

**INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON ADOLESCENT CHILDREN'S  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN EMBAKASI, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in this or any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my beloved husband Joseph Odede for his continuous support and motivation during the entire research process. I also dedicate it to my daughter Beryl Gertrude whose constant encouragement and reminder that I must succeed steered me on throughout the research process, to my son Lowell Luke who has always sought to know my progress in this course and to my son Vincent Benjamin who has been a source of inspiration to me and has kept encouraging me as I undertook this course. It is also dedicated to all those young adults who brought up in single family households who overcome odds to excel in academics.

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## ABSTRACT

The family is regarded as the basic unit in an organization. Families in Kenya have for long been perceived as comprising of a father, mother and their children. The roles of the father and mother in bringing up children are complementary. However, many families have absent fathers or mothers. The Kenyan government has been very supportive in the provision of quality education; despite this the performance of primary schools in Embakasi Sub County has remained below standard. This study examined the influence of single parenthood on adolescent children's academic performance in Embakasi, Nairobi County, Kenya. The objectives of this study were to establish the effects of single parenthood on the academic performance of adolescent pupils, determine the challenges facing single parents and their adolescent children in primary schools, to establish the level of assistance that these parents and their adolescent children get from their schools and finally establish the ways of improving the performances of adolescent pupils of single parents in Embakasi Sub County. The study used the Social Reaction Theory. The study used descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire and Interview guide were used to collect data for this study. The study population consisted of 340 respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents in these categories namely; standard 8 class teachers, standard 8 pupils and parents. Simple random sampling was used to sample respondents from each category of the population which totaled to 230 respondents. Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used to analyse the data collected from the respondents. Data presentation was done by using descriptive statistics in form of tables and charts. The study established that most adolescent pupils from single parent families were below average in academic performance secondly most adolescents pupils from single parent families were absent from school more frequently compared to children from two-parent families. The study also looked into the influence of single parenthood on academic performance where we had mother only and father only parents. The study intended to come up with policy guidelines that were to help adolescents achieve their optimal academic performance despite family backgrounds. Lastly adolescent pupils from single parents were found to be more involved in disciplinary cases than the ones from two parent families. The study recommends The school and social systems should partner together to see that all adolescents are treated in the same manner that would encourage the learners as if they all come from two parent family structures. Measures like guiding and counseling should be put in place for single parents and their adolescent children. Based on these recommendations from the study, similar studies should be carried out in secondary schools. Secondly a study should also be carried out on the kind of assistance to be given to single parents with students and pupils in schools.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ADB:</b>	African Development Bank
<b>DEO:</b>	District Education Office
<b>GPA:</b>	Grade Point Average
<b>NAEP:</b>	National Association of Education Procurement
<b>PQF:</b>	Pupils' Questionnaire Form
<b>PTA:</b>	Parents Teachers Association
<b>SAT:</b>	Scholastic Assessment Test
<b>SBCEO:</b>	Sub County Education Office
<b>SMC:</b>	School Management Committee
<b>SPSS:</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>TQF:</b>	Teachers' Questionnaire Form
<b>UNESCO:</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>USA:</b>	United States of America

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the topic under study by giving some background to the study, gives the statement of the problem, and outlines the objectives of the study as well as the purpose of the study. The chapter also lays out the research questions that will be answered by the study, gives the significance of the study and the limitations as well as assumptions made while carrying out the study. Finally the chapter lays out the conceptual and theoretical framework under which the study was based on.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The presence of both parents as the child grows is important for the child's optimal social and cognitive growth. Fleming (2014) noted that in the last century, the number of children brought up in single parent homes has been on the increase. Discussions have saturated the media on the adverse effects on the children's behavior and growth. Therefore the absence of any parent is seen as impacting on the social cognitive growth of their children since each parent has distinct roles on their children. However, Mece (2015) argued that with good and quality socialization, children from single parent homes are able to growth and develop as normal children from two parent homes. Abbott (2012) holds the view that single parenting can contribute to a child's academic performance just like in a two-parent family.

During the adolescence, there are physiological and other growth changes that occur in the young people. During this stage, children need guidance from the parents in order to

transit the stage successfully. Barajas (2011) posited that during adolescence, teenagers suffer from the stress and therefore children in single parents primarily experience lower levels of parental involvement thus this negatively affect adolescents' developmental outcomes. Bironga (2015) posited that during adolescence, children need close parental care to ensure successful transition and avoid upheavals of social, cognitive, and emotional maladjustments. Nevertheless, good parenting from single parents can negate the negative impacts that single parenting can bring to children. Hammer and Turner (2013) argued that nurturing and educating children are parental roles matters more than the structural organisation of the family. Therefore, parental behavior plays a definitive role in shaping the child's behavior and perception of the World more than the rules given at home.

Allen (2014) denoted parental goals as the principles that parents aim to achieve when raising the children. Answorth and Filmer (2013) argued that there existed a significant linkage between parental expectation and a child's academic achievement. In the same line, Ortese (2013) noted that children from families with high aspirations will be more successful than families from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Whiting and Edwards (1992) further noted that parents' educational aspirations play a critical role in how adolescents come to view school as well as their occupational future. The Theory of Social Reaction holds that individuals tend to become what the society around them dictates. The society views that children in single parent households do not get full guidance and attention. This breeds mistrust between the parent and the child. Whiting and Edwards (1992) further argued that there is a missing link that children in single

parenthood families face and normally is seen in a break in the network of friends, associated and family members. The study further noted that where a child lives with the mother, the father-child link is broken and this could be seen in a child's interaction with friends and teachers in school. This condition hinders that academic achievement of children from single parent households. Since separated parents are unlikely to keep their former associates, children are cut off from friends and peers that were fundamental in their growth and social interaction.

Epstein and Sheldon (2013) argued that parents monitor their child's academic and social growth progress which makes the child feel worth and boosts self-esteem as well as acts as an intrinsic mediator to the child. During adolescence stage, physiological and developmental changes taking place in a teenage require high parental supervision and guidance. When a child is in a single parent household, the parent is overwhelmed by economic and social demands that they do not fully assist their children understand the adolescent stage. Such children depend on peers or pull away from their friends, teachers and this leads to significant drop in academic performance. Households with both parents, there was team work and a higher level of supervision and assistance given to adolescent children. The child feels integrated and important and is motivated to pursue excellence in all spheres of life. In most households, there is general fear that children exhibit towards their fathers. This fear acts as a deterrent to children from indulging in any activity to evoke the fathers' wrath. Such fear was observed to contribute significantly to academic excellence by students.

Abbott (2012) noted that sociological discussions concentrate on the themes of universality and decline. Abbott noted that the family exists for a number of compelling reasons, people cannot live as solitary creatures nor can human females raise their young by themselves as mother cats do. Hence, human beings live always in groups containing adults of both sexes as well as children termed as family and membership in the family is determined by ancestry and sexual unions. The second theme in modern sociological writing on the family is that, despite the universality of the family in modern societies, the family is in decline. Abbott further argued that in majority of single parent households in the middle class; there is financial strain that affects the children and their socialization. Since single parents are under stress to meet the household needs and have to juggle between job and home, the children do not get assistance while handling their homework.

During adolescence, Barajas (2011) noted that parental involvement in a child's activities is important to offer wisdom and guidance. If there was a decrease in the level of parental involvement during adolescence, the children might develop negative behavior and attitudes detrimental to academic excellence. These sentiments were supported in Bironga (2015) whose study showed that majority of adolescents from single parent households showed significant involvement in vices in secondary school. This was attributed to lack of parental support which draws children to their peers. Such peers if not well oriented assists altering the good behavior of single parent children.

Orodho (2005) argued that as the people become more civilized, their social lives are constantly influenced by the same civilization depending on their location in the World.

Civilisation has therefore affected our family structure, view of life and issues as well as the belief systems. The traditional values have been eroded, paradigms shifted. This in turn has affected the family structures as more and more children are born in single families or families separate to create single parent homes. In the USA, Tolfree (2012) posited that the total number of single parent families in the year 2000 was in excess of twelve million.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child holds that all children have a right to quality education. The duty of the state is to ensure that primary education is today free and compulsory. The performance of students in the National Examinations in Embakasi Sub County has not been impressive. Sub-County Education Office (2015) showed the average performance has been oscillating between 230 and 240 in the Kenya Certificate of primary Education results since 2009 which is not impressive considering some sub counties post an average of 350 marks and above.

**Table 1.1: Primary School Performance in Embakasi Sub-County 2009-2013**

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mean School	230	233.90	233.20	236.60	239.60

Source: SCEO (2014)

To explain the dwindling performance, no study has been carried in the region to explain the stagnated trend. However, majority of the stakeholders in the region citing generalized views held in the media and politicians which at times lack merit and scientific backing has continuously been peddled to explain the stagnated and at times the

dropping trend in average performance of students. No single study in the region had also concentrated its scope of single parenthood and academic performance. Therefore it is the concern of this study to focus fully on the exploration into impact of single parents on overall educational performance of learners in adolescence stage in primary schools in Embakasi Sub-County.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Single parenthood is a newly accepted type of family where majority of children in developing countries and developed world find themselves in. Stake holders have tried to blame the single parent homes for the stagnated and low academic performance in schools. Children from single parents have been blamed for poor discipline and poor performance. School administrators treat the children from single parent homes with suspicion whereas the society treats them with ridicule. Jointly this is a clear indication that the Kenyan society does not seem to have adjusted adequately and accommodated this development of single parenthood option.

Although single parents have been blamed for poor performance, there has been no local research has established whether the status of single parenthood does in fact have effects on the social behavior and academic performance of the affected children.

In theory, the society views growing up in a single parent home as a risk to the child's social development. Single parent families are now a common phenomenon. Concerns have been put forth on the influence of single parenting and academic performance. Children from single parents have been blamed either rightfully or wrongfully for poor performance at school. These children have been labeled negatively and to some extent

have been treated with suspicion and ridicule even by their peers. This is a clear indication that the Kenyan society does not seem to have adjusted adequately and accommodated this development of single parenthood option.

Researchers however have not established whether the status of single parenthood does in fact have effects on the social behavior and academic performance of the affected children. The researcher therefore wishes to examine whether single parenthood has some bearing on the adolescent's academic performance. Also the challenges associated with single parenting are not properly documented.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to find out the influence of single parenthood on the academic performance of the adolescent children in primary schools in Embakasi Sub-County.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study were:

- i. To establish the influence of single parenthood on the academic performance of adolescent pupils in Embakasi Sub-County.
- ii. To determine the challenges faced by single parents and their adolescent children on academic performance in Embakasi Sub-County.
- iii. To establish the level of assistance that these parents and their children are getting from their schools in Embakasi Sub-County.
- iv. Determine the solutions for improving the performances of pupils of single parenthood Embakasi Sub-County.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:-

- i. What are the effects of single parenthood on the academic performance of adolescent pupils in Embakasi Sub-County?
- ii. What are the challenges facing single parents and their pupils in primary school?
- iii. What is the level of assistance that these parents and their children are getting from their schools in Embakasi Sub-County?
- iv. What are the solutions for improving the performances of pupils of single parenthood in Embakasi Sub-County?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The research will be useful in guiding school managers and other stakeholders in the management of adolescent academic achievement. These research findings will be useful to other researchers planning or carrying out research on adolescents' academic achievement. Teacher trainers and curriculum developers should also integrate these study findings in the training programs for primary school teacher trainees. The study will throw some light as to whether society needs to put some coping mechanisms in place that can accommodate and enhance positive attitude towards single parenthood option. Finally this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the management of adolescents in primary school. Scholars and other researchers who wish to read and conduct further studies in the same field will hopefully find great help from the findings of this study. This study will add up to the existing literatures on single-parenting and its effects on children's academic performance. Findings from this study

will help us know the types of family pattern in Embakasi Sub-County, problems faced by them, causes of poor performance among pupils and the way to solve these problems.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study was confined to Embakasi Sub-County in Nairobi County. Embakasi Sub-County was chosen by the researcher because of the diversity of its inhabitants. The study was based on data collected from schools that have registered candidates for at least the last three consecutive years in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). There are 40 public primary schools in Embakasi Sub-County. The study was limited to head teachers, standard eight pupils and their teachers. Another limitation of the study was that some respondents might be dishonest in volunteering information on the marital status of their parents. The study was limited to Embakasi Sub-County because of the constraints within which the researcher is expected to prepare process, analyze data and complete the study. The study was limited to single parenthood and its effects on the offspring's academic performance.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

A number of aspects hindered the expected outcome of the research study. However every effort was put in place by the researcher to ensure a smooth completion of the exercise. Some of the hindrances were that the research was carried out in some sampled primary schools instead of involving all schools within Embakasi Sub County. This narrowed the degree of representation of the findings. However, application of simple random sampling ensured a fair representation of the study units in the area. The study was carried out among standard 8 primary school pupils who are 13 years and above, their teachers and selected parents in Embakasi Sub County in Nairobi County. This implies that learners in form 1 and those in standard 7 were not part of the study.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that all respondents gave honest, detailed and accurate answers to questions. That The Kenya Certificate of Primary Education was a reliable and accurate instrument for measuring pupil academic achievement at primary school level.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is Social Reaction Theory. The theory was created by Howard Becker in 1963. This explains that whatever individuals tend to become that which the society dictated.

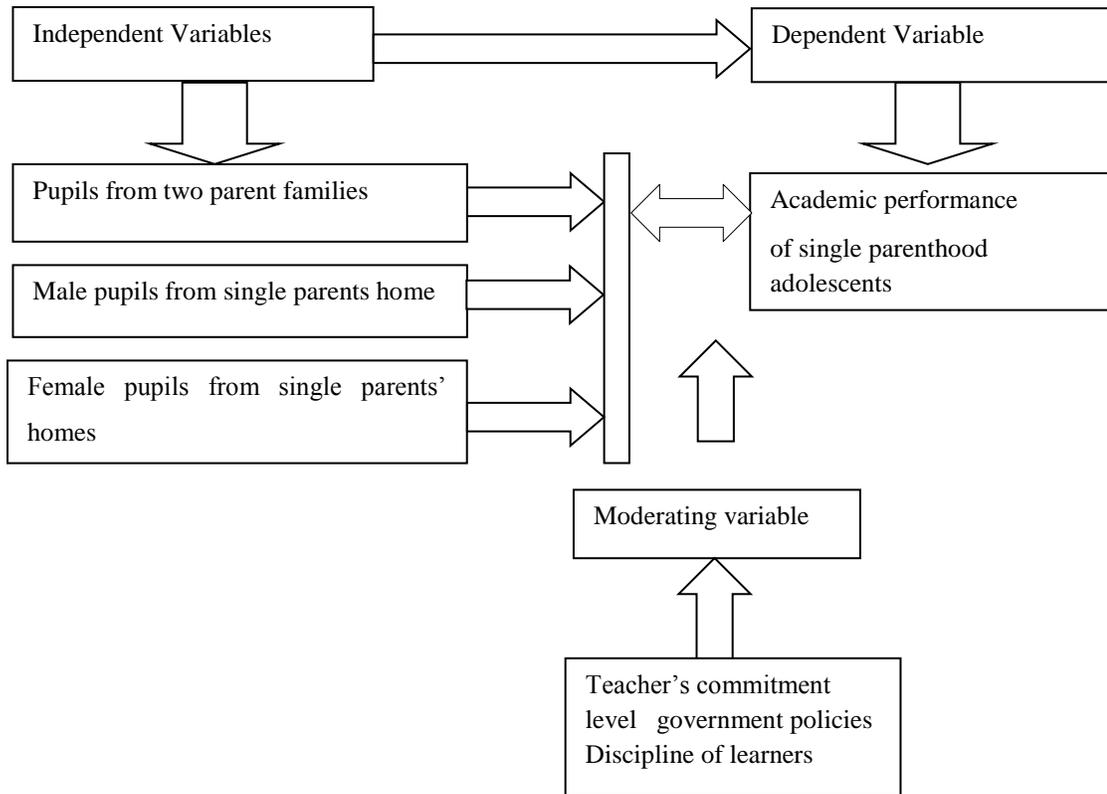
Human social interaction creates and maintains family definitions. Single parenthood environment has been associated with lack of full guidance and low level of parental involvement in the children's affairs. This low level of parental involvement is also linked with children's lack of trust in the parents. Lack of trust in parents' means that the relationship between the children and parents is limited to necessary. Children therefore lock their feelings and shift the trust to their friends. Children who look up and trust their friends more than their parents fall in the wrong group of friends. These friends unfortunately lead to juvenile delinquency in children and those who do not report lower academic scores.

The family is also charged with conflict resolution among the members. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, single parent families were stigmatized for it was not norm. As society modernizes, this form of family set up gained popularity as the rate of divorce increased, wars led to death of breadwinners and the education of the girl child brought independence among the greater number of women. Therefore, the acceptance of single-

parent family as a normal family depends on one's own definition of a family and the society in which one lives. Psychologists have indicated a close interdependence between parental involvement and academic performance of children. They emphasized that the academic performance of children influenced by their parents involvement in their education, their teachers and the role of the child as a student. The teacher is usually the first authority figure for children outside the family. Hargreaves and others emphasize that the ways in which teachers make sense and respond to their pupil's behavior affect their academic performance.

### 1.11 Conceptual Framework

There were three independent variables as listed above each one of them affected the dependent variable. The three moderating variables tried to minimize the effects of the independent variables.



Source: Researcher, 2014

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

### **1.12 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Academic Performance:** This is an academic score reported by a student after a process of education.

**Adolescent:** refers to children aged between 13 and 18 years of age.

**Intact family:** Is a family where both father and mother live together in the same house with their child/children.

**School Administrator:** Refers to a person charged with the responsibility of providing management and leadership to a school or a department in the school.

**Single Parenthood:** This is a situation where a child is brought up by a single parent.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter develops literature review related to the topic from international and national perspective based on the objectives of the study. It starts with the literature related to the single parenting and educational achievement of adolescent children, the challenges facing single parents and their pupils in primary schools, the level of assistance that these parents and their children are getting from their schools, the solutions for improving the performances of pupils of single parenthood.

#### **2.1 Single Parenthood and Academic Performance**

The family organisation plays a pivotal role on the attitudes and shaping the children's behavior. Chang, Stipek and Garza (2006) and Ewenyi (2005) noted that this in turn has an effect on the academic and social life of children. Whiting and Edwards (1992) noted that single-parenthood occurs when a child is brought up by one parent whilst the other parent is totally absent during the life of a child or such children; or is sporadically present at certain intervals during the life of a child. Salami and Alwode (2013) argued in most single parent homes, the mother is the person who lives and takes care of the children. Although the Children Act in Kenya gives the mother the right to bring up and stay with children till they reach the age of 18, the father gets reasonable access to the children. Single parenthood could be as a result of numerous life events such as unmarried relationships, single parent adoption, divorce, death or separation.

UNESCO (2011) noted that children from single parent homes scored poorly in school compared to children from both parent homes. Single parents had work and family chores to perform and this reduced the parent child bonding sessions. UNESCO argued that children living with both parents experienced less anxiety compared to children from single parents. Anxiety among children has been cited to be unsure of their career paths and aspirations, have behavior and adjustment issues. Single parent children have high levels of low esteem and mistrusted everyone around them.

Chang, Stipek and Garza (2006) showed children from single parents reported lower academic scores than children from both parent families. Schultz (2006) held that children from single parents have high levels of social and academic problems. Intact parents display high level of involvement in children's upbringing than that of broken home parents. Johnson (2005) argued that students from single parent households (separated parents) have high emotional problems. In two parent families, the children feel more secure are open and have emotional stability. The parents take turns to manage and support the students and this shared responsibility boosts the students' morale and translated to higher test scores.

UNESCO (2003) argued that in two parent families, there are shared financial responsibilities among the parents as well as shared child responsibilities. However, single parents shoulder the financial and child rearing roles which strains such parents. Therefore single parents show higher levels of financial and social stress. To cope with the stress the parents adjudicate the role of parenting and pursue financial stability and independence. Omoruyi (2014) noted that a child's learning abilities are dictated by

social, emotional and psychological facets of life. The study argued that single parents do not cope well with economic and social stress and subrogated parental guidance of their children. The study noted that single parent children face emotional and academic challenges. They are therefore more likely to perform poorly compared to children from both parent families. The study however noted that there were children from single parent homes who record very impressive academic performance due to other underlying factors such as role modeling and mentorship.

Suvarna (2006) posited that although adolescence is a stage in life, it has its own stress and challenges to students. He noted that at this stage parental involvement plays a key role in assisting adolescents to cope with the stress and challenges of adolescence. He noted that low level of parental involvement is a threat to a child's academic performance and social integration.

Klein (2012) argued that children in divorced families perform dismally in academics compared to children who have not undergone such ordeals. Hammer and Turner (2013) argued that in the African tradition, cases of single parent were unheard of in the last century since the women were forbidden to bring forth children outside marriage, divorce was unheard of and single parenthood only arose upon death of a partner. Even in case of death of a partner, one was encouraged to be inherited or the man married another wife to rear the children. However, today cases of single parents have grown tremendously due to education and family conflicts.

Each parent has a role to play in the life of their children. Michael (2012) pointed out that the role of the father in most households is to be the provider and as such he provides all

educational materials needed whereas mothers supplement the role of the men in the society. Absent fathers scenarios means that the mothers perform the role of provider. Since is a two parent households the financial responsibility is shared by two people, in single parent households, one parent is burdened with financial responsibilities. In such households, the parent is unable to fully supervise the children, check their school work, assist in assignments and other roles needed for parental involvement in academic life of their children. In such circumstances, Mece (2015) observed that there is low academic achievement in majority of learners from single parents households.

## **2.2 Single Parenthood and Adolescent Boys' Performance.**

Parenthood has diverse and pivotal role on social, cognitive and behavioural aspects of children. However, the type of homes where children are brought up determines their social cognitive and behavior development.

Odoyo (2015) held that adolescent children respond in differently as they adjust based on social backgrounds. Therefore children from single parent homes adjust differently borrowing from schemas they have already formed as they grew up. Boys brought up by single mothers showed more aggressive behavior compared to boys brought up in two parent homes. Sitnick, Shaw and Hyde (2014) argued that to emanate from mothers lacking authority in the home. Therefore mothers who brought up their children alone needed to assert their authority at home for children to avoid tapping into their aggression.

Brewer (2001) indicated that boys will adopt their absent fathers behavior and grow up to hate their mother. It was argued that such children viewed their mothers with suspicion

and as the cause of their father's departure. The study noted that unless the father's presence is felt in from of financial assistance, the more the children lacked the more they locked out their mother from their life. However the study found that the behavior of girls contradicted boy's behavior. Conversely, Anderson (2014) noted that children behaved in the opposite but soon if the mother is involved in another relationship, they adopt the behavior shown by boy child towards their mother. Rozumah (2013) indicated that children substitute parental love to other people around them such as grandparents, relatives or friends of the opposite gender.

### **2.3 Single-Parents and Influence on Adolescent Pupils' Academic Performance.**

Single parenting is a home with one parent be it father or mother only. Morgan and Allison (2011) argued that single parents do not have personal time with their children and as such their involvement in child's education was marginal. Single parents were observed to have frequent mood swings and this influenced their interaction with their children. Therefore children in single parent families were frightful and experienced low self-esteem. Barajas (2011) noted that a depressed parent has much less to offer a child. If you are depressed, speak to your physician or a mental-health professional.

#### **2.3.1 Single Parenthood and Adolescents' Social Development**

Uchenna (2013) argued that children brought up in single parent homes have behavioral and social interaction issues. The children were observed to be hostile and showed higher aggression symptoms. Children were also observed to have a certain level of hatred towards the gender of the absent parent. Mece (2015) posited that children in households with both parents were held to have a higher level of morality compared to children from

single parent homes. Montgomery (2012) noted that children from two parent homes were also noted to have a higher level of emotional balance and easy to socialize and integrate in the society. A two parent home lays a better academic foundation for children particularly at the young age when they understand their environment. Children in single parent homes have numerous family related questions such as why they had one parent when their peers have two parents, they feel cut off from school conversations and this breeds low self-esteem.

Kigan (2012) documented that single parents have an impact on their children capability to learn. However, Epstein and Sheldon (2013), Barajas (2011) and John (2013) found that the studies linking single parenthood to low academic performance of children from such backgrounds were inconclusive. Konji (2015) study on parenting and academic performance of learners, posited that single parenting produced children who have low self-confidence and this influenced their academic performance. Such children even experience greater stress levels if the parent remarries in case there was divorce involved.

#### **2.4 Academic Performance and Extrinsic Motivation**

The main goal of education is to develop an all-round person who will respond to various stimuli in their environment to grow and develop humanity. Education therefore liberates the person.

Ainsworth and Filmer (2013) noted that in the process of education, various items in the learners. These factors in the environment acts as intrinsic and external motivators to the learner although the impact on the learner varies. The learner's environment is either physical or psychological. Barajas (2011) argued that the learners' physical environment

incorporates the home, school and general neighborhood where the learner spends some considerable time. The physical environment should be learner friendly, act as inspiration and motivating factor to the child. The school should ensure that the school environment is learner friendly whereas it's the parent's responsibility to ensure that the home and neighbourhood is conducive for social, cognitive and behavioral development of the child.

Barajas (2011) observed that obviously the home environment is important in motivating the child and also ensuring the child develops the socially accepted behavior. The parent must provide learners with an environment that assist the child to form the right schemas for future development. Unfortunately, it was observed that single parents do not pay regard to the type of environment that children are brought up in. This is because they spend their time developing their careers and leave parenting to other third parties. Therefore when such children transit to formal schooling they find a different setting which they are unable to cope with. Michael (2012) posited that the best interests demand that all children should receive equal treatment without discrimination of any kind such as color, religion, national or social origin, property or other status.

Teachers should understand emotional intelligence so that they know how to maintain an emotional stable face while teaching and also assist learners control and understand their behavior. An understanding of the learners attitudes, drives, values and interests assist teachers manage learning. Barajas (2011) posited that teachers are able to provide learners with a conducive environment that will promote the affective domain. This promotes learners to feel more secure and build self-esteem and self-confidence. This

will compensate for what the child may have missed as a result of being an offspring of a single parent. The teacher needs to create an environment where the learner will have a high self-esteem, feel he is a person of worth and importance both as an individual and part of a group, family, peers and school. Salami and Alwonde (2013) noted that the most effective teachers while guiding their pupils also succeed in identifying themselves with the human concerns of their pupils.

#### **2.4.1 Gender and Academic Performance**

Studies have denoted a significant difference between gender and academic performance of children in single parent homes. Brewer (2001) argued that boys are more adversely affected by the type of family they are brought up in and this has an influence in the overall academic achievement.

Carrigan (2015) observed that there a significant relationship between the number of years a child was under single parent and their low performance. Anderson (2014) carried out a study on fatherhood and academic performance of children noted that there was a greater risk of boys from single mothers posting worse results and eventual dropout from school compared to boys in both parent homes,

#### **2.4.2 Influence of Truancy on Academic Performance**

Child socialization process requires two parents for optimal cognitive and social growth and development. Single parent children were observed to exhibit high levels of behavioral issues in schools. Barajas (2011), Salami and Alwonde (2013) and Abbott (2012) argued that suffered parental deprivation children could hardly notice opportunities around them. Adolescents' brought up in broken homes and single parent

homes were found to exhibit anti-social behavior and poor educational performance. This scenario was greater where the parent living with the children was unable to meet the financial and social issues that result from single parenthood. A child both parent household will be well taken care of and socialized in the best way possible.

Ortese (2013) argued that there are dual responsibilities that face single parents. These were responsibilities that require time investment as well as financial investment. Uchenna (2013) argued that teachers viewed children from single parent homes as likely to be very aggressive, hostile to other people and generally with low concentration span. Salami and Olwade (2013) and Mece (2015) argued that among the types of families in homes, single parent families faced many challenges in raising multi-faceted children. The studies revealed that single parent homes had majority of children scoring poorly in test scores and high propensity to drop out of school.

Hammer and Turner (2013) noted that there were various factors that led to poor performance and truancy in adolescents brought up in single parenthoods. These included family health as well as financial burden. Children were observed to be involved in commercial activities to supplement parent's income and also meet their basic needs that are viewed as luxuries in single parent homes. Other factors that lead to poor performance for single parenthood adolescents are related to school. When a school lacks effective and consistently applied attendance policies then adolescents are most likely to become truants. Poor record keeping like not marking the attendance register regularly makes pupils to miss school because they know nobody will notice. If schools are to ensure truancy is eliminated they should have push -out policies, for example suspension

as a punishment for truancy and automatic “Fs” for students with poor attendance. Parents or guardians should also be notified of absences. Teachers should also show respect for students and should not neglect diverse student needs. Schools should have welcoming atmosphere, for example a school with effective discipline policies where bullying is not tolerated. Adequate identification of special education needs, so that students do not feel overwhelmed and frustrated with their inability to succeed.

## **2.5 Challenges Facing Single Parenthood Families**

There is a long standing debate on the challenges facing single parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Michael (2012) argued that the challenges of single parenthood impacts on parenting practices and relationship between the parent and the child.

Morgan and Allison, (2011) argued that there are parenting internalized concepts that impact on children. Child tantrums are more frequent among children from single parents since they exhibit the same behavior observed from the parent. Incidences of lack of emotional intelligence among children from single parents was also noted to be higher compared to other children. Epstein and Sheldon (2013) found that during adolescence, children from single parents had a greater conflict level compared to others.

Oketch, Mutisya and Sangwe (2012) noted that parental economic status explained the differences between single parent children and others. Elaine (2012) noted that particular family structures such as the nuclear family were less important among the ethnic groups that formed the minority groups in the society. Emeka (2013) argued that two parent homes were better in bringing up a socially accepted child with minimal social and cognitive problems.

Muola (2010) posited that single parent homes experienced economic stress which greatly influenced parental child relationship and on the adverse end influenced the relationship negatively. Single parents were noted to be overwhelmed and lacked closer monitoring of children. Such items as child's homework went unnoticed and this influenced the child negatively in academics. Maurizi, Ceballo, Epstein-Ngo and Cortina (2013) holds that parental capability to meet the financial requirements of education play a defining moment in children's academic pursuit.

Jacobson (2013) argued that work related stress was higher among single parents compared to others. The study argued that this impacted on the children from such families as it reduced the parent –child interaction time and thus affected a child's academic.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on research methodology adopted. The research methodology incorporates the research design, the study location, sampling procedures and sample size determination methods and the research instruments. The chapter also analyses the procedures used to ascertain the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the data collection procedures and the ethical considerations applied by the researcher.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The research design for the research was descriptive survey. Survey design was used to collect precise information concerning the current status of phenomena. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) noted that this type of research sought to describe a social environment in greater detail.

It is for this reason that this study chose to use the descriptive social survey research design to examine single-parenting and its effects on children's academic performance in Embakasi Sub-County. The design adopted was appropriate and efficient to use because it is an accurate counter and indicator to measure the influence of single parenthood on children's behaviors and academic performance. The researcher used this research design because the study objective was to collect information from respondents on their experiences, perceptions and opinions in relation to the study.

### **3.2 Location of the Study**

Embakasi Sub County formed the study area. Its headquarters are located at Kayole. Its headquarters is located in Kayole on the Nairobi-Kangundo road about twenty kilometers east of Nairobi Central Business District. The sub county has a population of about five hundred thousand people. This cosmopolitan Sub County is home to several ethnic groups namely Luos, Kikuyus, Luhyas, Kambas, Kisiis and many others. It borders Njiru to the East, Makadara to the South East, Starehe to the North and Langata to the South. It has two education zones namely Kayole and Dandora. The Sub County has 40 primary schools, 4 of which are mixed boarding, 3 are girls day schools, 2 are boys day schools. The rest 31 are mixed day schools. It has an enrolment of about 15000 pupils, 1100 teachers and about 250 support staff members. This location was appropriate for the study coz it is a slum area and in slum areas we have many single parents.

### **3.3 Description of the Target Population**

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) pointed out that a study population is a set cases or objects with some unique observable characteristics. The study focused on the 40 head teachers, 100 class eight teachers, 100 standard eight pupils and 100 single parents as the target population. The primary schools that met the condition for the study were those that have presented candidates for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination for the years 2009-2013.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

Sampling is the procedure the researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. Kombo and Tromp (2006) hold that sampling is the process used by researchers to select

the number of individuals or items that will participate in the actual study and which must be representative of the entire set of the population targeted by researchers.

### **3.4.1 Sampling Procedures**

The study used simple random sampling to select its respondents: head teachers, standard 8 class teachers, standard 8 pupils and parents.

### **3.4.2 Sample Size**

Kothari (2003) says that a sample is a few selected samples from the “universe” or population for the study. Gay (2003) suggests that at least 30 per cent for social science study like education of the targeted population is a good representation where the population is large. In relation to sample size a sample of 20 schools was sampled for this study based on the above stratification. Simple random sampling technique was used to get samples from the following categories of respondents. Out of 40 public primary schools 20 were sampled for this research study. Out of 40 head teachers 20 were sampled, out of 100 class teachers 70 were sampled, out of 100 pupils 70 were sampled and out of 100 single parents 70 were sampled. Therefore the total sample size was 230 respondents.

**Table 3.1: Sample Size from the Target Population**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Head teacher	40	20	50
Standard 8 class teachers	100	70	70
Standard 8 pupils	100	70	70
Single-Parents	100	70	70

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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>230</b>
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**Source:** Researcher, 2014

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The research used two research instruments; these were questionnaires and interview schedule. Each of the research instruments had several sections are describe below.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaires for Head Teachers**

Questionnaire for Head teachers was specifically drafted to collect information from the Head teachers on their views on single parenthood and academic performance of learners from single parent homes. Being the administrators of schools, this category of provided information on management issues on vulnerable pupils. This is shown in Appendix II.

#### **3.5.2 Questionnaire for Teachers**

Questionnaire for Teachers was specifically drafted to collect information from the Head teachers on their views on single parenthood and academic performance of learners from single parent homes. Curriculum execution is primarily the sole responsibility of teachers in educational institutions. Teachers therefore provided vital data on learners' academic performance and overall social cognitive growth and development. This is shown in Appendix III.

#### **3.5.3 Questionnaires for Parents**

The interview schedule was used to get information from the Parents who explained the challenges and problems that they are undergoing in educating their children. This is shown in Appendices IV.

#### **3.5.4 Interview Schedule for Pupils**

According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006) interview provide collection of raw data from the respondents' oral presentations. They provide a chance for the researcher to weigh on psychological aspects that would be missed if questionnaires were the only data collection tool. The interview guide thus had incorporated both open and closed questions. Open ended (unstructured) questions were used. These questions were used as a guideline to collect data by recording data qualitatively. Because of the open-ended nature of the unstructured interviews, the probing method was commonly used to get detailed information. The instrument was used to collect data on opinion of pupils on the influence of single parenthood on academic performance. This is shown in Appendix C.

### **3.6 Validity of the Instruments**

Kombo and Tromp, (2006) holds that validity is the degree to which a research test tools measures the item that the researcher intended to measure. To achieve content, construct and face validity, the researcher worked closely with the research supervisors and the University lecturers to determine the relevance of the content that was used in the questionnaires. The research instruments were thoroughly evaluated and corrections made where appropriate.

#### **3.6.1 Reliability of the Instruments**

Orodho (2009) holds that reliability is the appropriateness to which a research tool items consistently measure intended items sought by a researcher. The research instruments were issued to ten teachers in Utawala and Embakasi primary schools and after one week

the same instruments were issued and their scores manually for consistency of results. The responses collected in the two different weeks analysed. The results were recorded accordingly. Using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to calculate the correlation coefficient the results showed 0.72 this indicated a perfect relationship between the first and second results. These results were reliable because they were within the acceptable range of between +1 and -1. The formula below was used for calculations.

$$R = \frac{\sum XY - \left(\frac{\sum X}{n}\right)\left(\frac{\sum Y}{n}\right)}{\sqrt{\left\{\left(\sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{n}\right)\left(\sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{n}\right)\right\}}}$$

Kothari (2003) holds that a reliability coefficient greater than 0.7 should be accepted and in this case the test yielded R=0.72 which as accepted to mean that the instruments were reliable.

### **3.6.2 Pilot Study**

Questionnaires and interview schedules were piloted in two selected primary schools namely Utawala and Embakasi Primary Schools. The piloting was to ensure clarity and sustainability of the language used. Furthermore expert opinion from the supervisors was sought to help check on the content and constant validity of the instruments. The purpose of this pre-testing was to ensure that all areas that were found to be weak and wanting were addressed. The piloting also sought to determine the reliability of the instruments.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher sought an introduction letter the University and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. After this, the researcher booked appointments the county education officer and informed the office holder on the

nature and purpose of the study. The researcher contacted the school heads and booked appointments on appropriate days to issue the questionnaires. On the agreed dates, the researcher visited the schools and after explaining the nature purpose and scope of the study, the respondents were assured of the confidentiality and application of their responses and then given at least one hour to fill the instruments before the researcher collected them.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data analysis procedures to be employed involved both quantitative and qualitative procedures using SPSS computer program. Data involved both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods.

Qualitative data collected by the instruments were recorded and transcribed done through “intelligent verbatim” which left out fillers that were not relevant for the study. For analysis of interview guide, Framework Analysis was used. Framework Approach involved predefining research objectives and specific outcomes are expected. Framework Approach also allowed for the researcher to deductive and inductive analysis of responses given by the respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data to generate frequency tables and charts.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The respondents were assured on the confidentiality of the data they provided. They were assured that they would not be victimized nor were they required to give any information that would easily identify them on the research instruments. The respondents were also assured that the information they provided was only used for academic purposes. No

respondent was coerced or forced to participate in the study since they were assured that they did so on own volition. The research was very expensive since it involved frequent and intensive travelling in the area under study which involved use of private and public means of transport. The researcher had to spend considerable fuel and time held up in traffic jams synonymous with Nairobi. The researcher also had to prepare for other areas of research which involved preparation of the instruments and ensuring completeness of each instrument. The researcher also systematically arranged the process of data collection to avoid time wastage and missing any appointments made in various schools and thus avoided inconveniencing teachers and school administrators.

## CHAPTER FOUR

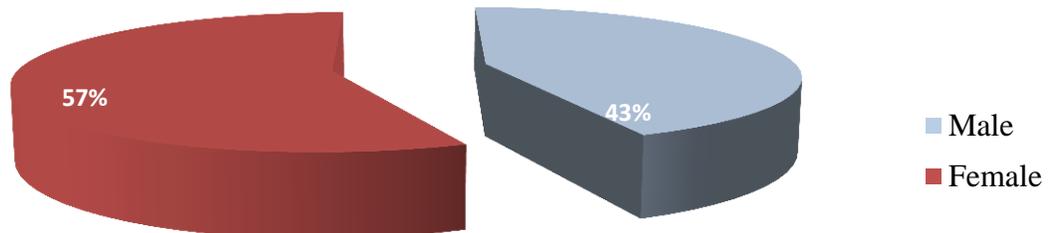
### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the demographic analyses of the respondents such as gender distribution, analysis of age of respondents and occupations and other relevant data to assist readers build the profile of the respondents. The chapter finally presents analysis of data from the respondents and is organized sequentially based on the study objectives.

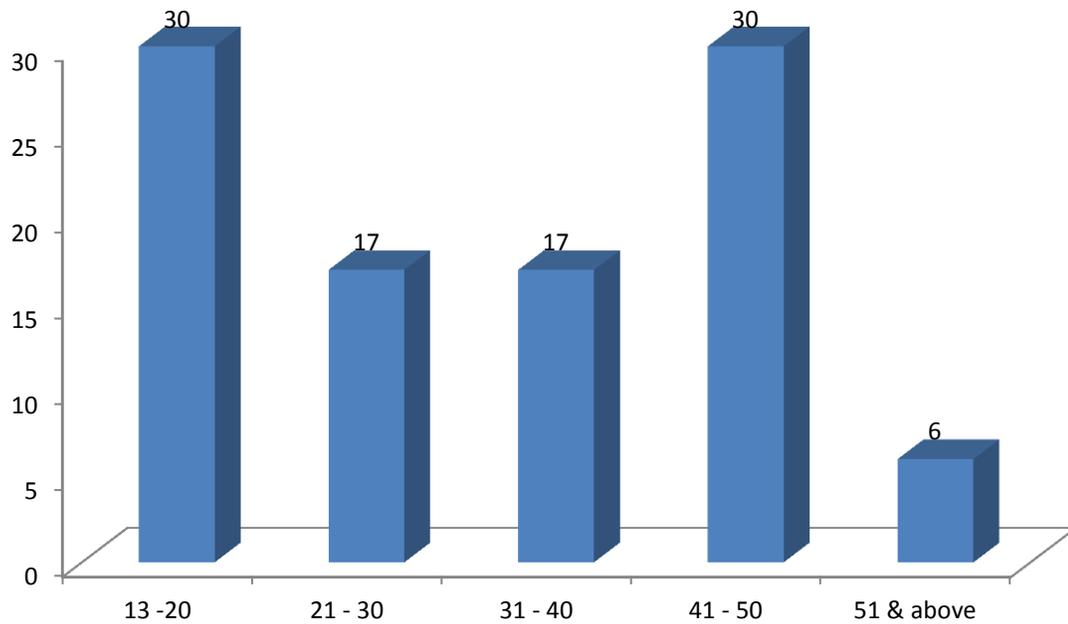
#### 4.2 Demographic Data Analysis

Respondents' demographic data was presented in the following figures.



**Figure 4.1: Respondents Gender**

Among the entire respondents majority 130 (57%) were female while 100 (43%) were male respondents.



**Figure 4.2: Respondents Age**

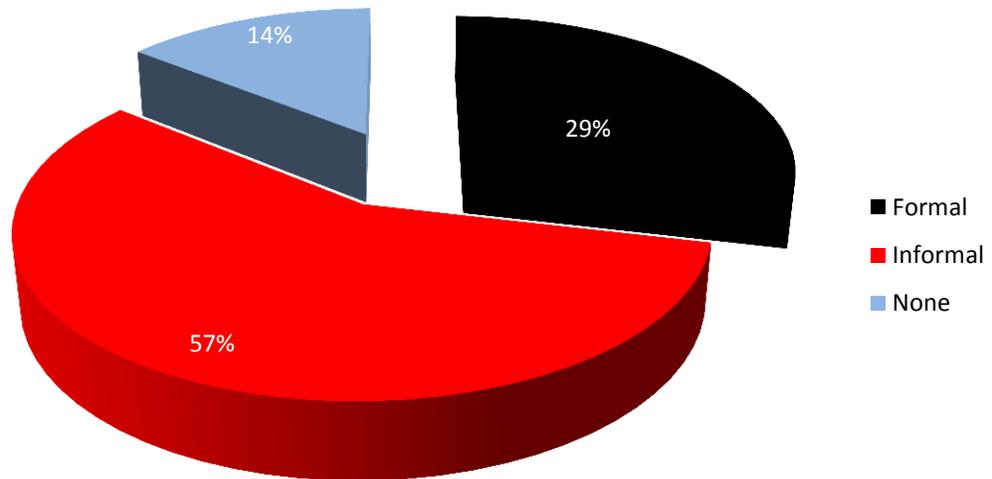
Majority of the respondents 70 (30%) were between age 13 – 20 and 41 – 50 years each.

Another 40 (17%) were between age 21 – 30 and 31 – 40 years each.

**Table 4.1: Head Teacher & Teachers Experience at Work**

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
-Less than 5 years	13	14
6 to 10 years	45	50
11 to 15 years	22	24
Above 15 years	10	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Most the head teachers and teachers 45 (50%) had a teaching experience of between 6 to 10 years followed by 22 (24%) had an experience 11 to 15 years. Another 13 (14%) and 10 (12%) had less than 5 years and above 15 years respectively.



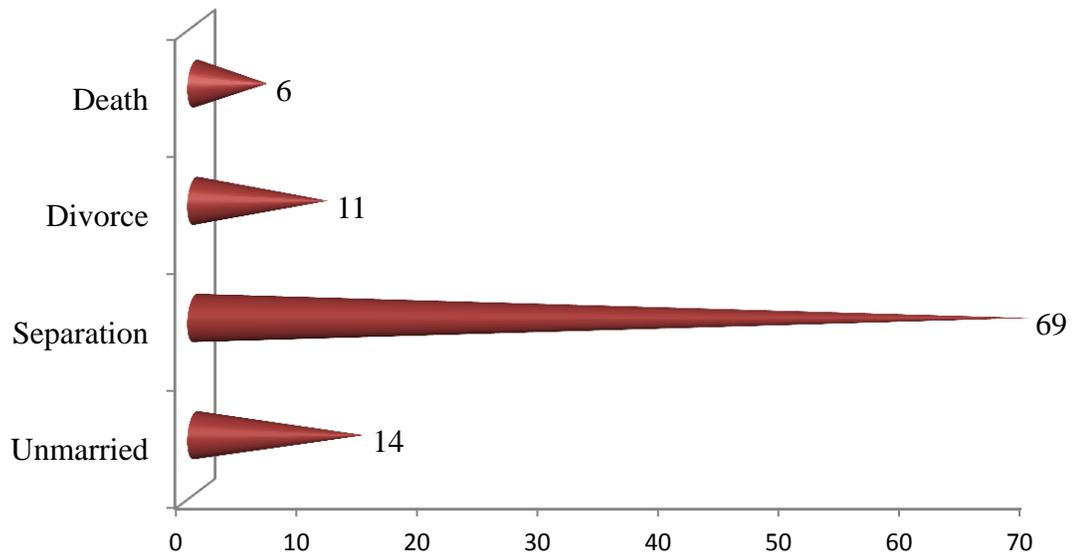
**Figure 4.3: Current Occupations for Single Parents**

A total number of 40 (57%) single parents were currently occupied in informal sector while another 20 (29%) were in formal occupation. Only 10 (14%) indicated that they were not in any of the two occupations.

**Table 4.2: Head Teacher, Teachers and Parents Level of Education**

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	55	34
Diploma	73	46
Bachelors	23	14
Masters	9	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority of the head teachers, teachers' and parents respondents 73 (46%) had the highest level of education as diploma followed by 55 (34%) who had certificate. Only 23 (14%) and 9 (6%) had Bachelors and Masters respectively.



**Figure 4.4: Causes of being Single Parent**

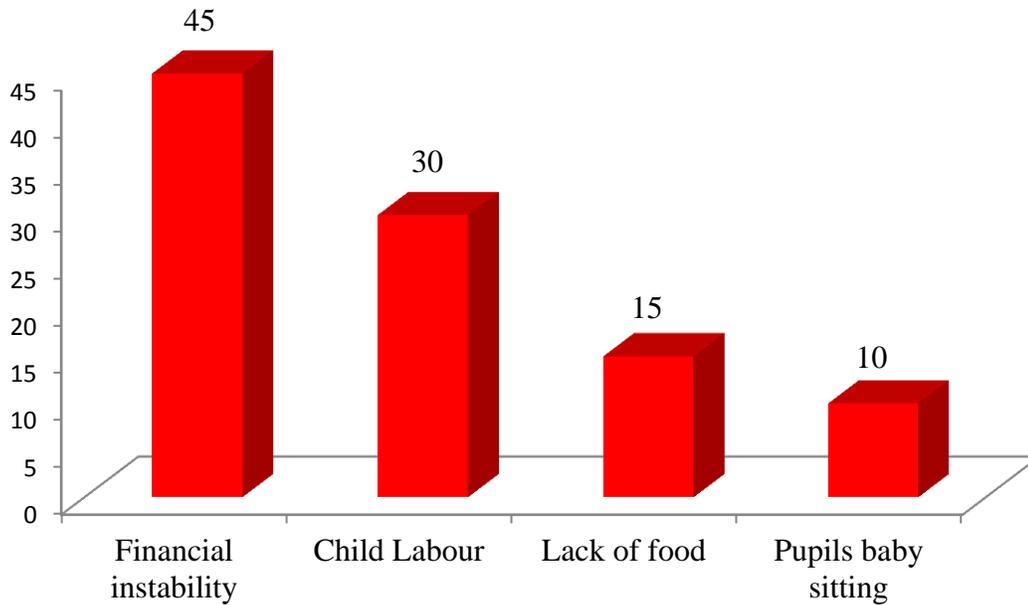
Giving the reasons for being single, majority of the parents respondents 48 (69%) indicated that they had separated followed by 10 (14%) who were unmarried. Another 8 (11%) and 4 (6%) gave divorce and death as the reason for being single.

### **4.3 Adolescents' Academic Performance and Type of Parenthood**

The first objective was to establish the influence of single parenthood on the academic performance of adolescent pupils in Embakasi Sub-County.

#### **4.3.1 Single Parenthood and learners Academic Performance**

The respondents were asked to indicate single parenthood factors that influence learning as summarized in Figure 4.5.



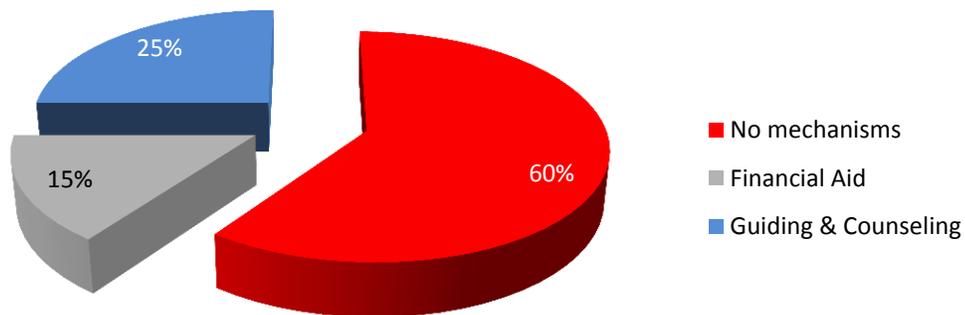
**Figure 4.5: Single Parenthood and Academic Performance**

Among the Head Teachers involved 9 (45%) and 6 (30%) indicated that financial instability and child labor were the main effects of single parenthood on academic performance respectively. Only 3 (15%) and 2 (10%) said of lack of food and pupils baby sitting as the possible effects.

This result corroborates those of Whiting and Edwards (1992) that there was a significant change in children from single parent homes compared to others children from both parent homes. There were higher incidences of examination malpractices among children from single parent homes compared to others. Higher incidences of trauma experienced by children can be attributed to single parent homes.

### 4.3.2 School Mechanisms Implemented to assist Learners

The head teachers were asked to indicate the assistance they offered to children from single parenthood to improve their academic performance and the results are summarized in Figure 4.6.

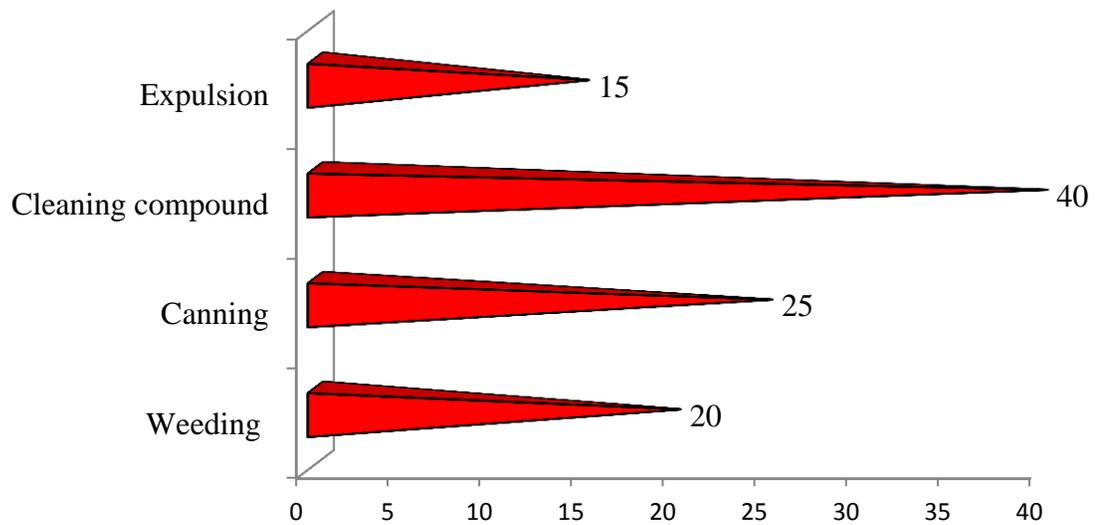


### 4.3.3 Figure 4.6: Mechanisms that Head Teachers use in helping Single Parents

Majority of the Head Teachers 12 (60%) indicated that they had mechanisms for helping children from single parents. Another 3 (15%) indicated that they gave financial aid while 5 (25%) had put in place guidance and counseling programs. According to Barajas (2011) schools are in a better position to assist such parents by soliciting funds from other sources like churches bursaries, well-wishers and government assistances like CDFs. First priority is needed to consider such students as opposed to children with both parents.

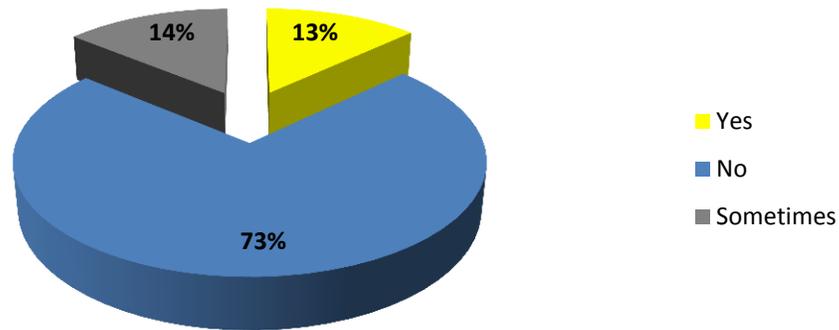
#### 4.3.4 Discipline Mechanisms Adopted by Schools for Learners from Single Parenthood Families

The respondents were asked to indicate the discipline mechanisms adopted to assist learners from single parenthood families and the responses are summarized in Figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7: Punishments used by the Head Teachers**

The main form of punishment according to the majority of the respondents 8 (40%) was cleaning the compound. This was followed by 5 (25%) and 4 (20%) who indicated that canning and weeding were also used respectively. Only 3 (15%) used expulsion as a possible means of punishment.

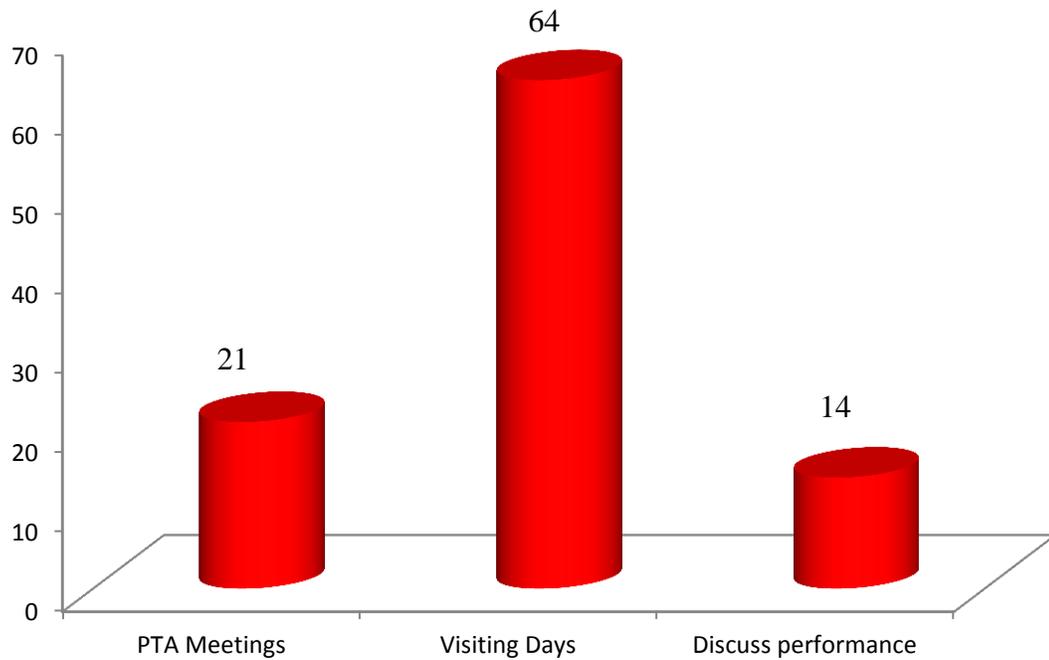


**Figure 4.8: Parents Assistance in Assignments**

Majority of the parents respondents 51(73%) indicated that they didn't assist in the assignment while 10 (14%) said they sometimes assisted. Only 9 (13%) were certain that they assisted them. This result agrees with Micheal (2012) who stated that single parents do not have time to assist their children in doing their assignments. When parents have time to assist their children in school work, they increase the level of parental participation in learning which boots a child's academic prowess.

#### **4.3.4 Single Parents Participation in School Activities**

The respondents were asked to indicate the types of school activities that single parents participate in the schools.



**Figure 4.9: Parents' Involvement in School**

Among the parents respondents, 45 (64%) indicated that they involved in the child's visiting and 15 (21%) were involved in PTA meetings. Another 10 (14%) were involved in academic clinics to discuss performance. Lack of time to balance both their pupils schooling and school activities are tricky to single parents. In that most parents are involved in economic activities in order to make ends meet in their single parents' families.

Schools are meant to help parents in parenting by providing information on children's developmental stages. Successful parent involvement is an ongoing activity of parental participation in all spheres of a growing child. This participation is noted when parents create time to attend Parent Teachers Association meetings, academic clinics and also when they visit during visiting days. For a single parent this can be quite challenging

because they are at times faced with two meetings in two different schools on the same day.

If the missing parent is not contributing financially it means that the single parent has to work extra hard to make ends meet thus has no time to attend to the academic clinics and other school meetings. Parental involvement in most cases is financial support and attendance to school meetings. Some parents are not involved in school activities because of schedule conflicts. There are some schools which resist parental inclusion.

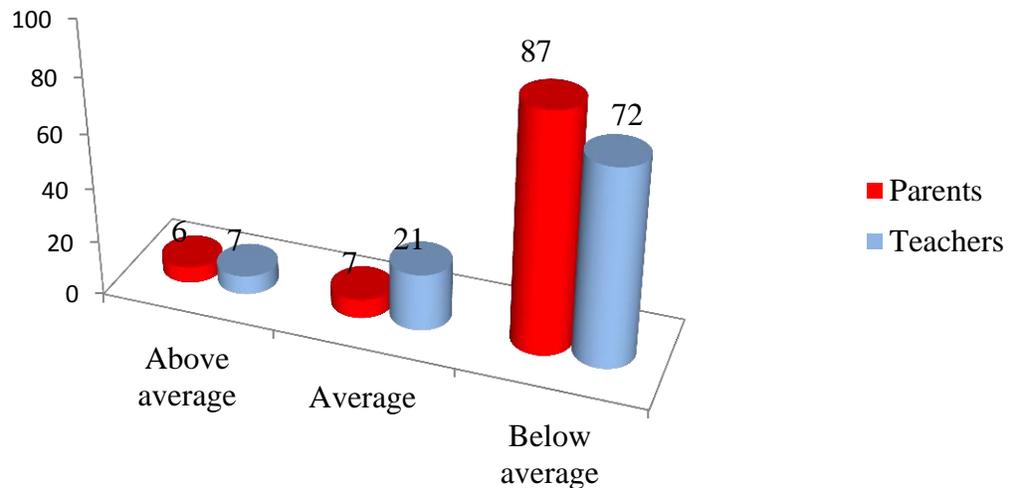
**Table 4.3: Pupils’ Class Position in Relation to Parents**

<b>Class position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
06 – 10	2	3
11 – 16	4	6
17 – 22	6	9
23 – 30	15	21
31 - 40	43	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority of the parents respondents 43 (61%) held class position 31-40 followed by 15 (23-30) who held position 23-30. Another 6 (9%) and 4 (6%) held position 17-22 and 11-16 respectively. Only 2 (3%) held class position 6-10.

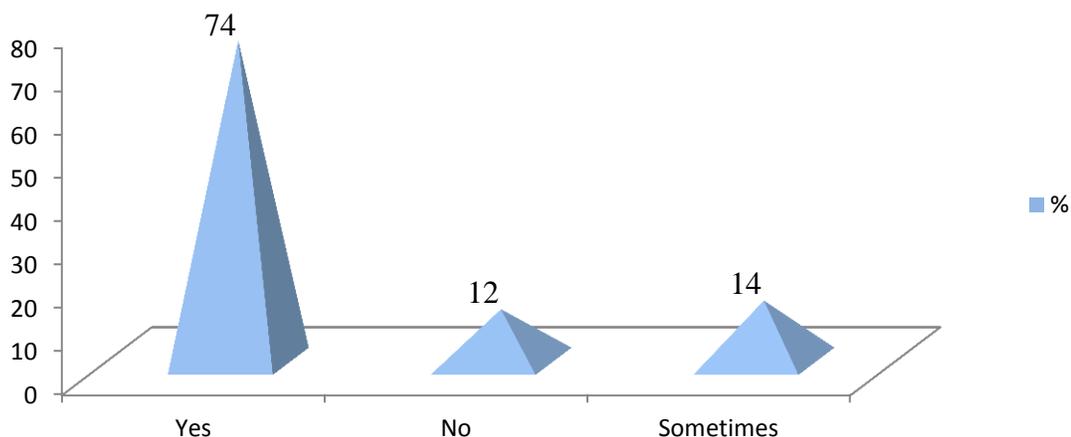
The Children of educated and therefore affluent parents generally have more opportunities for achievements. Educated parents are a motivation to their children because their children are able to taste the fruits of education. Educated parents are able to assist their children with homework and thus improve the academic performance of learners. Parents with low status jobs as a result of lack of education become mere

observers as far as their children’s work is concerned. Tolfree (2012) argued that parents with a high level of education value education. They provide adequate learning materials they also take part in coaching their children. Having many children exerts a greater burden on parents and this reduces the attention given to each child.



**Figure 4.10: Ratings of Performance by Parents**

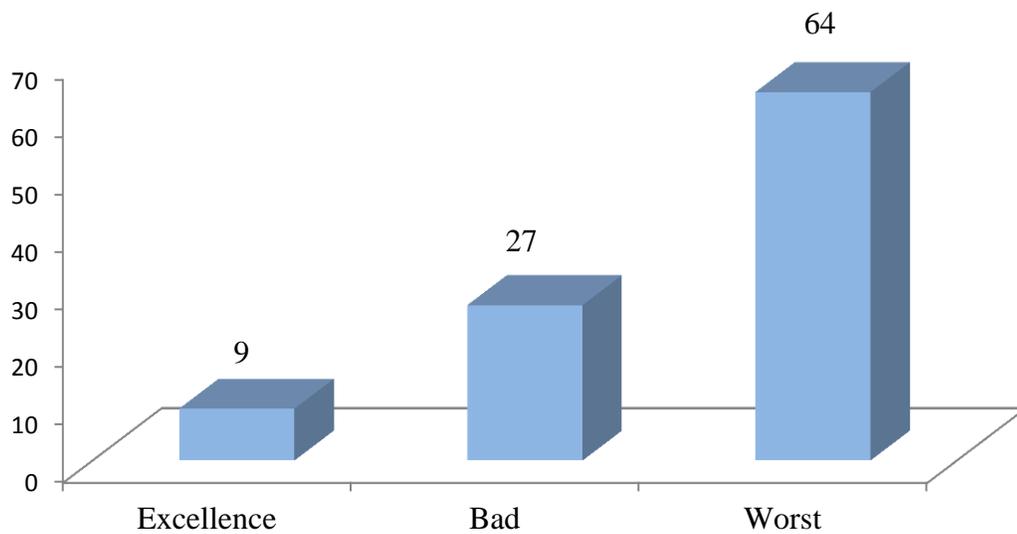
Majority of the parents respondents 61(87%) rated the performance as below average while 5 (7%) were average. Only 4 (6%) were above average in performance. Majority of the teachers respondents 50 (72%) indicated that the performance was below average while another 15 (21%) was average performance. Odoyo (2015) established that single parenting exerts a greater risk of poor grades among children. Single parents were also found to increase the chances of student indiscipline and generally low academic performance among children.



**Figure 4.11: Truancy Effects on Children in Single Parents**

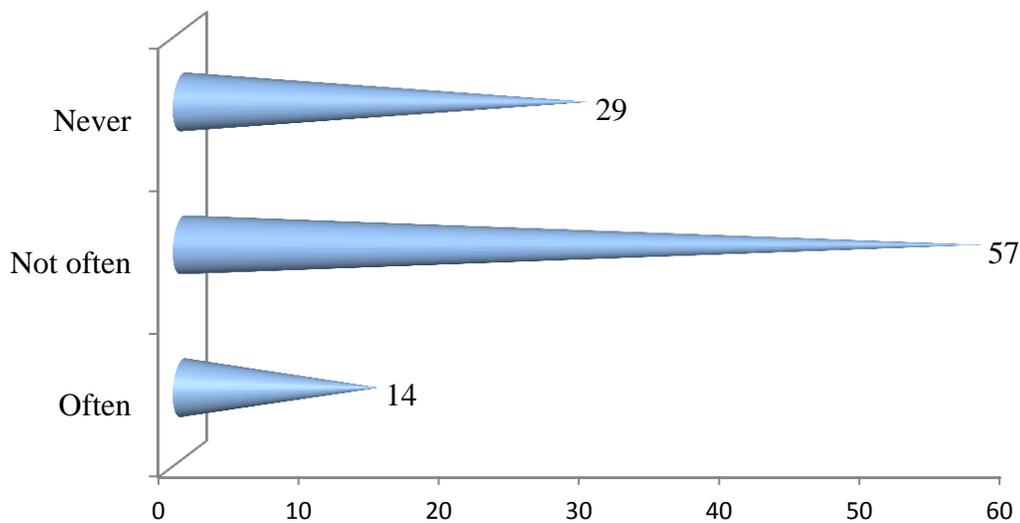
On truancy as an effect of single parenthood, 52 (74%) of the parents respondents agreed with this while 10 (14%) said it was sometimes an effect. Only 8 (12%) parent said that truancy was not an effect of single parenthood. This result is supported by the findings of Hammer and Turner, (2013) that children from single parent backgrounds suffered social interaction issues and showed high propensity of truancy. Suvarna (2006) posited that although adolescence if a stage in life, it has its own stress and challenges to students. He noted that at this stage parental involvement plays a key role in assisting adolescents to cope with the stress and challenges of adolescence. He noted that low level of parental involvement is a threat to a child’s academic performance and social integration.

The respondents were asked to indicate the children from single parents’ attendance in school and the results are summarized in Figure 4.12.



**Figure 4.12: Teachers' Views on Pupils School Attendance**

On attendance status as an effect of single parenthood, majority of the respondents 45 (64%) said it was worse followed by 19 (27%) who indicated that it was bad. Only 6 (9%) indicated that the attendance was excellence. a complete family structure with both parents playing respective roles in everyday socialization would bring optimal development to a child. The findings concur with Fleming (2014) and Epstein and Sheldon (2013 that households with both parents, there is team work and a higher level of supervision and assistance given to adolescent children. The child feels integrated and important and is motivated to pursue excellence in all spheres of life.



**Figure 4.13: Teachers' Views on Pupils' Socialization**

Majority of the teacher's respondents 40 (57%) said that these pupils were not often able to socialize while another 20 (29%) indicated that they never socialize. Another 10 (14%) indicated that they often socialized with others.

Allen (2014) argued that the surrounding of an organism is its environment, which can be both physical and psychological. Physical environment refers to the home, school and the neighborhood. The environment provides an important background for the child's learning activities. If the physical environment is uplifting, challenging and motivating, the child's learning is enhanced and vice-versa. The teacher has considerable influence that must extend to the community, the school he/she serves and through which it becomes powerful. The community will share more in the learning as it makes the school as a center of learning.

Epstein and Sheldon (2013) noted that single parenting can have adverse effects on children. Single parenting was observed to contribute to lower academic achievement since the parent did not have time to make academic follow up on their children. Muola (2010) found that there were higher conflict incidences from children from single parent homes.

#### **4.4 Challenges Faced by Single Parents and Adolescent Children on Academic Performance**

The second objective of this study was to determine the challenges faced by single parents and their adolescent children on academic performance in Embakasi Sub-County.

##### **4.4.1 Class of Challenges Faced by Single Parents in Educating their Children**

The respondents were asked to indicate the challenges the head teachers and parents perceived to hinder single parents in the area under study and the responses are summarized in Table 4.4.

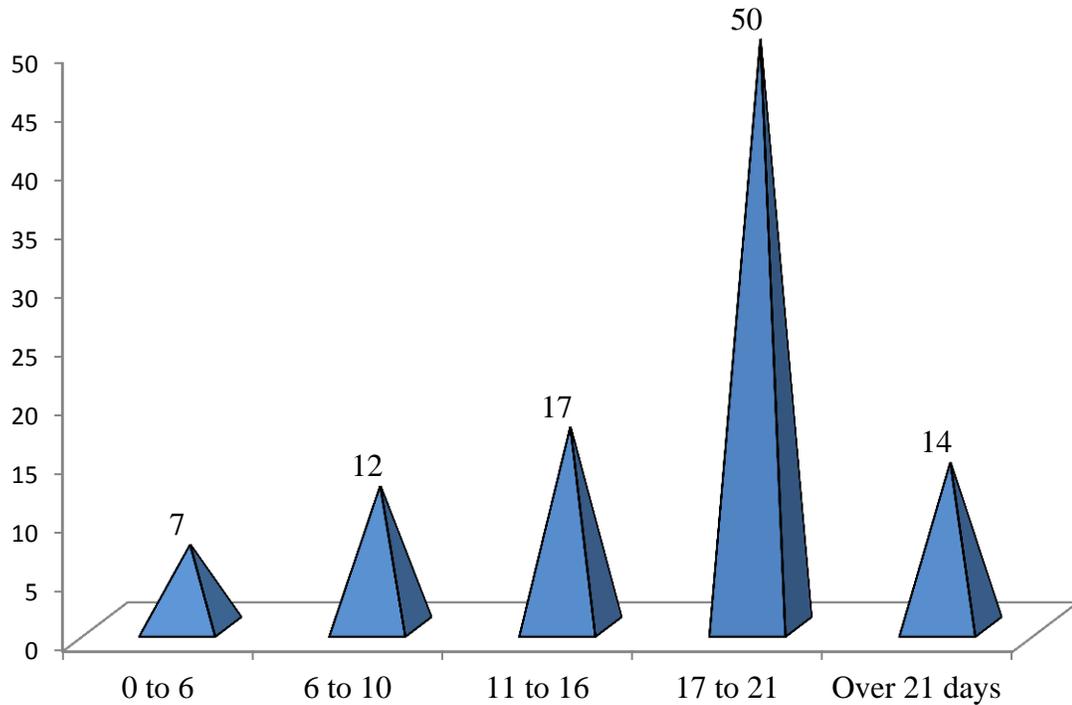
**Table 4.4: Challenges to Parents as Perceived by H/Teachers and Parents**

Challenges	H/Teachers		Parents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of finance	5	25	24	34
Trouble with discipline	3	15	9	13
Skip parents meeting	4	20	7	10
Overwhelming responsibilities	4	20	20	29
Help in Homework	2	10	3	4
Stigmatization	2	10	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

On the challenges facing parents, majority of the head teachers 5 (25%) indicated lack of finance as the main challenge. This was followed by 4 (20%) each who said that skipping parents meeting and having overwhelming responsibilities were the main challenges. According to the parents respondents 24 (34%) and 20 (29%), the main challenges was lack of finances and overwhelming responsibilities.

Morgan and Allison, (2011) argued that there are parenting internalized concepts that impact on children. Child tantrums are more frequent among children from single parents since they exhibit the same behavior observed from the parent. Incidences of lack of emotional intelligence among children from single parents was also noted to be higher compared to other children. Epstein and Sheldon (2013) found that during adolescence, children from single parents had a greater conflict level compared to others.

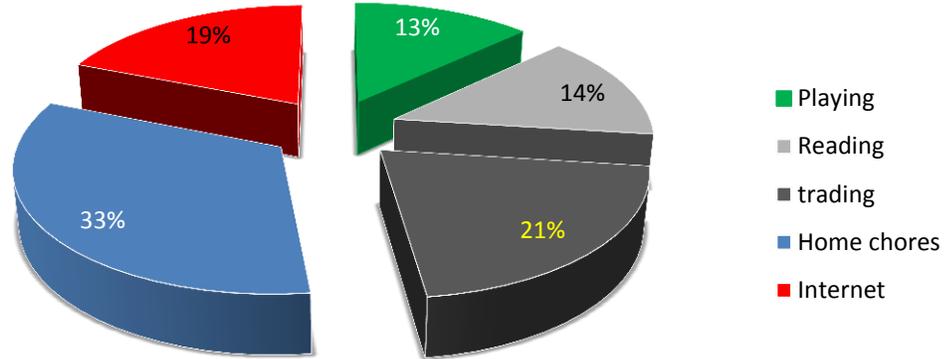
Oketch, Mutisya and Sangwe (2012) noted that parental economic status explained the differences between single parent children and others. Elaine (2012) noted that particular family structures such as the nuclear family were less important among the ethnic groups that formed the minority groups in the society. Emeka (2013) argued that two parent homes were better in bringing up a socially accepted child with minimal social and cognitive problems.



**Figure 4.14: Absent Days Term Per Term**

Most pupils from single parents home, 35 (50%) were absent for between 17-21 days in a term while 12 (17%) were absent for 11 – 16 days. The least were 5 (7%) having been absent for 0-6 days.

Single parents struggle to make ends meet because they usually survive on one income. There is a lot of power struggle and therefore no parent is ready to correct a child lest they be looked at as the bad parent. Most single parents have to do everything by themselves and no one else to blame when things do not get done.



**Figure 4.15: Parents Views on Child Work after School**

Majority of pupils from single parents 23 (33%) were involved in home chores after school while 15 (21%) did some trading. Another 13 (19%), 10 (14%) and 9 (13%) were involved in internet, reading and playing respectively.

According to the above results it shows that most do not participate in assisting their children with school work. This is contrary to Montgomery (2013) who affirms that parent involvement in their children's assignment improves their performance in all levels of schooling.

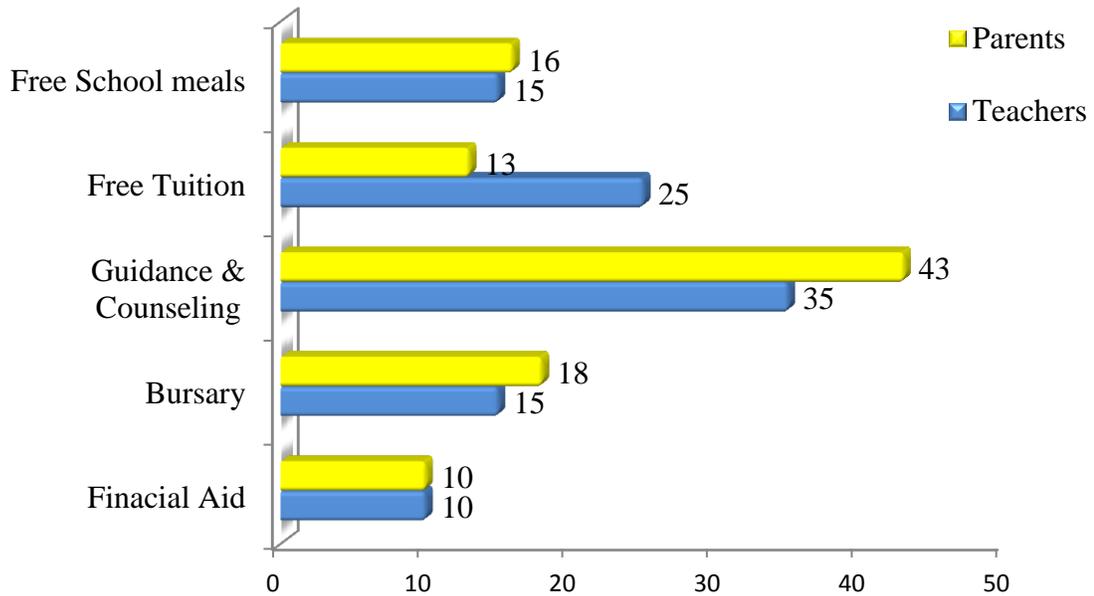
**Table 4.5: Punishments by Parents on their Pupils**

<b>Punishment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Beating	18	26
Insults	21	30
Starvation	3	4
Unwarranted comparisons	14	20
Corporal punishments	7	10
Exercise	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Forms of punishment used by single parents according to most of the parents respondents 21(30%) and 18 (26%) were using insults and beating. Another 14 (20%) used unwarranted comparisons. Only 7 (10%) each used corporal punishment and giving them exercises. The study noted that single parents resulted to beating and insults as a form of punishment when children did something wrong. This cements that single parents were overwhelmed by their many roles in the house and resulted in socially unfriendly strategies of disciplining their children. Insults were an indicator of parental stress and as such should be addressed in single parent homes. Mece (2015) posited that single parent homes resulted in high parental stress and as such this stress was offset on the children. Therefore such children showed high aggression levels and low discipline levels.

#### **4.5 Level of Assistance Giving to Parents and Children in Schools**

The third objective of this study was to establish the level of assistance that these parents and their children are getting from their schools in Embakasi Sub-County.



**Figure 4.16: Level of Assistance**

The assistance mainly given pupils from singlehood according to Head Teachers and parents 7 (35%) and 30 (43%) respectively was mainly guidance and counseling. These were followed by 5 (25%) who benefitted from the free tuition as indicated by head teachers and 13 (18%) who received bursaries according parents. From the respond of both Head teachers and parents 2 (10%) and 7 (10%) financial aid was minimal. From these results its clear indication that school assistance to single parents is very crucial and it needs support from all levels to ease their burden as had been found in Kigan (2007).

#### **4.6 Solutions for Improving the Performances of Pupils of Single Parenthood**

The fourth objective of this study was to determine the solutions for improving the performances of pupils of single parenthood Embakasi Sub-County. Responses were collected and summarized from 20 Head Teachers, 70 Teachers, 70 Pupils and 70 Single-

Parents on solutions for improving the performances of pupils of single parenthood in Embakasi Sub-County.

The responses were qualitatively analyzed from their various opinions and suggestions. The head teachers are expected to hold guidance and counseling sessions for both parents and pupils. They should also look for scholarships and other grants to enable children from economically challenged families attend school. During school meetings the head teachers should sensitize the parents on the importance of education. It is also important that they provide jobs for the single parents who are not financially stable. The government is always ready to assist. They should therefore be able to solicit for government support. The teachers are expected to hold guidance and counseling sessions for both parents and children. To ensure adolescents are given equal chance of succeeding teachers should look for scholarships and other grants to enable children from economically challenged families attend school. All teachers should strive to treat the children equally. No name calling should be allowed and derogatory language should not be used. All children should be given love and attention. Teachers should encourage all the pupils to do well despite their parental background. Pupils from rich families should assist their colleagues from poor families.

The study determined that pupils should disregard their family background and strive for excellence. All pupils should learn not to let their parents misunderstandings interfere with their academics, they should also not side with either of the parents. The single parents who are not economically stable should be empowered economically to enable them assist their children. The parent who will have custody of the children should try

and play the role of both. Parents should strive to provide medical attention to their children so that they do not miss school due to sickness. Motivate the learners by rewarding them remember it is not their problem that the parents are not living together.

The study observed that parents should always find ways and provide learning materials for the children. The adolescents could miss a confidant if the parent who left was their confidant. The mothers may not be able to properly discipline the boys. If one of the parents was violent then the children may experience peace. Trying not to side with either of the parents at times can be difficult for the adolescent. Society looks at children from single parents as bad influence on their own, most parents would therefore not like these children to associate with their own. They might have to miss school quite often due to economic challenges at home. Teachers may blame learners for the separation of their parents. Due to financial constraints these adolescents could miss some items needed in school and therefore lower their self-esteem. The children may miss school due to health issues and lack of money for proper medical care.

#### **4.7 Interview Schedule of Pupils.**

The following are responses from the 70 pupils from single parents over what they experience in school and at home environment. They were qualitatively discussed and found to be both direct and indirectly related to the impact of single parenthood on the academic performance of adolescent pupils in primary schools in Embakasi Cub-County. These responses were discussed as follows: Most pupils from single parent homes, 50% were absent between 17-21 days in a term while 17% were absent for 11-16 days. The least was 7% having been absent 0-6 days

Forms of punishment used by single parents according to the pupils was that 30% used insults whereas 20% used beatings. Another 20% used unwarranted comparisons and 10% used corporal punishment.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives summary of the findings of the study, implications, conclusions and recommendations arrived at. It also gives suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.1 Summary of the findings

Among the entire respondents majority 130 (57%) were female while 100(43%) were male respondents. Majority of the respondents 70 (30%) were between age 13 – 20 and 41 – 50 years each. Another 40 (17%) were between age 21 – 30 and 31 – 40 years each. A total number of 40 (57%) single parents were currently occupied in informal sector while another 20 (29%) were in formal occupation. Only 10 (14%) indicated that they were not in any of the two occupations. Giving the reasons for being single, majority of the parents respondents 48 (69%) indicated that they had separated followed by 10 (14%) who were unmarried. Another 8 (11%) and 4 (6%) gave divorce and death as the reason for being single.

Among the Head Teachers involved 9 (45%) and 6 (30) indicated that financial instability and child labor were the main effects of single parenthood on academic performance respectively. Only 3 (15%) and 2 (10%) said of lack of food and pupils baby sitting as the possible effects. Majority of the Head Teachers 12 (60%) indicated that they had mechanisms for helping children from single parents. Another 3 (15%) indicated that they gave financial aid while 5 (25%) had put in place guidance and counseling programs. The main form of punishment according to the majority of the respondents 8

(40%) was cleaning the compound. This was followed by 5 (25%) and 4 (20%) who indicated that canning and weeding were also used respectively. Only 3 (15%) used expulsion as a possible means of punishment. Majority of the parents respondents 51 (73%) indicated that they didn't assist in the assignment while 10 (14%) said they sometimes assisted. Only 9 (13%) were certain that they assisted them. Among the parents respondents, 45 (64%) indicated that they involved in the child's visiting and 15 (21%) were involved in PTA meetings. Another 10 (14%) were involved in academic clinics to discuss performance.

Majority of the parents respondents 43 (61%) held class position 31-40 followed by 15 (23-30) who held position 23-30. Another 6 (9%) and 4 (6%) held position 17-22 and 11-16 respectively. Only 2 (3%) held class position 6-10. Majority of the parents respondents 61 (87%) rated the performance as below average while 5 (7%) were average. Only 4 (6%) were above average in performance. Majority of the teachers respondents 50 (72%) indicated that the performance was below average while another 15 (21%) was average performance. On truancy as an effect of single parenthood, 52 (74%) of the parents respondents agreed with this while 10 (14%) said it was sometimes an effect. Only 8 (12%) parent said that truancy was not an effect of single parenthood. On attendance status as an effect of single parenthood, majority of the respondents 45 (64%) said it was worse followed by 19 (27%) who indicated that it was bad. Only 6 (9%) indicated that the attendance was excellence. Majority of the teacher's respondents 40 (57%) said that these pupils were not often able to socialize while another 20 (29%) indicated that they never socialize. Another 10 (14%) indicated that they often socialized with others. On the

challenges facing parents, majority of the head teachers 5 (25%) indicated lack of finance as the main challenge. This was followed by 4 (20%) each who said that skipping parents meeting and having overwhelming responsibilities were the main challenges. According to the parents respondents 24 (34%) and 20 (29%), the main challenges was lack of finances and overwhelming responsibilities.

Most pupils from single parents home, 35 (50%) were absent for between 17-21 days in a term while 12 (17%) were absent for 11 – 16 days. The least were 5 (7%) having been absent for 0-6 days. Majority of pupils from single parents 23 (33%) were involved in home chores after school while 15 (21%) did some trading. Another 13 (19%), 10 (14%) and 9 (13%) were involved in internet, reading and playing respectively. Forms of punishment used by single parents according to most of the parents respondents 21 (30%) and 18 (26%) were using insults and beating. Another 14 (20%) used unwarranted comparisons. Only 7 (10%) each used corporal punishment and giving them exercises. The assistance mainly given pupils from singlehood according to Head Teachers and parents 7 (35%) and 30 (43%) respectively was mainly guidance and counseling. These were followed by 5 (25%) who benefitted from the free tuition as indicated by head teachers and 13 (18%) who received bursaries according parents. From the respond of both Head teachers and parents 2 (10%) and 7 (10%) financial aid was minimal.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that there was a strong positive relationship between adolescent educational performance and single parenthood.

Single parent families exerted pressure on educational institutions in terms of student discipline and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, the study result showed that a strong positive relationship also exists between environmental influence and academic achievement of adolescents.

The study also revealed that most of the schools had identified the challenges experienced by pupils from single parent families. This therefore implied that everybody was only too eager to find a lasting solution to this challenge so that all children have equal opportunities of excelling in academics without any bias. Head teachers, teachers and parents are all working together to ensure the children are given a chance to give out their best.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, these are the recommendations;

1. The school and social systems should partner together to see that all adolescents are treated in the same manner that would encourage the learners as if they all come from two parent family structures.
2. The schools should liaise with the Ministry of Education to ensure that children from single parenthood families complete school through creation of school bursaries to help these children settle their school fees.
3. The parents through the Parent Teachers Association should be encouraged to create time for their children at home for homework activities.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

Through my experiences in the course of this research and the relevance it has towards the adolescent learners in the area of the study, I therefore make the following suggestions for further and future studies by other researchers;

- 1) The study may be replicated in other sub counties in Nairobi County and Kenya in general in order to have findings that can reflect a national outlook.
- 2) A similar study may be undertaken but with interest in the orphans' academic performance in Nairobi County and other parts of Kenya.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Introduction letter

Lucy Okaka

P.O Box 1957 10101 Karatina

Tel: +254724606296

Dear Respondent

I am a student at Karatina University carrying out an academic research titled: **Influence of Single Parenthood on Adolescent Children's Academic Performance in Embakasi, Nairobi County, Kenya**. I kindly request you to assist in collecting data by responding to the questions and statements attached in this questionnaire.

The attached questionnaire is aimed at assisting the researcher to gather information as outlined in the title above. Kindly note that you are free to participate or opt out of this study at any point. However please remember that participation in this study is voluntary. You may ask questions related to the study at any time or refuse to respond to any question or statement that you may feel infringes on your rights.

Once the researcher is through with the study, the questionnaire will be kept in a locked cabinet for safe custody and thus the contents therein will be private.

Note: **Do not put any markings on this questionnaire which may be used to identify you.**

Thank you

Signature:.....

Lucy Okaka

**Appendix II: Questionnaire for Head Teachers**

Do not write your name or the name of your institution. Please answer the questions as honestly and truthfully as possible by ticking in the spaces provided.

**SECTION A: General Information**

- 1. Gender      Male ( )      Female ( )
  
- 2. Age    a)30—40 ( )      b)41—50 ( )      c)51—60 ( )      d)61—70 ( )
  
- 3. Experience at work
  - (a) Less than 5 years ( )
  - (b) 6 to 10 years ( )
  - (c) 11 to 15 years ( )
  - (d) Above 15 years ( )
  
- 4. Indicate the highest level of Education \_\_\_\_\_  
Certificate ( )      Diploma ( )      Bachelors ( )      Masters ( )

**SECTION B:**

**i) Single Parenthood and Academic Performance**

5. What are some of the constraints faced by parents?

Category	Tick
Financial instability	
Child labor	
Lack of food	
Pupils babysitting siblings	

6. What mechanisms do you have in place?

Category	Tick
No mechanism	
Financial Aid	
Guiding and Counseling	

7. If these pupils miss school what are the some of the punishments?

Category	Tick
Weeding	
Canning	
Cleaning compound	
Expulsion	
All the above	

**ii) Single Parent Challenges in boasting Academic Performance**

8. Select the challenges facing single parents

Category	Tick
Lack of finance	
Troubles with discipline	
Skip parents' meeting	
Overwhelming responsibilities	
Help in Homework	
Stigmatization	

**Single Parents and School Assistance**

9. What kind of assistance do you give these pupils from single parents?

<b>Category</b>	<b>Tick</b>
Financial Aid	
Bursary	
Guidance and Counseling	
Free Tuition	
Free school meals	

**Solution for Single Parent and Academic Performance of their children**

10. What are your suggestions for improving this situation?

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....
- d. ....

**Appendix III: Questionnaires for Teachers**

Do not write your name or the name of your institution. Please answer the questions as honestly and truthfully as possible by ticking in the spaces provided.

**SECTION A: General Information**

- 1. Gender      Male ( )      Female ( )
  - 2. Age    a) 21—30    b) 30—40 ( )    b) 41—50 ( )      c) 51—60 ( )    d) 61—70 ( )
  - 3. Experience at work
    - (e) Less than 5 years    ( )
    - (f) 6 to 10 years      ( )
    - (g) 11 to 15 years      ( )
    - (h) Above 15 years      ( )
  - 4. Indicate the highest level of Education\_\_\_\_\_
- Certificate ( )    P1 ( )      Diploma ( )    B. Ed ( )    Masters ( )

**SECTION B:**

**ii)      Single Parenthood and Academic Performance**

5. How do you rate the performance of these pupils from single parents?

Category	Tick
Above average	
Average	
Below average	

6. How do you rate the frequency of school attendance?

Category	Tick
Excellent	
Bad	
Worst	

7. Do these pupils socialize with others?

Category	Tick
Often	
Not Often	
Never	

**ii) Single Parent Challenges in boosting Academic Performance**

8. List the challenges

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**Single Parents and School Assistance**

9. List the assistance

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**Solution for Single Parent and Academic Performance of their children**

10. Identify the solutions

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#### **Appendix IV: Questionnaire for Parents**

I am a post graduate student in Karatina University pursuing an Executive Master's Degree in Education (Leadership and Policy studies). I kindly request you to assist with some information by filling this questionnaire. The information you will give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for this study only. Do not write your name or the name of your institution. Please answer the questions as honestly and truthfully as possible by ticking in the spaces provided.

#### **SECTION A**

1. Your Designation\_\_\_\_\_
2. Your Gender           (a) Male   ( )                   (b) Female ( )
3. Age of the respondent
  - (a) Less than 30 years ( )
  - (b) 31 to 40 years   ( )
  - (c) 41 to 50 years   ( )
  - (d) 51 and above   ( )

#### **SECTION A: General Information**

1. Gender           Male ( )           Female ( )
2. Age   a) 21—30   b) 30—40 ( )   b) 41—50 ( )   c) 51—60 ( )   d) 61—70 ( )
3. Current occupation
  - (a) Formal           ( )
  - (b) Informal       ( )
  - (c) None           ( )
4. Indicate the highest level of Education\_\_\_\_\_
5. Certificate ( )   Diploma ( )   Bachelors ( )   Masters ( )

### 5. Single Parenthood and Academic Performance

Do you assist your child to do the assignments?

Category	Tick
Yes	
No	
Sometimes	

6. Indicate your involvement in your school

Categories	Tick
PTA meetings	
Visiting days	
Discuss Performance	
None	

7. What was the class position of your child in the last examination?

Category	Tick
06—10	
11—16	
17—22	
23—30	
31—40	

8. How do you rate the performance of your child?

Category	Tick
<b>Above Average</b>	
<b>Average</b>	
<b>Below Average</b>	

9. Does truancy affect your child in academic performance?

Category	Tick
Yes	
No	

Sometimes	
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### Single Parents and Challenges in Boasting Children’s Performance

10. How many days per term does your child get absent from school?

Category	Tick
0—6 days	
6—10 days	
11—16 days	
17—21 days	
Over 21days	

11. What are the challenges that you face with your child in relation to schooling?

Category	Tick
Lack of finance	
Troubles with discipline	
Skip parents’ meeting	
Overwhelming responsibilities	
Help in Homework	
Stigmatization	

12. What does your child do after school?

Category	Tick
Playing	
Reading	
Trading	
Home chores	
Internet	

13. What kind of punishment do you use on your child?

Category	Tick
Beatings	
Insults	
Starvations	
Unwarranted comparisons	
Corporal punishments	
Exercise	

**To establish the level of assistance that these parents and their children are getting from their schools**

Category	Tick
Financial Aid	
Bursary	
Guidance and Counseling	
Free Tuition	
Free school meals	

## **Appendix V: Interview schedule for Pupils**

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Are you from a single parent family?

Is your parent employed or working anywhere?

What kind of work do they do?

How much time does your parent share with you?

Do your parents check your performance at school?

Do you attend school regularly?

What is your parent's highest level of education?

Does their level of education enable them follow-up on your studies at school?

How much support do you get from your parents in your school activities?