



# **PARENTING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CALABAR MUNICIPALITY, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

**ONETE U. ONETE**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS/ CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CROSS RIVER STATE, CALABAR, NIGERIA**

## **Abstract**

*This paper examined the impact of parenting and academic achievement of senior secondary school two students in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey design method using 200 senior secondary two students selected from the sampled schools within the study area through simple random sampling technique. A researcher designed data collection instrument titled "Impact of Single Parenting on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students Questionnaire (ISPAASSSSQ) was used to gather data from 200 selected participants. The descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the data. At the end of data analysis, the outcomes were as follows: (i) single parenting has a significant negative impact on the academic achievement of students. (ii) females benefit more from academic motivation in single parents homes than their male siblings. Based on the outcomes, the paper recommended among others thus; parents must avoid discriminatory relationship with their children irrespective of sex; spouse should reduce their expectations from their marriage partners to avoid crises occasioned by unfulfilled needs.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Parenting refers to the intricacies of raising a child and not exclusively for biological relationship. Parenting or child rearing/upbringing if properly handled promotes, and supports the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting could as well be viewed as the practices of raising up and nurturing

children to become independent of parental influences on their lives. Nwaoba (2011) sees parenting as bringing up of children in orderly manner and is said to be a shared responsibility of a father and mother, so that children will grow up to be well adjusted, normal, well positioned and God fearing citizens. Adding credence to the above views, Action Health Incorporated (2003) avers that the economic cost of parenting are only one of the many responsibilities an individual must be prepared to undertake. Different parents adopt different parenting practices/styles and the style adopted may have lasting influence on the personality differences and needs of individuals. Okeke (2003) identifies three parenting styles commonly employed in the upbringing of children. These include: emotional concentration on the child, avoidance of the child; and acceptance of the child.

Through series of landmark studies, Diana Baumrind in Onete (2006) found that through combinations of parental response (i.e. a tendency to set controls, expectations and limits), four child rearing styles could be distinguished, namely, authoritarian (higher in demand, low in response) authoritative (high in both response and demand) permissive (high in response, low in demand); and uninvolved (low in both demand and response) (Berk, 2002). The authoritative parenting style according to Berk and Berns (2004) is the most successful for developing competent and confident children. They also recognize different types of parents such as biological parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, single parents, step-parents.

Many families in Nigeria today including Calabar Municipality of Cross River State have only a single parent either because of death, divorce or out of wedlock births, or separated due to location of work place. The focus of this study is on SINGLE PARENTING. In Cross River State, Nigeria, parental roles are culturally determined. Maternal role is that of child care and home making safe for contemporary economic hard times that have forced females to engage in income generating ventures to complement husbands' income. The paternal role is mainly that of economic responsibilities and discipline of children. Generally speaking, it is the responsibility of the family to train and bring up a child according to the norms and values of the society. The family is responsible for the psychological, emotional and educational development of the child. However, divorce or separation of various kinds or death of one spouse may leave the role of the child's up bringing/nurturing in the hands of a single parent. Single parenthood is not an experience found among only adults, as it can be found among the youths as in cases where female students who indulge in illicit and unprotected sex become

victims of abuse and end up with pregnancy and subsequent child birth, and where the partner shies away from responsibility, the hapless and helpless mother is left to cater for the child as a single parent. A single parent is one who is not living with a spouse or a partner, it could be the woman or man. In other words, a single parent is a man or woman who is a biological parent to an off-spring and bears the burden of single-handedly bringing up the child. According to the Centre for Marriage and Families (2005) in over the past 35 years, the United States of America's children being raised in two-parents homes has dropped significantly from about 85% in 1968 to 70% in 2003, while the proportion of children living in single-parent homes has nearly doubled. In the same vein, Anderson (2002) observes that in the United States of America, almost half of all the children by the age of 15 years would have lived in a single parent family.

The foundation of what a child becomes in the society is laid in the home Parents therefore are seen as significant persons in the nurturing of the youths in the acquisition of appropriate social, psychological, moral and mental skills necessary for the survival of the individual and the development of the society in which he/she lives. The child is emotionally and academically healthy according to researches where the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents. Positive academic health is denoted by high academic performance by the learner. Academic performance is an objective score of attainment after a specified instructional programme. Academic performance can be influenced by many factors but the impact family members play on a child's scholastic achievement along side the over all development of the child cannot be under estimated. Research has shown that children from two-parents homes do better in their academic pursuits in their various schools due to emotional stability/balance than those from single-parent homes.

According to Eszeu (1990) the family has the potential of exercising a strong influence over the life of the child in school and long after he/she leaves school. The mental and emotional development which are factors of academic achievement according to research would be greatly influenced by the nature/structure (single home or two-parents home) into which the child is born.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between single parenting and the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in English language in Calabar

Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. In pursuit of the general objective of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

- i. There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of SS students from single parent home and those from two-parents home.
- ii. There is no significant difference between the level of academic motivation given to SS students from single parents home and those from two-parents home.

## Methodology

This study employed the survey research design. The population comprised all the SS II students in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. A simple random sampling method was used to select 200 participating students from ten (10) both public and private randomly selected secondary schools in the municipality. A researcher designed instrument titled “Impact of Single Parenting on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students Questionnaire (ISPAASSSQ) was used for data gathering. The instrument has a reliability index of 0.87, and a twenty (20) item multiple choice achievement test from standardized senior secondary certificate Examination in English language was used to establish students level of achievement.

## Findings

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of SSII students from single parent home and those from two-parents home.

Table I: Academic achievement of SSS from single and two parents homes

Item	X	F	FX		Computation Decision
Single parent homes have impact on academic achievement of students	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	170 30 - - 200	680 90 - - 770	EFX F 770 200 3.8.5	Accepted
Single parent homes affect child's over all achievement	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	168 32 - - 200	648 112 - - 762	EFX F 762 200 3.81	Accepted
Students from single parent homes achieve poorly in school	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	133 67 - - 200	532 207 - - 733	EFX F 733 200 3.67	Accepted
Home variables positively impact on academic achievement, but single parent home negatively impact on academic achievement	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	147 50 - - 200	588 150 6 - 744	EFX F 769 200 3.72	Accepted

The above table clearly indicates that single parent homes have significant impact on the academic achievement of SS II students.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between the level of academic motivation given to female SS students in single parent homes and their male siblings in Calabar Municipality.

Table II: level of academic motivation of females and males in single parent homes

Item	X	F	FX		Computation Decision
Female SS students from single parent homes are less confident than their male siblings	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	50 17 48 36 200	200 57 96 36 383	EFX F 383 200 1.92	Rejected
Female SS students from single parent homes suffer neglect to be psychologically balance to face their academics than their male siblings	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	121 23 31 25 200	484 69 62 25 640	EFX F 640 200 3.2	Accepted
Female SS students from single parent homes experience emotional stress that impact positively on their academics than their male siblings	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	139 31 17 13 200	556 93 34 13 696	EFX F 696 200 3.48	Accepted
Single parents homes tend to favour SS female students than their male siblings	SA = 4 A = 3 SD = 2 D = 1 Total	90 84 21 5 200	360 252 42 5 6.59	EFX F 659 200 3.29	Accepted

From the table II, it is observed that female SS students tend to benefit or are given more academic attention/motivation in single parents home than their male siblings in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### Discussion of findings

The finding from the testing of the hypothesis which states that there is no significant impact of single parenting on academic achievement of SS students rather revealed the contrary. This outcome is consistent with the revelation of Centre for Marriage and Families (2005) that revealed that children from single parenting homes display lower self esteem, lower

academic achievement as well as low achievement motivation than those from two-parent homes. Previous researches have shown that a child is emotionally, psychologically and academically healthy and well adjusted socially when the caring and upbringing responsibilities are carried out by both parents. No wonder this study discovered a negative impact of single parenting on the academic achievement of SS students. The reason for this outcome is quite obvious as the sayings go “two heads are better than one” “one finger cannot remove a louse from the head but two fingers can easily do it”. These are pointers to the fact that it takes two to tangle, and so children upbringing is no exception. For healthy social adjustment parenting must be carried out but by both partners

The outcome of testing the second hypothesis reveals that there is a significant difference between the level of academic motivation given to female SS students in single parent home and male siblings with the female students benefiting more favorably than their male siblings. This result is consistent with Eszeu (1990) who discovered that in the United States of America, for most single parenting homes, the female children were given more favourable attention over their male siblings. The belief that males are stronger and tougher than their female siblings, and so could endure hardship could have accounted for the less attention and academic motivation that male children enjoy from the single parent. Again the females are generally known in most cultures to be more pampered and well cared for than males so that they can turn out to be good house wives and mothers in future. This could only be achieved if the girls are made to avoid unnecessary interactions with males, and so they need attention, motivation and close monitoring if they must excel academically without any “accidental” event in the course of their academic pursuit.

The conclusion drawn from the outcomes of this study is that good child upbringing is easier and more profitable when it is a joint venture between two-parents, where possible, single parenting should be avoided completely.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the outcomes of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

- i. The home plays vital role in the upbringing of children and so parents should endeavor to create a favourable home atmosphere that enhances proper social and academic adjustment of the child.

- ii. Spouse should lower their expectations towards their marriage partners to avoid crises occasioned by unfulfilled needs, in order to engender a lasting and happy marriage life
- iii. Parents, especially single parents should appropriate their time in such a manner that they would be able to assist their children in completing their home work, give tip bits or counselling in becoming academically successful, visit their children's schools to see things for themselves and provide as much as possible for children school needs. This helps to complement the efforts of the teachers.
- iv. Parents must avoid discriminatory relationship with their children irrespective of sex.
- v. There is need for school counsellors to occasionally visit the students homes especially single parent homes for family counselling. It is a truism that a happy home breeds right thinking youths and well adjusted children.

## REFERENCES

1. Action Health Incorporated (2003). *Comprehensive sexuality education trainers, resources manual*. New York: Action Health Inc.
2. Anderson, G. (2002). Children's experience of family disruption and family formation Evidence from 16FFS countries: *Demographic Research*, 7 (7), 343 - 364.
3. Berk, L. E. (2002). *Infants, Children and adolescents*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon
4. Berk, L. E. & Berns, R. M. (2004). *Child, family, school, community; Socialization and support*, Belmont C. A.: Wads Work.
5. Centre for Marriage and Families (2005). *Family structure and children's education outcomes*. New York: Centre for Marriage and Families.
6. Eszen, S. (1990). Older adolescent and parental divorce; adjustment problems and mediator of coping. *Journal of Divorce*, 7(2) 59-75.
7. Nwaoba, C.N.(2011). *Parenting and parenting techniques in Africa; psychology of family and adulthood matter: the African perspective*. Owerri Hudson-Jude.
8. Okeke, B.A. (2003). *Child rearing practices in principles of guidance and counselling*. Enugu: SNAAP Press.
9. Onete, O. U. (2006). Psycho-social determinants of adolescents attitude towards drug-abuse prevention in Cross River State, Nigeria. *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis*, University of Calabar Nigeria.