

**Challenges Faced by Single Parents in Educating their Children in Zvimba Primary Schools, Zimbabwe**

By

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine challenges faced by single parents in educating their children in primary schools in Zimbabwe using the case of Zvimba for illustration. The contention of the article is that increase in single parenting has become a global concern, depriving many children the opportunity to attain academic excellence. This study explored the difficulties faced by single parents in Zvimba District in educating their children. Data was gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling was used to select the eight teachers, two headmasters, five parents, and ten grade seven students. The study is underpinned by Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Findings of the study revealed that the single parents had difficulties in paying fees and other expenses for their children, failed to give children enough school resources. The results of the study showed that single parents do not regularly monitor and supervise the academic progress of their children. Raising children by one parent, either the mother or father alone, was reported to be quite challenging, placing extraordinary demands on both the parent and the children. The study also established that family environment is the most powerful influence in determining students' achievement, academic motivation, and the number of years of education they will receive. In this study, parents' involvement in learning activities proved to have substantial emotional and intellectual benefits for children. Given the above, the study recommends that the schools set up support groups for single parents so that they can exchange knowledge on how to make their circumstances better. Schools must provide guidance and counselling programs to equip children with psychosocial and innovative skills.

**Key words:** Zimbabwe, Single parent family, Children, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, Children's right and Education

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### **Background of the Study**

Single parenthood is a phenomenon that has always been in existence and is as old as mankind (Kitange, 2019). Factors such as divorce, separation, death of a parent, unintended pregnancy or birth to unmarried couples, and single parent adoption are the major causes of single parenthood in society today (Amato, 2018). Sibanda, Chingove & Munyati (2021) describe a single-family style as a family with either father or mother living with their children from their previous marriage. Tassoni (2021), in his study on the causes of single parent families in the US, found divorce and death to be some of the major causes of single parent families. The New York Times (2018) made studies in the southern part of Africa and found out that poverty and teenage pregnancies led to a rise in single parent families. Single parenting family system can therefore be as a result of death due to global pandemics such as HIV and COVID-19, divorce or having children out of wedlock which leaves the roles of childcare in the hands of one parent. Tan-Kwick and Ng (2020) further argue that when one of the parents is absent in the life of a child, a gap is created as the child would have lost the support of one parent. Hamburg (2021) states that marital separation commonly involves major emotional distress for child relationship. About twice as many children from one parent families compared to two parent families drop out of school (Addo-Adeku, Opare & Banini, 2018).

The number of children from single parent households in Zimbabwe and the world over is increasing due to divorce and out of wedlock sexual relations among parents. Nyarko (2021), propounds that the falling standard of education in Zimbabwe was due to lack of single parental involvement in their children's education. In Ghana according to the Family Support Institute (2017) in 13 district 45 percent of the families had both parents present and 55 percent were headed by single parents; indicating that more than half of the families in these 13 districts had only one parent present.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) in the United States from the period 1960-2016, the percentage of children living with only their mother nearly tripled from eight to 23 percent and the percentage of children living with only their father increased from one to four percent. An increase in the number of single parent families in Zimbabwe and the world over may mean that a large number of children are likely to experience problems associated with single parenting due to limited parental contact, economic deprivations and decrease in parental control (Amato & Keith, 2018).

Children with both parents have an advantage of getting almost everything they need at school or at their homes because their parents are able to help them at any time compared to those with only one parent. Thus, a child with both parents receives materials as well as academic assistance from both parents. In some parts of Zimbabwe, especially urban areas, the percentage of single parent families has tripled in the past 10 years (UNICEF, 2019) affecting negatively on the academic performance of the learners. It is also argued that some learners

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dropped as a result. Literature has indicated that there is a relationship between single parenting and poverty and academic achievement of children, hence, it is important to investigate the extent to which single parenting has an influence on academic achievement of children at primary school level in Zvimba District, Zimbabwe.

In Ghana, a study conducted by UNICEF (2018), established that learners' performance in school was greatly determined by the family background in terms of single parent family, parent's level of education and income. In a study conducted by the Ghanaian Government through UNICEF (2018) and The Family Support Institute (2017) in 13 districts in Ghana, it was found that 45 percent of the families had both parents present and 55 percent were headed by single parents, indicating that more than half of the families in these 13 districts had only one parent present. In Kenya as with Ghana, single parent families were also increasing at a very rapid rate (Kitange 2011). This was due to modernisation and urbanisation which in turn contribute to breakdown of traditional structures (Kitange, 2019). Kitange (2019) also found out that in most regions within Kenya, children living with one parent were less likely to be in school at age 17 compared to those with both parents. Another recent study carried out in the Coast, Nyanza, Rift Valley and North Eastern by Oriento (2019) found out that children living in a single parent home had a significant risk factor to manifest violent behavior. It was against this background that the researcher sought to examine the influence of single parenting on learner academic performance.

In Zimbabwe, studies by Ganga and Chinyoka, (2018) have generally shown that children with absent and single parents have poor educational outcomes compared to those who stay with both parents. A case study carried out by Zano (2019) in Zimbabwe on the involvement of parents on the literacy development program for deaf learners shows the following: specialist teachers were 20%, regular teachers 80%, parental involvement in assisting their children 30% and not involved 70%. From the study, less parents assist their children as others do not get relevant information from educators on how to assist their children. Most educators argued that such children's education was limited due to their hearing status, attitudinal problems as well as due to some misconception parents have. They however agreed to the need for parental involvement so as to enhance literacy development for the parents and be more aware of their children's needs at school. The goal of this study is to explore the difficulties single parents in Zimbabwe's Zvimba District encounter when trying to educate their children in schools.

Most single parent families are unable to give their children the financial and material resources they need for their learning and development because of poverty, illness or unemployment. According to Marther (2019), a family is considered poor if its income is less than 100% of the official poverty line. According to Tassoni's studies from (2016), the majority of single-parent households in the USA are in the low-income range and rely on menial labor to supplement their income. The source above goes on to say that most single parent families may not be able to afford to pay their bills, buy food or adequately provide for their children's educational resources like computers, books and other different learning materials to help their children learn concepts at home in order to succeed in school because of low income. According to Marther's (2019) research findings, some single parents may be unable to provide their children's fundamental needs because they are unemployed. From the aforementioned findings, it is evident that it is challenging for the majority of single parents to provide for their children's

education so that they can have quality learning and development at home during their early years of life and perform well in school.

The family size and parent-child relationships are listed by Case (2019) in her research study as additional contributing factors to single parent challenges for providing their children with quality learning and development, even though the family income is an important factor in their learning and development success. The size of the family makes it more difficult for single parents to meet their children's educational needs. According to Kail's (2017) research, single parents with numerous children find it challenging to effectively support their children's education in the majority of Asian and African regions, so they often turn to outside sources for help. Therefore, it follows that single parents will have an easier time affording to meet their children's educational needs the smaller their family is. The goal of the current study was to identify how family size and the cost of educational materials affected the needs of the majority of single parents in the Zvimba District. Case (2019), was supported by Anthony (2017).’s explanation that healthy parent-child relationships positively affect children's learning and development. The parent may fail to supervise, control, monitor and guide their children's socio-emotional aspects, which enhance positive school achievements and positive behavior as well, if the parent-child relationship is not supportive (Anthony, 2017).

In his research on single-parent families in Australia, Craig (2016) discovered that parental stress directly affects children's learning and social skills, which compromises the quality of child care. According to Craig (2016), providing effective child care entails consistently responding to children's cues, being approachable, reducing stress and laying the groundwork for a strong attachment bond with the child. When a child receives quality childcare, they can interact with teachers during the school day with confidence, including their parents and other caregivers. According to Musiiwa and Muzembe (2018), Mary Ainsworth's ethological theory supports Craig (2016) in that a child has to have a positive attachment link with their parents in order to grow up feeling secure and trustworthy. The parent must be present for the necessary child rearing procedures as a family unit, according to prior studies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study’s significance points out that it may help single parents to identify and understand their role to play in helping their children in terms of their learning and education. Providing strategies to single parents and educators on how to assist children from single parents in their education as their situation would be different from those children who come from households that have both parents present. This study is important to many stakeholders including teachers, parents, learners, educational officers, government organisations, especially the Ministry of Education, Art, Sports and Culture, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the different political components in Zimbabwe. Parents are going to be helped in the payments of school fees by the stakeholders. The study is going to benefit teachers, school headmasters and education officers, because an understanding of the influence of single parenting on learners’ academic performance may allow them to craft and adopt approaches that can assist these children in order for them to maintain their academic level. The study is also important to the government, because it is the organisation most suitable to institute appropriate legislation, measures and policies that govern the education system in the country, so that the negative effects that result from single parenting on learner academic achievement are mitigated.

## **Literature Review**

A family only becomes a single parent family when the parental link is severed. A single family is defined by Sibanda, Chingove and Munyati (2016) as a family where the father or mother lives with their children from a prior marriage. In his research on the causes of single parenting, Tassoni (2016) families in the US cite death and divorce as two of the main reasons of single parent households. Due to the immaturity of both parents, the phenomenon of teen pregnancies in recent years has led to an increase in single parent homes. *The New York Times* (2017) conducted research in southern Africa and discovered that teen pregnancies and poverty increased the number of single parent homes.

Due to the likelihood that the children born will not be able to receive a quality education, these adolescent pregnancies actually serve to keep people in poverty. Having a single-parent family might occur from a death, divorce, or having children outside of marriage. One of the most crucial duties of parents in raising their children and promoting their education is to provide for their requirements in terms of care, support and learning. Children depend on their parents to help them learn, develop and get ready for school during the early years of life, according to Bruce and Meggit's (2016) explanation.

In their studies, Anthony, Glanville, Naaman, Waander and Shaffer (2016) note that children learn most well when they have access to sufficient learning and development resources and psychosocial support. Therefore, parents must take care of their children's educational demands. The demands of their children's learning and development are most likely difficult for single parents to care for and support. Divorce and death are listed as two of the leading reasons of single parent families by Tassoni (2017) in his research on single parent families in the US. According to research done in the southern region of Africa by the New York Times (2016), single parent families are becoming more prevalent as a result of poverty and teenage pregnancies.

The goal of the current study was to identify the main reason why single parent families are so prevalent in Zimbabwe. Most single parent families are unable to give their children the financial and material resources they need for their learning and development because of poverty, illness or unemployment. According to Marther (2019), a family is considered poor if its income is less than 100% of the official poverty line. According to Tassoni's studies from (2016), the majority of single-parent households in the USA are in the low-income range and rely on menial labor to supplement their income. The source above goes on to say that most single parent families may not be able to afford to pay their bills, buy food or adequately provide for their children's educational resources like computers, books and other different learning materials to help their children learn concepts at home in order to succeed in school because of low income.

According to Marther's (2019) research findings, some single parents may be unable to provide their children's fundamental needs because they are unemployed. The research show that some single parents do not have the chance to take their children to different educational locations like museums, zoos, educational centers and other places to expose them to the topics taught in school. Marther (2019) agrees with Tassoni (2016) that some single parents struggle to meet their children's educational material needs in order for their children to develop academic and skill competence during the formative years of their lives. From the aforementioned



findings, it is evident that it is challenging for the majority of single parents to provide for their children's education so that they can have quality learning and development at home during their early years of life and perform well in school. In-depth analysis of the ability of single parents in Zvimba District Schools to afford to effectively provide for their children's educational material resources at home and at school was the goal of the current study.

The family size and parent-child relationships are listed by Case (2019) in her research study as additional contributing factors to single parent challenges for providing their children with quality learning and development, even though the family income is an important factor in their learning and development success. The size of the family makes it more difficult for single parents to meet their children's educational needs. According to Kail's (2017) research, single parents with numerous children find it challenging to effectively support their children's education in the majority of Asian and African regions, so they often turn to outside sources for help. Therefore, it follows that single parents will have an easier time affording to meet their children's educational needs the smaller their family is.

The goal of the current study was to identify how family size and the cost of educational materials affected the needs of the majority of single parents in the Zvimba District. Case (2019), was supported by Anthony (2017).’s explanation that healthy parent-child relationships positively affect children's learning and development. The parent may fail to supervise, control, monitor and guide their children's socio-emotional aspects, which enhance positive school achievements and positive behavior as well, if the parent-child relationship is not supportive, according to International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 7, Issue 6, June 2017.

In his research on single-parent families in Australia, Craig (2016) discovered that parental stress directly affects children's learning and social skills, which compromises the quality of child care. According to Craig (2016), providing effective child care entails consistently responding to children's cues, being approachable, reducing stress and laying the groundwork for a strong attachment bond with the child. When a child receives quality childcare, they can interact with teachers during the school day with confidence, including their parents and other caregivers. According to Musiiwa and Muzembe (2018), Mary Ainsworth's ethological theory supports Craig (2016) in that a child has to have a positive attachment link with their parents in order to grow up feeling secure and trustworthy. The parent must be present for the necessary child rearing procedures as a family unit, according to prior studies.

### **Research Question**

What are the challenges facing single parents in educating their children in Zvimba District Primary Schools in Zimbabwe?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory. Bronfenbrenner offered an approach to parental involvement that was not tied to overcome some alleged cultural deficit. Bronfenbrenner’s theory suggests that a person’s surroundings, including his/her home, school, work, church, neighborhood, culture and government, all have an influence on the way one develops. The ecological perspective can be defined as an interaction between an individual and the environment. The ecological perspective, as espoused by Bronfenbrenner (2016, 2018),

provides a framework from which multiple contextual factors affect the academic performance of a child. According to Bray, Gooskens, Khan, Moses and Seekings (2016), the system is greater than the sum of its parts. So, how a child thinks, feels, behaves and develops as a person is inevitably linked to the social grouping, forces and relationships that make up their environment for example, families, peer groups, the school and other social groupings, the socio-economic forces and the interpersonal, cultural, political and power relationships. To study a child's development, then, one must look not only at the child and his/her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well.

### **Methodology**

This study was informed by the interpretivism paradigm and the qualitative approach was used. The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges faced by single parents in educating their children in Zvimba primary schools, Zimbabwe. The interpretivism paradigm was relevant because it derives constructs from the field of an in-depth examination of the phenomena of interest (Abbadia, 2020). According to Brick and Green (2017), interpretivism believes that there are multiple realities and they endeavour to understand and interpret the meaning attached to the action. Interpretivism allows the researcher to interact with respondents through interviews.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), the premise of interpretive research is to access reality through social constructions such as language consciousness and shared meaning. So, in this case, information about challenges faced by single parents in educating their children was collected and interpreted. Using the interpretivism paradigm the researcher was able to interpret different perceptions of single parenthood.

The study adopted the qualitative approach. Young and Wayne (2019) describe qualitative research as an umbrella term that combines a family of inductive reasoning-based methods. In this regard, the term 'Interpretative' is often used inter-changed with 'Qualitative' to refer to data collection procedures conducted in naturalistic environments to achieve comprehensive understandings of the participants and the context within which they live. Indeed, this study suggests that human behaviour is better investigated or settled upon when taken naturally (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020). Coleman, Davis and Best (2018) agree that the perspective of qualitative researchers is a 'whole-world experience' that is interested in the complexity of human interactions related to a specific phenomenon

### **Research Design**

For this study, the phenomenological design was used. The qualitative phenomenological case study approach is used to highlight the specifics and to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in the situation. One of the advantages of this approach is that it allows the researchers to gain an understanding of social phenomena from participants' perspectives in their natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2015).

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Purposive sampling was used to select the eight teachers, two headmasters, five parents, and ten grade seven students.

### **Instrumentations**

A semi- structured interview is a method of research used most often in the social science. While a structured interview has a rigorous set of questions which does not allow one to divert. Lee (2019) points that a semi- structured interview is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. Kalen (2016) sees it as the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasises the social situations of research data. Semi- structured interviews are therefore ways for the participants to get involved to and talk about their views. In addition, in this study, the interviewees were able to discuss their perceptions and interpretations with regard to the influence of single parenting to learners' academic achievement in Zvimba District. Cohen and Daniel (2017) argue that the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life; it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable. In the context of this research study, the researcher and the respondents came together and agreed on a time to meet for discussions.

A focus group is a method was also used because of its flexibility. It usually lasts one or two hours and provides the opportunity for all the respondents to participate and to give their opinions. A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The group of participants is guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves.

### **Data Trustworthiness**

The degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methodologies employed to assure the quality of a study is referred to as the study's trustworthiness or rigor (Pilot & Beck, 2016). This enables scientists to create the protocols and practices necessary to guarantee the validity of research studies (Adcock & Coontz, 2016). Although it appears that research professionals are in agreement that trustworthiness is vital, arguments concerning what exactly constitutes trustworthiness in research investigations are still ongoing (Leung, 2017). In this context, the following related ideas merit consideration:

According to the viewpoints that are available and were gathered from the research participants, the level of credibility describes how trustworthy or believable the conclusions of a qualitative study are (Jenifer, Trochaic, & Donnelly, 2017). The researcher in this study looked at participants' perceptions, experiences, feelings, and attitudes about the value of instruction in order to assure its legitimacy. Through the use of triangulation and "member-checking" techniques, the validity of the study's findings was evaluated. Triangulation is the "process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (Krein & Creswell, 2019). To confirm the validity of the study, the researcher therefore used triangulation. In order to check for biases, emotions, and feelings in the data analysis and data collection processes, the researcher additionally enlisted the expertise of and other specialists. The process of "member-checking" comprises testing the data, analytical categories, interpretations, and findings with the people who provided the original data. The researcher made sure that the case descriptions and



conclusions were accurate by also giving the participants access to the transcripts and data analysis in order to preserve confidence.

In order to avoid introducing her own biases into the research processes and findings, the researcher in this study maintained her neutrality, as advised by Lincoln and Kinnear (2020). As a result, the researcher is convinced that the study's findings—and not her own—were influenced by the participants' experiences, perceptions, and thoughts. To further reduce the researcher's biases during data collecting and analysis, triangulation from a range of data devices was used. To enable other researchers to evaluate the validity and integrity of the entire research process, the researcher has made an effort to maintain a clear and consistent summary of the investigation process that has been explained step-by-step from the initial outline through system creation and findings reporting (Noble & Smith, 2021).

Furthermore, dependability or reliability indicates that using the same research design with a different group under a different set of conditions would result in the same interpretations (Shelton, 2020). Participants in this study had to evaluate the study's conclusions, interpretations, and suggestions to make sure they were all consistent with the information they had provided. Regarding credibility, the researcher went to considerable lengths to make sure that the research procedure was logical, traceable, and well-documented. In general, the results are more accurate when a researcher is more consistent throughout the research process. In order to evaluate how well the processes for achieving the reliability and transferability requirements were being followed, the researcher also employed a reliability audit, in which she used an outside investigator to critically review the researcher's efforts. The external investigator was pleased with how well the processes had been followed.

### **Data Analysis**

Given the interpretive stance that was adopted by the current study, the Grounded Theory method of data analysis was relevant. Grounded theory was employed to select themes using thematic content analysis. Data were presented, analysed and immediately discussed to avoid repetition. The questions used in the interviews were drawn from the research questions and each critical question had several questions formulated to address it. The researcher crafted themes from the topics, expressions, participant examples and expressions of their thoughts. The interviews were tape-recorded so as not to miss some important information.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

The majority of single parents who participated in the interviews said they had trouble purchasing sufficient stationery, school supplies, and athletic gear. Findings showed that just half of the target group's youngsters were in good health. The excerpts below highlight parental reactions as follows:

...I have a hard time affording to pay my kids' term fees. I don't make enough money from my job to take care of my kids. **P 1**

My kids lack appropriate, presentable clothing for both school and sports. They occasionally skip school because they are embarrassed to show up without the

proper clothing. **P 2**

I struggle to feed my five children properly. Some of them struggle with bad behavior. When the father is not home, I have trouble keeping them under control.

**P 3**

Occasionally, my kids choose not to go to school because there isn't enough school supplies. They engage in inappropriate behavior when they are not in school. Since I must work to pay for food, there is nothing I can do. **P 4**

I don't have much time to monitor my kids' homework because I'm usually out selling veggies to support my family. I won't be able to help my kids with their homework when I get home because I'll be too exhausted. I'll just go to bed so I can wake up with energy to work. **P 5**

Given the above sentiments, raising a child or children by one parent, either the mother or father alone, for most of the time is reported to be quite challenging, placing extraordinary demands on both the parent and the children. In line with the above, researches by Addo-Adeku, Opare & Banini (2018) established that single parents do not regularly monitor and supervise the academic progress of their students and in effect, these children are normally not provided with the necessary learning materials to aid their learning. UNICEF (2018) also advice that children from both parents perform better than children from single parents as due to limited time single parents has to spend on their child academic work.

One can thus argue that single parents may have profound negative impact on student's academic performance as parents play an important role in most children's academic development. Children from both parents perform better than children from single parents. This was attributed to the limited time a single parent has to spend on their child's academic work (Sibanda, Chingove & Munyati, 2021). Parenthood is challenging enough even under the best of conditions. So, being a single parent in our society is tasking to say the least. This is because, with one parent, the challenges are multifaceted.

Some grade seven learners and teachers echoed the following sentiments: T1 states that

...majority of the learners from single parents households are sometimes depressed and not emotionally sound and this makes them feel uncomfortable in their academic pursuit. In fact, the effects are more shocking on the part of the children because single parenthood leaves them with deep scar. It is generally accepted that the quality of family interactions has important associations with children academic motivation and achievement, and with young adults' eventual educational and occupational attainments.

This is in line with sentiments echoed during Focus group discussions which highlighted that family environment is the most powerful influence in determining students' achievement, academic motivation, and the number of years of education they will receive. Similarly, parents' involvement in learning activities has substantial emotional and intellectual benefits for children.

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Sibanda, Chingove and Munyati (2021) observed that because supportive and strong families are significant for prepare success; teachers confront increasing challenges as many children experience severe family disruption and upheaval. Although studies have acknowledged that families are perhaps the most substantial influence on children's prepare success, it is not always clear which family influences are the most important.

Children who are raised in a single-family home are at risk of not reaching their full potential. Children in most communities are raised in a highly structured and disciplined manner, parents helped to instill and inculcate strong basic moral, spiritual, social, physical and cognitive principles in their children A child biological temperament plays a vital role in the eruption and resolution of single parent. Parents are the first point of contact of children and when both parents are alive and responsible, it implies that the child would derive effective care from the parents. T2 raised the following concerns, stating that:

...single parenting represents a major life stress for the individuals involved, with potentially strong negative consequences for the mental and physical health of all members of the family. Single parenting harms children's mental, emotional and psychological well-being. children from single parent families are occasionally dejected and emotionally disturbed and hence they are uncomfortable in their learning activities.

The above direct quote suggests that children from single parent families sometimes suffer from personality issues and may as a consequence become antisocial (Tan-Kwick & Ng 2020). Similar sentiments were echoed by teacher 1 who asserted that children who grow up in a family where the father is absent suffer from an identity crisis and disciplinary problems. Single mothers may experience psychological distress due to the resultant pressure of raising their children alone which may affect their children social behaviour (Chinyoka & Ganga, 2018). Children require a parent role model to emulate. Due to the reasons advanced here, students from single parent families perform poorly relative to their peers from two parent families.

The grade seven learners also highlighted the following challenges they encountered as children raised by single parents:

- (i) Visitation and custody problems
- (ii) Continuing conflict between the parents
- (iii) Less opportunity for parents and children to spend time together
- (iv) Effects of the breakup and death on children's school performance and peer relations
- (v) Disruptions of extended family relationships
- (vi) Parents dating new people

Children in single-parent families have higher levels of mental health problems, which could result partly from the stress of trying to balance the needs of home responsibilities, child rearing, and interactions with the child's school with limited time, personal, and social support.

Findings of this research established that children in single-parent families are more likely to drop out of school due to lack of time, money, emotional stress and mental health issues. A single mom or dad may have to work longer hours to make ends meet, so they have less time and energy to help

their children with schoolwork. If the child also works to help pay expenses, it can give them less time to spend on their school work. Extracurricular activities and community involvement are an important part of school today, but their cost can keep a single-parent child from participating. Some learners argued that when your family is going through a divorce, or if financial struggles mean you have to move a lot or even become homeless, school becomes a low priority. Children in single-parent families often have trouble making friends and developing healthy relationships with adults. They often struggle with depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, which can lead to substance abuse.

The results of the current study showed that due to parental stress, low education, unemployment, and lack of experience with single parenting, the majority of single parents encountered difficulties in providing educational material resources, such as school fees, books, sports equipment, and paying for educational events like trips. The results showed that most single parents lack meaningful employment due to their poor level of education, making it difficult for them to appropriately support their children's educational demands. When they were working, their positions were typically physically demanding and poorly paid.

Most single parents in the target area fell into the low-income family category as a result of the lack of well-paying employment, as indicated by several respondents in the current research study, which left them with financial difficulties. The family will be dependent on the single parent's income, which is typically quite meager. These results were in line with those of Tassoni (2018), who notes that because most single parents have limited financial resources, it can be difficult for them to meet their children's educational material needs, which jeopardized their infant children's learning and development.

The study's findings revealed that single parents typically lacked the time to oversee their kids' homework. Their labour was time-consuming and physically demanding, similar to vending where employees move from station to station in search of consumers. Such endeavors produced very little in the way of rewards. The study's findings concur with those of Tassoni (2018), who discovered that the majority of single parents were either unemployed or working in menial jobs. The single parent wouldn't have time to help their kids with their schoolwork because the activities would be so exhausting. According to the research study's findings, children of single parents exhibited behavioral issues. The behaviour of children of single parents was deemed to be poor. The majority of the time, the kids will be by themselves and lack direction from responsible adult figures regarding appropriate behavior.

In most cases, the parents will be working outside the home in an effort to support the family financially. The kids are more likely to act in ways that are not socially acceptable as a result of this. According to Case (2019), healthy parent-child relationships benefited children's learning and development. When a parent is constantly engaged to their job, there is no time to develop a strong bond. The study's findings indicate that single-parent children's books were typically not presentable. According to the findings, 60% of the youngsters had exercise books that were filthy, indicating that they had not received any help keeping them clean or completing their schoolwork. According to 66% of respondents, single-parent children's schoolwork demonstrated that it was unmonitored.

Due to the single parents' lack of time to review their children's work, the kids did not receive adequate instruction on how to manage their home books. The parents are so worn out when they get home that they don't have time to check at their kids' assignments. Kail (2019)

discovered comparable outcomes in an Asian investigation. Due to a lack of resources and time, the single parents could not adequately care for and watch over their children. The results of the current study also show that most single parents did not sufficiently oversee their children's schoolwork because of their hectic daily schedules and lack of experience helping children with their homework. In most cases, single parents lacked the information necessary to help their kids with academic subjects like reading, math, and other schoolwork.

Other factors that prevent most single parents from assisting in their children's education at home are parental stress brought on by external pressures. They must perform their normal motherly duties and also make up for the absence of the other parent. Other parental responsibilities include running the home and engaging in a variety of income-generating activities, as well as a lack of parenting expertise, adversely affected their capacity to help their kids. The current research supported the findings of Kail (2019), who claimed that parental stress prevented single parents from keeping track on their children's abilities in learning and growth. The research showed that a significant portion of single parents in Zvimba District schools lack the financial means to meet their children's basic material and psychosocial educational needs.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the numerous factors listed above, single parents often had difficulties affording their children's education expenses. This was due to their demanding work schedules and limits on their abilities to support their children academically. Children who are raised in a single family home are at risk of not reaching their full potential. A child biological temperament plays a vital role in the eruption and resolution of single parent. Parents are the first point of contact of children and when both parents are alive and responsible, it implies that the child would derive effective care from the parents

### **Recommendations**

In light of the study's findings, the following suggestions are being made: Schools should set up support groups for single parents so they may exchange knowledge and strategies for getting better. The government should create laws and programs to help low-income single parents support their kids. For children of single parents to manage academic work and compete on an equal basis with children from intact households, schools must establish platforms for guidance and counselling. Counselling is necessary for single parents so that they may confidently assume their obligations as single parents. To be able to meet their children's demands in life, single parents need to be trained on how to launch income-generating projects hence the need to impart them with psychosocial and innovation skills



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