron, K. (2021). Health outcomes, healthcare use, and development in children born into or growing up in single-parent households: A systematic review study protocol. *BMJ Open*.
- Manski, C., Sandefur, G., McLanahan, S., & Powers, D. (1992). Alternative estimates of the effect of family structure during adolescence on high school graduation. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 87(417), 25–37.
- McCain, M. N., Mustard, J. F., & Shanker, S. (2007). Early years study 2: Putting science into action. Retrieved from http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/publications/early_years_study_2.pdf
- McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pérez-Corral, A. L., & Moreno Mínguez, A. (2022). Single-parent families, educational gradient, and child deprivation: Cases in Italy and Spain. *Research on Child Indicators*.
- Siegel, D. (2012). *The developing mind* (2nd Ed.). London: Constable and Robinson.
- Yaw, L. (2016). The effect of single parenting on secondary school students' academic performance in schools in Brunei. *Medwell Journals*, 11(5), 698–703.
- Zhang, C. (2020). Are children from divorced single-parent families disadvantaged? New evidence from the China Family Panel Studies. *Sociological Review*.

Appendices

Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?

16-25 years ☐ 26-35 years ☐ 36-45 years ☐ Above 45 ☐

2. What is your gender?

Male ☐ Female ☐

3. What is your highest education level?

Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐ University ☐

4. What is your household structure?

Nuclear ☐ Single parent ☐ Sibling ☐ Extended ☐

Section B: Educational Performance

5. From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the least, how would you describe your child's academic performance?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

6. What is your child's average grade in school?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F ☐

7. From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the least, how often does your child complete homework assignments on time?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

8. Has your child ever repeated a grade?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section C: Parental Involvement

9. From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the lowest, how often do you assist your child with homework?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

10. From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the least, how often do you attend parent-teacher meetings?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

11. Do you feel that being a single parent affects the amount of time you can dedicate to your child's education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section D: Socioeconomic Factors

12. What is your employment status?

Employed ☐ Unemployed ☐

13. What is your monthly household income?

50,000-100,000 ☐ 101,000-150,000 ☐ 151,000-200,000 ☐ Above 200,000 ☐

14. Do you believe that limited financial resources will impact children's educational success?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section E: Psychological and Social Aspects

15. Do your children experience emotional or behavioral challenges in school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. From a scale of one to 5, with 1 as the lowest, how often does your child participate in extracurricular activities?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

17. Do you believe that single parenthood has affected your child's confidence or social skills?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section F: General Perception

18. What are the biggest challenges facing single parents in supporting your child's education?

.....

19. What kind of support would help improve your child's educational experience?

.....

20. Do you have any additional comments regarding the impact of single parenthood on educational outcomes?

.....

