

Influence of Single Parenthood Family Structure on Pupils Academic Achievement in Primary School in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.0545>

Published April 27, 2026

Citation: Oyelade O.O., Shittu I.J., Odeleye A.A. (2026) Influence of Single Parenthood Family Structure on Pupils Academic Achievement in Primary School in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*,7(2),45-53

Abstract: *The purpose of this research was to assess how the family structure, specifically single parenthood, impairs the performance of primary school age children in the area of Egbeda Local Government in the Oyo State. The study was a descriptive survey which assisted in the collection of data from 200 students drawn randomly from each of four schools. The study compiled all gathered data from both sets of materials – structured questionnaire and schools’ files – and appropriate statistical treatments in terms of analysis were conducted. Results revealed that academic achievement of majority of pupils could be classified as moderate level of performance and mean girls’ performance was better than boys. Hence, the study demonstrated that academic performance of pupils whose parents lived separately was less than that of the students from nuclear families. However, an analysis of some pupils from reconstituted family revealed that they scored very high in their performance inclusive of the aspects like poverty, resilience, parental involvement, and school inclination. It is thus the case that the learning culture of single paternity has adversely affected the learners’ scholastic achievement. Part of the recommendations that can be made therefore is to suggest strategies that inherently exist within school teaching programs, which are focused on the child. They can be as ways of solving the problem - first, strategies that place the welfare of the child and issues of gender in particular, in the course of why children go to school, second, strategies that actively involves parents in the learning experiences of their child, third, and pushing for better legislation and/or working policies that support singlehanded families. This study aims at advancing knowledge in the field of the topic of family pattern as a contributor to the grade of attainment in education in Nigeria, more specifically, in primary school therefore calling the educationist and all the stakeholders as one.*

Keywords: single parenthood, academic achievement, primary school pupils, gender differences, educational support

INTRODUCTION

The term academic achievement describes the various ways students reach educational goals which they demonstrate through their learning in both structured and unstructured educational settings. The traditional method of measuring academic achievement used to depend on actual assessment results which included both examination scores and grade point averages but current research shows that academic achievement requires assessment of cognitive and metacognitive and emotional learning aspects (Steinmayr et al. 2024). The process of learning requires students to engage with educational material which they need to complete all assignments until they achieve end results that show their competence through demonstration of knowledge and skills which enable them to succeed in both tests and real-life situations.

The academic performance of primary school students plays a vital role in shaping their educational results and their future learning paths throughout their lives. The term academic achievement describes the total knowledge and skills that students acquire in their main subjects which include English mathematics science and social studies. The academic performance of students shows their actual learning progress because it reflects their ability to understand and use knowledge in school. Recent research found that students' academic performance depends on three main factors which include their home background the quality of their school facilities and the effectiveness of their teachers and their personal traits such as motivation and learning habits and mental development (Okeke 2024).

Educational assessments need a precise definition of academic achievement because this definition sets the assessment boundaries while it influences teaching methods and educational policy development for improved school performance. Primary school academic achievement establishes the fundamental base which supports all future academic success and subsequent professional development.

Statement of the Problem

The educational system uses academic achievement as its primary method to measure educational effectiveness which helps determine both student intellectual growth and their ability to acquire skills and prepare for advanced academic studies. Despite being a crucial aspect in the realization of potential, scores of students in the primary level are still churning good performances in competences such as Maths, English and Science. An issue persists where there is a high concern that children who possess so much can go to waste or stuck within the limitations system as it impacts negatively on the potential and the interest in studies through disillusionment at an early age and jeopardization of their future in education and labor. Unrealized potential by students is a common quality of education offered by the educational system and it is largely due to teachers using traditional teaching methods, as well as inadequate facilities for practice and the use of large containers and buildings are some of the problems that attain school building infrastructure.

Performance of school or pupils is based not only on the methods of teaching and tools used for learning, but also on a family setup with a consideration on the roles, responsibilities and needs. Polygamous families however bring with them a number of challenges for family members as they render children with poor citizenry since fathers are overburden without any social support system. These challenges become more severe in areas that lack social support systems because single parents find it difficult to provide their children with both educational support and economic assistance. Students who face multiple academic challenges show different results because some succeed while others fail which leads to different academic achievements that result from both school and family circumstances. Researchers need to study the different elements which affect student academic performance especially the impact of parental involvement and household income and family dynamics. The study examines how single parenthood affects the academic performance of students who attend primary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions would be formulated to guide the conduct of this study and would be answered in the study:

1. What is the level of academic achievement among pupils in primary school in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State?
2. Is there any significant difference of gender based on academic achievement among pupils in primary school in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State?
3. Is there any significant relationship between independent variable (single parenthood) and dependent variable (academic achievement) among pupils in primary school in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State?

METHODOLOGY

The research used a descriptive research design which researchers consider the best method to study social and health-related phenomena because it preserves natural conditions of their research subjects. A descriptive design enables researchers to gather data which shows current circumstances and participant behavior and attitude patterns especially concerning their academic performance. The method will provide in-depth results about how single-parent households affect students' academic performance through their academic performance which serves as a research variable of comparison. The study population includes all primary school students who attend schools in the Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo State. The research selects a sample of two hundred (200) pupils in primary school in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State. The research team determined that a sample size of 200 study participants would provide sufficient statistical power to produce reliable and valid results while remaining within the confines of available study duration and research resources. The research team used simple random sampling to choose study participants because this method guarantees equal selection chances for all members of the study group. The technique fits the study because its target group contains students from primary schools throughout the Egbeda Local Government Area in Oyo State who possess common characteristics

that make it easy to choose study participants without introducing bias. The sample population includes students from different gender groups and religious backgrounds who show different levels of academic performance. The researchers collected data from study respondents through self-developed questionnaires. The questionnaire developed into three sections which the researchers designated as sections A through C. Section A collects information about the socio-demographic characteristics of participants which include their gender and age. Section B collects information about single parenthood and Section C measures academic achievement which will be determined through students' examination scores.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of academic achievement among pupils in primary school in Egbeda Local Government, Oyo State?

The academic achievement of pupils was measured using their overall school scores in core subjects (English, Mathematics, and Science). Scores were categorized as High, Moderate, or Low. Table 1: Academic Achievement Levels of Pupils (N = 200)

Level of Academic Achievement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
High	50	25.0
Moderate	110	55.0
Low	40	20.0
Total	200	100

The results show that 25% of students achieved high academic success while 55% achieved moderate success and 20% achieved low academic success. Most students show moderate academic abilities while only a few students reach exceptional academic success. Most students handle their schoolwork successfully but substantial number of students need academic support to improve their learning results.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference based on gender in academic achievement among pupils?

The academic scores of male and female pupils were compared to determine if gender differences exist.

Table 2: Gender and Academic Achievement (Mean Scores)

Gender	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Male	68.5	10.2
Female	70.3	9.5

Females achieved higher academic success than males who scored lower than 70 and achieved 68.5 as their average score. The research shows that girls perform better than boys in primary school because they maintain better concentration during classroom activities. The analysis showed that female pupils achieved better academic results than male pupils across their entire academic performance. The study found that girls maintained better academic focus and learning consistency which supported their learning outcomes more than boys did.

Research Question 3: Is there any significant relationship between single parenthood and academic achievement among pupils?

To examine the relationship between the independent variable (single parenthood) and the dependent variable (academic achievement), pupils were categorized based on family structure (Single-parent vs. Two-parent households) and their academic scores were analyzed.

Table 3: Relationship between Single Parenthood and Academic Achievement (Mean Scores)

Family Structure	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Single-parent	65.2	11.0
Two-parent	72.1	9.2

The results reveal that pupils from single-parent households had lower mean academic scores ($M = 65.2$) compared to pupils from two-parent households ($M = 72.1$). This indicates a noticeable difference in achievement based on family structure. The findings suggest that single parenthood may be associated with lower academic performance, which could be due to limited parental supervision, fewer learning resources, and additional responsibilities at home that reduce study time.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that most students in the selected schools achieved moderate academic performance while only a few students reached high academic performance and a small group showed lower academic achievement. The pattern shows that most students achieve satisfactory results but there exists a considerable group who fail to achieve their academic potential. The teaching quality and learning resources and classroom management and home support all function as potential explanations for this situation. The finding supports Harripersaud (2025) which states that primary school students academic success results from both home and school learning conditions. Students without proper home guidance experience challenges in completing schoolwork and understanding lessons while they lose their academic drive.

The low rate of high-achieving students in the study shows that several students can succeed because they possess both the required cognitive skills and the drive to succeed. People who achieve high results prove their learning capacity while others who achieve low results face

challenges that stop their academic progress. Schools should implement support programs which include tailored educational approaches and additional tutoring and mentoring and structured assistance for students in academic settings and their homes. The research demonstrates that academic success consists of multiple dimensions which academic performance develops through various interdependent factors.

The research shows that girls in Nigeria and other African countries demonstrate more commitment to schoolwork because they handle their homework more effectively and participate actively in class and follow teacher instructions, according to Ajanaku and Obafemi 2020. Girls develop academic excellence through cultural expectations that start from their childhood while boys face social pressures that require them to participate in sports and domestic work which reduces their study opportunities. The finding indicates that gender influences academic achievement through its interaction with parental involvement and home environment and school support systems. The study found that girls performed better than boys because they showed more focus and dedication to their work but boys reached similar results when they received proper guidance and motivation. The educational strategies need to establish gender-specific support systems which will enable every student to achieve their maximum academic potential.

The study found that pupils from single-parent households generally had lower academic achievement compared to those from two-parent households. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the challenges faced by children from single-parent homes, including reduced economic resources, less parental supervision, and psychosocial stress (Akida, Adan, & Karama, 2024; Harripersaud, 2025). Children in single-parent households may face limited access to educational materials, fewer opportunities for guided learning, and additional responsibilities at home, which can interfere with their ability to focus on schoolwork and engage effectively in learning activities.

Emotional and psychosocial factors further explain the lower achievement among pupils from single-parent homes. These pupils may experience stress, anxiety, or reduced emotional support due to the absence of one parent, which can negatively affect concentration, motivation, and overall learning. However, it is important to note that single parenthood does not automatically result in poor academic performance. Some pupils from single-parent households performed at levels comparable to their peers from two-parent families, suggesting that parental involvement, extended family support, school-based interventions, and individual resilience can mitigate potential disadvantages (Ajanaku & Obafemi, 2020).

The research results demonstrate that students from the examined schools show average academic performance while only a few students reach exceptional achievement and only a small number of students show below average performance. The evidence shows that most students learn basic skills but their progress needs to improve before they achieve their desired educational results. The

existing patterns stem from multiple factors which include teaching quality classroom management learning resource accessibility and parent participation levels.

The research discovered minor academic differences between male and female students because female students performed better than male students in their studies. Research shows that girls exhibit more academic dedication through their superior focus on tasks and their persistence in completing schoolwork (Ajanaku & Obafemi, 2020). Primary school students learn differently because their behavior patterns and social behavior and cultural background interact with each other.

The research established that single parenthood leads to decreased academic performance. Students who come from single-parent homes encounter academic difficulties because their parents spend less time with them and their family lacks money and they deal with more psychological distress. The research discovered that single-parent students performed at a high academic level which indicates that people who face disadvantages through single parenthood can overcome their challenges through strong school support and family help (Harripersaud, 2025). The study shows that academic success emerges from the interactive effects of personal factors and family dynamics and institutional influences. The presence of single parenthood creates academic difficulties however educational results depend on the learning atmosphere and parent participation and student resilience at school.

CONCLUSION

The research results demonstrate that students from the examined schools show average academic performance while only a few students reach exceptional achievement and only a small number of students show below average performance. The evidence shows that most students learn basic skills but their progress needs to improve before they achieve their desired educational results. The existing patterns stem from multiple factors which include teaching quality classroom management learning resource accessibility and parent participation levels.

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Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **School Interventions:** Schools should develop targeted programs for pupils from single-parent households, including mentorship, counselling, and peer-assisted learning opportunities.
2. **Teacher Practices:** Teachers should adopt gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching strategies that address the learning needs of both boys and girls.
3. **Parental Involvement:** Single parents should be encouraged and supported to actively engage in their children's education through home supervision, provision of resources, and collaboration with school staff.
4. **Policy Initiatives:** Government and educational authorities should implement policies that provide financial, educational, and psychosocial support to single-parent families to improve academic outcomes.

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