



Single parenting as an Antecedent of Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Single parenting is increasing at an alarming rate in Kenya. Single parenting comes with burden as all the responsibilities of bringing up children is left to only one parent unlike to a case where both parents are present. Learners from single parents are likely to experience diverse challenges in their learning compared to their counterparts from families with both parents. There is upsurge in single parenting in Kiambu County where almost every 4 out of 10 learners are from single parent families. The aimed at investigating effects of single parents on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to determine effects of monitoring of children by single parents on the academic performance of learners and to establish the effect of motivation of children by single parents on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study utilized descriptive survey research design. Stratified random sampling was used to select 264 respondents who included: 96 parents, 96 Grade 6 learners, 46 teachers and 24 head teachers in 24 randomly sampled public primary schools in Kiambu County. Questionnaires, interview schedule and FGD schedule were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis while quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study adopted multiple regression analysis model. It was realized that both monitoring and motivation of children was practiced using varied methods by single parents in public primary schools. The study findings further indicated that both monitoring and motivation of children by single parents had significant positive effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools. It was further realized that both monitoring and motivation of children by single parents was better among children brought up by single mother compared to children brought up single fathers and which had proportionate effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study recommends to teachers and school administration to sensitize parents on how to monitor learning of their children and come up with motivation programs to appreciate better performance of learners. Parents should establish rewards strategies for their children on good performance at home. Ministry of Education (MOE) should train Board of Managements (BOMs) and parents on their role in monitoring learning of their children.

Keywords: Single Parents, Single Parenting, Monitoring, Motivation, Academic Performance, Public Primary Schools.

1. Introduction

Single family structure is sky rocketing globally. Single parenting emanates from break up, separation, divorce, death of spouse, unintended pregnancy, single person adoption and migration of one parent to urban areas (Nasir & Patil, 2019) ^[24]. For instance, in United States of America (USA), single mothers rose by triple to 23% from 1960 to 2016 while single fathers increased from

1% to 4% and this was attributed to divorce and separation or never married mothers (US Census Bureau, 2016)^[36]. OECD (2011)^[27] ranked USA as the country with highest single parents at 25.8% followed by Ireland, New Zealand, Canada and United Kingdom which all scoped over 20% rate of single parenthood. From the African perspective, single parenting was originally forbidden as some of its triggers like divorce and siring a child before marriage was highly discouraged although this has been overtaken by events due to globalization and industrialization (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010)^[28]. By the start of this millennium, Amato and Keith (2000)^[4] projected that 75% of African children born to married parents will experience their parent's divorce before the age of sixteen.

Single parenting in Kenya has signaled an upward trend for the last three decades due to modernization and urbanization. Most people have trashed traditional beliefs and norms in this new era of technology leading to increased single parenthood. Kenya is leading in single parenthood in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2019)^[16] indicate that for the last 10 years, single parenting had increased by 15% with more than 25% of Kenyan homes being led by single mothers (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics -KNBS, 2019)^[16]. Mungai (2017)^[19] observed that 23.2% of single parents were women from Central Kenya although there are few single fathers. The estimates of Kiambu County show that 4 out of every 10 children in public primary schools are brought up by single parent (Unpublished Kiambu County Education Report, 2024).

The debate on the nexus between single parenting and academic performance of learners is still not settled in both social and mainstream media platforms (Fleming, 2014). There is consensus that parents are critical component on schooling of their children. They may get involved through various ways including monitoring and motivating of their children during learning process. Parents are anticipated to monitor learners both at home and school. Park, Byun and Kim (2011)^[29] observe that parental monitoring of children both at home and school positively affects children's educational outcomes. This involves quality and quantity spending time with their children and helping them in reading, doing homework, how their children involve themselves in social work and be informed on school experiences by their children which might be compromised for single parents. Parental involvement may extent to motivation of their children which acts as thriller to learners to aspire to succeed in a certain action. Motivation is either intrinsic or extrinsic. Coetzee (2011)^[12] advocate for children to have intrinsic motivation to learning which push them to achieve a certain self-set goal. Aja (2009)^[3] contents that extrinsic motivation may emanate from teacher, parents, peers and the society in general and advocate for intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation. The scholar however acknowledges that if learners are properly motivated, they excel well academically.

Narad and Abdullah (2016)^[23] view academic performance as knowledge and skills that are assessed through marks by teachers or examination to measure education goals. The Academic performance may be influenced by myriad factors one factor including single parenting. The extent to which single parents monitor and motivate their children has an impact on the academic performance. It's all about how single parents invest their time, resources and go ahead to motivate and inspire their children which is linked to

academic performance of their children (Bengesai & Nzimande, 2020; Naite, 2021)^[8, 22]. Presence of two parents in the schooling of children is key. The absence of one parent affect how children are socialized which in return affect optimal social and cognitive development and schooling of the children (Fleming, 2014; Mece, 2015)^[14, 18].

The extant empirical literature indicates a paradox on whether single parenting affect academic performance. Mece (2015)^[18] observed that learners from families with both parents are properly socialized leading to optimal growth. Amato, Patterson and Beattie (2016)^[5] noted that single parent households are more prone to exhibiting dysfunctional parenting styles and behaviors due to poverty and depression which affect performance of the learners. However, Bironga (2015)^[9] claimed that when learners from single parents are given quality upbringing and have closer parental care, they divert disorders relating to social, cognitive and emotional maladjustments hence performing like other children. Azumah, Krampah, and Nachinaab (2018)^[7] supported the study by finding that there was no significant difference in academic performance between children from both parent families and single parent families. It is further noted by Clark, Kabiru, Laszlo and Muthuri (2023)^[11], that single mothers are likely to face unemployment and most of them have challenged education background compared to single fathers which bring gender issues among single parents on whether it influences the academic performance of learners. The variance in the study findings on how single parenting affect academic performance of learners creates a gap which this study investigated bringing forth issues of gender of the single parents in the conversation.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

There is notable exponential rise of single parenting in Kenya. Currently, it is estimated that there is no single class without a child from single parent families in most primary schools (Mungai, 2017)^[19]. The number of single parents has sky rocketed in Kiambu County with the current estimates indicating that 4 out of every 10 children in public primary schools are raised by single parent. The academic performance of learners of learners has been on decline for the last five years in Kiambu County. Most learners have failed to meet expectation in their final results in Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA) in the County (Unpublished Kiambu County Education Report, 2024). The responsibilities in families with both parents are likely to be shared unlike in single parent families where one parents is tasked with all roles of parenting (Mece, 2015)^[18]. With the up-surging rate of single parenting, concern has been raised whether there is connection between single parenting and whether the gender of the single parent is instrumental to the performance of their children in Kiambu County, Kenya.

There is paradox in the existing empirical literature on whether single parenting effect academic performance of learners. For instance, Mece (2015)^[18] indicated that single parenting affected academic performance of learners while Azumah, Krampahm and Nachinaab (2018)^[7] pointed to no difference between academic performance of learners from single parent families and their counterparts from families with both parents. There is no known study which has been done in Kiambu County on the relationship between single parenting n school activities and academic performance of learners in public primary schools drawing gender of the

single parents to the conversations. This created a gap thus this study investigated how single parenting affected the academic performance of learners in public primary school pupils in Kiambu County in Kenya.

1.2. Specific Research Objective

- To determine the effect of monitoring of children by single parents on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.
- To establish the effect of motivation of children by single parents on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

1.2.2. Research Hypotheses

- **Ho1:** Monitoring of children by single parents has no significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County.
- **Ho2:** Motivation of children by single parents has no significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

2. Review Literature

2.1. Theoretical Review

2.1.1. Socialization Theory

This study was premised on socialization theory which was coined by Charles Cooley (1902). The theory borrows a lot from the paradigm of 'looking-glass self' which accentuates that people are defined by how they get socialized. The key assumption of socialization theory is that in order to understand how people behave, we should relook at how they interact with other people (Chandler & Munday, 2011). The theory organizes people's mind in to dimensions that is social and mental dimensions. The scholar pointed out that mental process of human being is influenced by the social interactions with other people and the environment. The scholar further asserts that people you interact with will determine how other people will perceive you. (McIntyre, 1998). The parenting practices are noted as a cornerstone of socialization of children as it determines how children grow and develop in the entire life of children.

Parenting styles and models of children may involve long life process which involves inheriting and training on the rules, culture, customs and principles which help them in acquiring of knowledge, skills and habits of importance to them as they get involved in societal activities. It is however noted that despite culture amongst people varying by having diverse customs and habits, it may be expressed well by individuals which all depends on one is socialized by parents, extended family and extended social networks (Super & Harkness, 2002). It should be appreciated children from single parent families are socialized different compared to children from families with both parents. Equally children from single parent families head by women are socialized different from children from single parent families headed by fathers.

The theory connects how socialization of children is key in determining their future lives of the children and which links with their upbringing including raising children as a single parent. It's fair to note that children from families with both parents are more socialized than those with single parents because the responsibilities are shared amongst the parents. Equally children brought up in single parent families headed by mothers socialize their children differently compared to

families headed by fathers. This theory is relevant in that depending on how children are socialized, it lays foundation in raising esteem of learners and on how they perceive themselves which is precursor for the level of their academic performance in schools.

2.2. Empirical Review

2.3. Monitoring of Children by Single Parents and Academic Performance

Various studies have explored the relationship between monitoring of children by single parents and academic performance of learners in learning institutions. Sharmila and Manimekalai (2025)^[31] investigated how monitoring systems connected with academic performance. The monitoring systems was operationalized as use of web-based platform to track attendance learners' punctuality by parents, daily attendance records, grades in schools and general academic performance of learners. The study noted that monitoring systems allowed timely updates and gave room for virtual conferencing where both parents and teachers can interact directly especially when parents are busy without meeting physically. The monitoring systems also allowed students to access notes and study materials and have their assignment uploaded where the parents may get an opportunity for parents to be informed on the progress of their children. The study concluded that the monitoring systems had impact on academic performance of learners.

Ngangi, Cheloti & Mwanja (2023)^[25] conducted a survey on the influence of parents' role in monitoring learning activities on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kangundo Sub County in Kenya. The study was anchored on Epstein's theory on parental involvement on overlapping sphere of influence. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study involved a census of all 24 public secondary schools involving all 24 principals, 27 parent association chairpersons. Stratified random sampling was used to sample 102 teachers and 348 students. The study used questionnaires and interview guide to collect the data which was analyzed using correlational analysis. The study findings indicated that there was a weak positive correlation between parents' role in monitoring learning activities and students' academic performance in Kangundo Sub County in Kenya.

Munir, Rani, Ali and Afzal (2021)^[20] conducted a descriptive survey on single parenting and its effects on the academic performance of students at private university in southern Punjab. The study findings indicated that most learners from single parent families were emotionally unsound and depressed. The study further revealed that single parents hardly had time to regularly monitor and supervise the academic progress of their children and they struggle to provide learning materials which affected the academic performance of the children at the university level.

Kimaru, Mukolwe and Kimani (2020)^[15] conducted a descriptive survey which linked family structure on the learner's academic performance in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The researchers sampled participants through stratified and simple random sampling procedure. It was discovered from the study findings that there was no visible variance between academic performance of children from single parent families and children from families with both parents.

Study conducted by Bengesai and Nzimande (2020)^[8] and

Musili, Mwanja, & Mulwa (2020) ^[21] indicated that the family structure of children affects academic performance of learners in schools. It was noted that children from single parents are more likely to be headed by single mothers who may be not be economically endowed and may lack sufficient time to support and monitor learning progress of their children which in return affect academic performance of the learners. Hitherto studies by Amoakohene (2013) ^[6] denoted that single parenthood may affect academic outcomes negatively because single parents are more likely to be poor and lack adequate time to supervise learning of their children in learning activities.

2.3.1. Motivation of Children by Single Parents and Academic Performance

Shebani, Aldhafri and Alsaidi (2025) ^[32], conducted a study on the effect of parental involvement on academic passion: the mediating role of student motivation in learning English online in Oman. The study tried to unlock how involvement of parents is key to academic passion and the role played by motivation which was operationalized as either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The study used convenience sampling to sample 270 grade 7-11 students in Oman. Questionnaire was used to collect data which was analysed using Pearson Correlation and Path Analysis using AMOS 25. The study findings indicated that parental involvement significantly promotes both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, thus promoting academic passion, study habits and English language grades.

Rubamande and Mukadi (2021) ^[30] indicate that whenever single parents guide and counsel, instil positive social circles and motivate their children, such children develop positive attitude towards schooling, hence achieve better academic performance. Motivation also helps learners in setting their goals high, which in the long run leads to improved academic performance in schools. The scholars appreciate the key role played by motivation in influencing academic performance of learners in learning institutions.

In Unamba, Okwara-Kalu and Ibe Georgeline (2020) ^[35]'s study, it was strongly agreed by 20% of the respondents that

motivation and encouragement was linked to positive performance of learners in schools. It was further found that encouragement and motivation of learners from single parent families lead to improved achievement of learners in academics. The study further realized that motivation and encouragement improved the behavior and commitment of the learners in schooling.

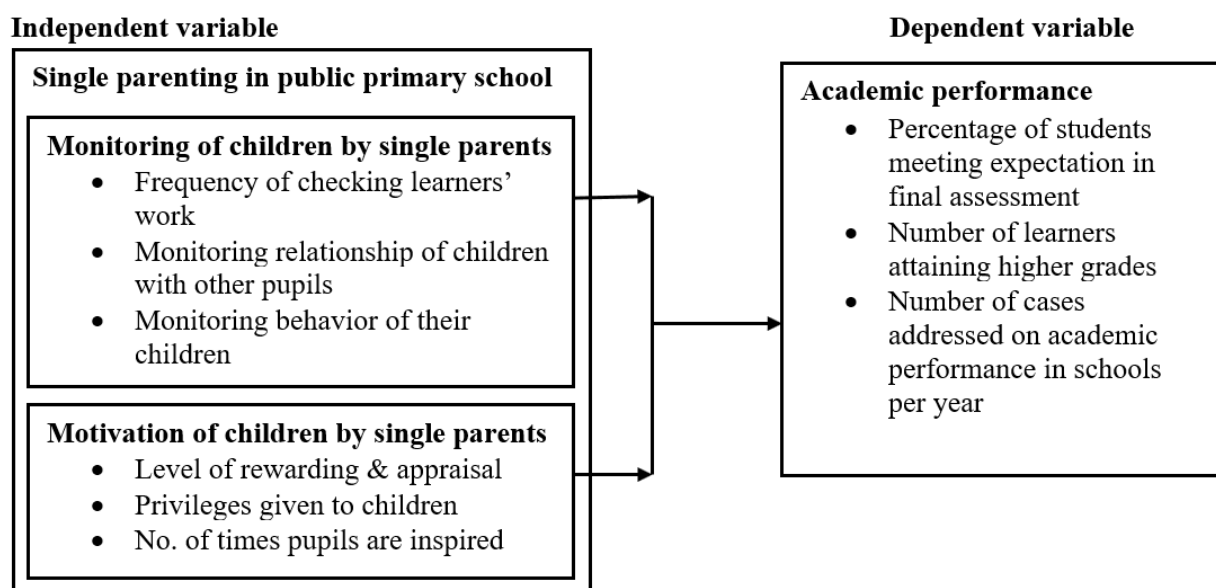
Abubakar (2020) ^[1] influence of parental motivation on students' academic performance in business studies in junior secondary schools in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey and ex-post facto research design. The study utilized simple random sampling to sample of 382 students drawn from five educational zones in Kaduna State. Data was collected using structured questionnaire and data analysed using simple linear regression analysis. The study findings indicated that parental motivation on students had a positive significant influence on students' academic performance in Business Studies and gender of students didn't influence their academic performance in Business Studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State.

2.3.2. Gaps emanating from the empirical review

The extant empirical literature reviewed so far indicated there were gaps noted. The studies had gaps in that each study operationalized the study variables in manner that suited their studies. Some studies had contextual gaps by being carried out in areas whose legislative and cultural context is different from Kenyan context limiting generalization of findings. Some studies had methodological gaps which include use of sampling which is non-representative in nature like convenient and purposive sampling and also gaps in using only descriptive statistics or qualitative analysis which limited making of inferences whether there was a relationship between the study variables.

2.3.3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework highlighted the relation between the aspects of single parenting (Independent variable) and the academic performance (Dependent variable) of learners in public primary schools.



Source: Author, 2025

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

This study used descriptive research design. The design allowed quick data collection where large sample size was involved and there was a time constrain. The method is also cheap when it involves large sample size. The study interacted with 21 head teachers, 44 teachers, 80 parents and 96 Grade 6 learners totaling 241 participants drawn from 24 public primary schools in Githunguri Sub County, Kiambu County in Kenya who were sampled using stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling allowed equal gender representation and gave equal chances to all anticipated respondents to be selected during the study.

Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires for head teachers and teachers, interview schedule for parents and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) schedule for both parents and Grade 6 learners. Questionnaires were administered through drop and pick method. The interviews of parents and FGDs for both parents and Grade 6 learners were done in their respective schools. Two randomly schools were used during pilot study which involved two school head teacher, four teachers, eight parents and eight pupils.

Validity of the instruments was tested using face and content validity by experts while reliability test utilized Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The overall coefficient was 0.813 thus concluding that most items in the study was reliable. The threshold proposed for items to be reliable is a coefficient above 0.7 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) ^[34]. Quantitative data was analyzed to produce descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was summarized in form of percentage, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was used to test hypothesis where regression analysis model was used which was reported using adjusted coefficient of

determination (R^2), F statistics (ANOVA), unstandardized coefficients (beta values) and p values at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data was pieced together as per study objectives and analyzed on the basis of common themes and patterns which were reported in narrative form.

4. Findings and Discussions

The study involved 65 head teachers and teachers who filled questionnaire. The study involved interviewing 24 parents and another batch of 80 parents and 96 Grade 6 learners who were engaged in a Focused Group Discussion (FGDs). The respondents were sampled in ratio of 1:1 in terms of gender.

4.1. Monitoring of Children by Single Parents.

The study utilized percentage analyze responses in relation to level of monitoring of children by single parents which is our independent variable. The study findings indicated that monitoring of children by single parents was noted to average as indicated by 40% of all respondents with 26% feeling the monitoring of children by single parents was poor as proposed by 26% of the respondents. Only one fifth (20%) of respondents opined that monitoring if children by single parents was high while 14% of respondents claimed there was no monitoring of children by single parents. This implies that though not satisfactory there was monitoring of children by single parents in public primary schools in Kiambu County Kenya.

The study further used percentage to analyze various ways the aspects of children which are monitored by single parents in their learning process in public primary schools. The analysis was summarized in table 1

Table 1: Aspects of Children Monitored by Single Parents

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Aspects of learners monitored	1, 2,3	9	13.8
	1,2,3,5	12	18.5
	1,3	6	9.2
	1,5	4	6.2
	2,3	14	21.5
	2,3,4	7	10.8
	2,3,5	8	12.3
	2,4	5	7.7
	Total	65	100.0
NB: 1 = Discipline of the children2 = School attendance 3 = Home works and assignments 4 = Relationship with fellow pupils 5 = How learners spend their free times			

Source: Survey data (2025)

The results in table 1 indicated that single parents monitored more than one aspect of children during their learning process. The main aspects monitored by parents was combining monitoring of children's school attendance plus home works and assignments which was represented by 21.5% of all responses. The least aspects monitored was combination of monitoring of discipline of the children and

how learners spend their free time which was represented by 6.2% of all respondents. This study further utilized mean and standard deviation of a 5-point Likert on how participants agreed or disagreed with various statements related to monitoring of children by single parents. The results were summarized in table 2

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Monitoring of Children by Single Parents

Monitoring of children by single parents	Mean	Std. Dev.
Single parents frequently monitor the progress of their children in learning process	3.66	.853
Single parents do not have adequate time to monitor how their children relate with others in school	3.55	.779
Single parents do not have adequate time to monitor the behavior of their learners in school	3.51	.886
Single parents do not have enough time to check on their children's home works and assignments	3.35	.779
Learners from single parent families headed by fathers are monitored better in their learning process than learners from families headed by mothers.	3.77	.825
Families with two parents have higher level of monitoring of their children on learning than single parent families	3.89	.812
Aggregate mean scores for monitoring of children by single parents	3.62	.822

Source: Survey (2025)

Results in table 2 indicate that overall mean response for all items on monitoring of children by single parents was 3.62 which is closer to 4.0 (agree) on the 5-point Likert scale adopted in this study. The variability of responses was low at 0.822. This affirms that respondents were agreed that children were monitored by single parents in Kiambu County. The study results indicated that children were frequently monitored in their learning process although most respondents noted that single parents did not have adequate time to monitor how their children relate with learners. The study findings also revealed that most respondents were of the opinion that single parents do not have adequate time to monitor the behavior of their learners in school and check on their children's home works and assignments. The study further revealed that there was agreement that learners from single parent families headed by fathers were monitored better in their learning process than learners from families headed by mothers. Lastly, most respondents concurred that children from families with two parents have higher level of monitoring compared to their counterparts from single parent families in Kiambu County.

4.2. Motivation of Children by Single Parents

The study utilized percentage analyze responses on the state of motivation of children by single parents which was independent variable. Over half of the respondents (56%) were of the opinion that indicated motivation of children by single parents was average while 26% believed that motivation of children by single parents was poor. It was only 12% and 6% of respondents who viewed motivation of children by single parents to be good or it wasn't there respectively. This implies that motivation of children by single parents was not adequate. The study further

interrogated various through which single parents motivated their children which was summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Ways through which Children are Motivated by Single Parents

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Ways of Motivation	1, 2,3	9	13.8
	1, 2,5	8	12.3
	1,3	9	13.8
	1,3,5	5	7.7
	1,5	4	6.2
	2,3	5	7.7
	2,3,4	13	20.0
	2,3,5	4	6.2
	3,4	8	12.3
	Total	65	100.0

NB: 1 = Prompt payment of school levies 2 = Rewarding
3 = Verbal appraisal 4 = Giving them privileges
5 = Participating in all school activities

Source: Survey (2025)

The results in table 3 demonstrated that single parents motivated their children by combining more than one way. The core ways of motivating children by single parents were integrating rewarding, verbal appraisal and giving learners privileges which accounted to 20% of all responses. The least ways of motivating children by single parents were either combining prompt payment of school levies and participating in all school activities or combining rewarding, verbal appraisal and participating in all school activities which each combination accounted to 6% of all respondents respectively. The study further sought to find the level of agreement or disagreement on various statements on state of motivation of children by single parents which was summarized in table 4

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Motivation of Children by Single Parents

Motivation of children by single parents	Mean	Std. Dev.
Single parents frequently motivate their children in learning process	3.34	.940
Single parents frequently reward and appraise their children on academic performance more than children from families with both parents	2.71	.861
Children from single parents are given more privileges to learning compared to children from families with both parents	2.74	.776
Learners from single parent families headed by fathers are motivated better in their learning process than learners from families headed by mothers.	2.87	1.030
Families with two parents motivates their children better than single parent families in their learning process	3.66	.889
Motivation of children by single parents affect their academic performance in schools	3.71	.996
Aggregate score for motivation of children by single parents	3.17	.915

Source: Survey (2024)

Results in table 5 indicate that the aggregate mean response for all items on motivation of children by single parents was 3.17 which is closer to 3.0 (Not sure) on the 5-point Likert scale. The low variability of responses as indicated by

standard deviation of 0.915 confirms that motivation of children by single parents was partially practiced in Kiambu County. There was doubt by respondents that single parents often rewarded and appraised their children, gave their

children more privileges than it was done for children with both parents. The findings posted a doubt whether learners under care of single fathers were more motivated than those from single mothers but there was concurrence by most respondents that children from families with both parents motivated were motivated better than their counterparts from single parent families. Lastly, most respondents were of the opinion that single parenting affected academic performance of learners in public primary schools.

4.3. Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools

Academic performance of learners	Mean	Std. Dev.
Learners from single parent families are performing like their counterparts with both parents	2.86	.882
Learners from single parents headed by fathers perform better academically than counterparts from families headed by mothers	3.06	.788
Most learners from single parent families have been meeting expectation in their final assessments as their counterparts from families with both parents	3.25	.751
Most learners from single parents have attained higher grades in their final assessments	3.06	0.818
The number of cases addressed on poor academic performance have dropped among the learners from single parent compared to learners from families with both parents.	3.05	.856
Aggregate mean scores for Academic performance of learners	3.06	.819

Source: Survey data (2024)

The study findings in table 5 revealed that the overall mean response for all items on academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County to be 3.06. This is closer to 3.0 (not sure) on the 5-point Likert scale adopted in this study. This translate that most participants were not sure if there was good academic performance of learners in public primary schools. The study also noted that there was doubt if learners from single parents were performing better than their counterparts from families with both parents and whether gender of single parents (male or female) was a factor in influencing academic performance. Most respondents were not sure if learners from single parent families met expectation in their final compared to colleagues with both parents.

The percentage was utilized to analyze the academic performance of learners in public primary schools. The findings indicated that most learners performed averagely as noted by 52% of the respondents. Those who believed academic performance was either good or poor tied at 20% with only 8% of the respondent pointing to performance being excellent. The study further utilized mean and standard deviation of a 5-point Likert on how participants agreed or disagreed with various statements related to the state of academic performance of learners in public primary schools. The results were summarized in table 5.

4.4. Relationship between Single Parenting and Academic Performance of Learners

The regression analysis model was utilized to statistically test hypotheses of the study. The hypotheses were tested at 95% confidence level ($\alpha=0.05$) to determine how single parenting influenced academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County using adjusted R^2 . Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) or F- test was used to determine whether the relationship between the study variables was significant. The summary of regression analysis results for single parenting and academic performance was summarized in table 6.

Table 6: Regression Results for Single Parenting and Academic Performance

Model summary						
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R ²	Standard error of estimate		
1	.388 ^a	.144	.116	.3716		
ANOVA						
Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	
Regression	1.441	2	0.720	5.218	0.008 ^a	
Residual	8.559	62	0.138			
Total	10.000	64				
a. Predictors: (Constant), Monitoring of children by single parents, Motivation of children by single parents						
b. Dependent Variable: Academic performance in public primary schools						
Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient (beta)	t	Sig.
		Beta	Std error			
Constant		0.984	.554		1.778	0.005
Monitoring of children by single parents		.109	.075	.091	.117	0.001
Motivation of children by single parents		.188	.192	.148	.976	0.005
Dependent Variable: Academic performance						

Dependent Variable: Academic performance

Source: Survey data (2024)

The results in table 6 indicated that the adjusted R squared was 0.116 implying that aspects of single parenting (Monitoring and motivation of children by single parents) explains 11.9% of the variation of academic performance of

learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County at 95% level of significance. The model was statistically significant at $F(2, 62) = 5.218$ and the calculated probability was 0.008. The summary for model was:

Academic Performance = $0.984 + 0.109$ Monitoring of Children by single parents + 0.118 Motivation of Children by single parents Model 1

The regression model indicated that when single parenting is constant at zero, the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County was at 0.984. Therefore, by adding aspects of single parenting that is monitoring of children by single parents and motivation of children by single parents, the academic performance of learners in public primary schools would be enhanced positively and would improve.

4.4.1. Monitoring of Children by Single Parents and Academic Performance

The first objectives sought to determine whether motivation of children by single parents had effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The null hypothesis to be tested was: H_{01} : Monitoring of children by single parents has no significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. From the regression model in table 6, monitoring of children by single parents was statistically significant at $\beta=0.109$; $t = 0.117$; $p = 0.001$ since the p value was less than 0.05. This means if you change monitoring of children by single parents by one unit, the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County would increase of 0.109. It is from the basis of these results that we should reject null hypothesis thus concluding that monitoring of children by single parents had significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary school in Kiambu County, Kenya. The findings are in consensus with hitherto study by Munir, Rani, Ali and Afzal (2021) ^[20], Bengesai and Nzimande (2020) ^[8], Musili, Mwanja, & Mulwa (2020) ^[21] and Ntumi, Larbi, & Yirenyki. (2019) ^[26] who noted single parenting and in particular monitoring had significant effect on the academic performance of learners in varied learning institutions. Kimaru, Mukolwe and Kimani (2020) ^[15] however was in contrast as it noted no visible difference between academic performance of learners from single parent families and those from families with both parents despite difference in the level of monitoring of the learners.

4.4.2. Motivation of Children by Single Parents and Academic Performance

The second hypothesis to be tested was: H_{02} : Motivation of children by single parents has no significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results in table 6 indicated that motivation of children by single parents had statistically significant effect on the academic at $\beta=0.188$; $t = 0.976$; $p = 0.005$ as the p value was less than 0.05. This meant changing motivation of children by single parents by single unit would improve academic performance by 0.188. From the regression results we should reject the null hypothesis thus concluding that motivation of children by single parents had significant positive effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study findings corroborated well with study findings by Rubamande and Mukadi (2021) ^[30], Unamba, Okwara-Kalu and Ibe Georgeline (2020) ^[35] and Adegboyega (2019) ^[2] who indicated that motivation of learners by single parents had effect on the academic performance of learners in learning institutions.

4.5. Qualitative Analysis of Single Parenting and Academic Performance of Learners

This study obtained qualitative data from the responses given by the participants from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires, interview schedule and FGDs schedules. The data was pieced together and analyzed on the basis of common themes and patterns which were reported in narrative form.

4.5.1. Monitoring of Children by Single Parents and Academic Performance.

The opinion of most respondents who were involved in FGDs and interviewed noted that there was poor monitoring of learners by single parents compared when compared to parents of families with both parents. To quote verbatim some of the respondents opined “The monitoring of single parents is poor because they support the learners alone unlike in case where both parents help one another”. There were conflicting responses on whether who between male and female single parents monitor their children with most responses skewed towards female gender who are noted to be keener in monitoring their children while male counterparts rely on relatives for the upbringing of their children. Most respondents indicated that parents monitored their children in learning mostly on aspects like homework and assignments, school attendance and discipline. The respondents further concurred that there was positive effect of monitoring of children by single parents on the academic performance in public primary schools in the area of the study. This validates study done previously by Munir, Rani, Ali and Afzal (2021) ^[20] which observed that there was positive effect of monitoring of learners by single parents and academic performance in schools.

4.5.2. Motivation of Children by Single Parents and Academic Performance

The study findings indicated that most of the respondents were of the view that there was motivation of children by single parents was average implying it wasn't fully actioned in Kiambu County. There was concurrence amongst respondents that female single parents motivated their children more than their male counterparts. To quote in one FGD opined “Female single parents tend to be more attached to their children and they give more praises, rewards and generally inspired them to learning than male single parents who rely on caregivers and relatives”. Most respondents opined that motivation of children from single parent families was noted to be lower compared to children from families with both parents with children with both parents having advantages as the responsibility was shared among the parents including rewarding and motivation of children. Most respondents opined that children were motivated mainly through rewards, verbal appraisal and giving privileges to learners in their learning process. Most respondents claimed that motivation of children by single parents had positive effects on the academic performance of learners in the area of the study. Most respondents further opined that motivation of children by female single parents had stronger effect on academic performance of learners compared to male counterparts. These findings concur with hitherto findings by Rubamande and Mukadi (2021) ^[30] which indicated that motivation of learners had significant effect on the academic performance in learning institutions although this study advanced further the study to include gender card in the

analysis.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study sought to find out the relationship between single parenting and the academic performance of learners in public primary schools. It explored two perspectives of single parenting that is monitoring of children by single parents and motivation of children single parents and how they linked to academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County. First, the results indicated that monitoring of children by single parents was average in public primary schools in Kiambu County. It was further found that monitoring learners by single parents were done by combining varied ways which had positive effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools. The study acknowledges the role gender with monitoring of children by female single parents having greater impact compared to their male counterparts. It is therefore logical to conclude that monitoring of children by single parents had effect on the academic performance in public primary schools and need to be encouraged in schools.

Secondly, the study found that motivation of children by single parents in their learning was averagely practiced. The study further noted that single parents used varied motivation methods to motivate their children. Motivation of children by single parents had effect on the academic performance among learners in public primary schools. Motivation of children by female single parents had stronger effect on the academic performance compared to their male counterparts. It is therefore in order to conclude that motivation of children by single parents has effect on the academic performance among learners in public primary schools.

5.2. Policy and Practical Recommendation

This study recommends to school administration and teachers to organize for a workshop for parents to train them on how to monitor learning of their children to improve performance. They should also come up with motivation programs to reward good performance of the learners so that they boost morale in learning. Parents should have home-based motivation and reward strategies for their children in order to encourage better performance of their children in schools. Ministry of Education (MOE) should train Board of Management (BOMs) and parents on their roles in monitoring learning of their children both at schools and home. Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should strengthen the Head teacher of Year Award (HOYA) and Teacher of Year Award (TOYA) by bringing forth aspects relating to stakeholders and parental engagement as one of the key indicators and how they reward success in their schools.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study focused on public primary schools and did not co-opt private institutions and other levels of learning which limit generalization of findings calling for future research to incorporate all level of education and bringing out aspects of gender of the parents in the investigation. The study also did a snap shot of the state of the study variable at a specific time. There is need for a future research to be done over a period of 10 years in order to capture the changes in the trend of the study variable to validate the study findings. There is also need to capture factors moderating the study variable like

school environment in the future research because this study did not analyze any moderating variable.

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