

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF SINGLE MOTHERHOOD ON SOCIO-
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KALUNDU
ZONE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, KITUI COUNTY**

BY

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Award of Degree of Master of Education in Early
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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for an award of degree in any other university.

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RECOMMENDATION

This research project report been submitted for examination with our approval as the South Eastern Kenya University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my guardians: Beloved Uncle Martin and Aunt Janet, my dear husband Thomas Maithya, loving children Francis and Sopherine without whose support and understanding, I would not have had the drive to complete it. They have been wonderful people to me, without them, I would not have been where I am. May God's grace be with them always.

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ABSTRACT

Family processes affect the socio-emotional functioning of children and especially those living in poor families and families experiencing economic decline. Children of single mothers are at substantially higher risk than children of two parent families in experiencing socio-emotional problems. Increasing numbers and proportions of children born outside marriage and the rise in divorce rate have contributed to increased proportions of children growing up in single motherhood families; hence the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children in Kalundu Zone schools, Kitui County. Three research objectives were formulated to guide the study. These were; to find out whether there is any statistical significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children, to establish the role of teachers and caregivers in promoting socio-emotional development of children from single motherhood families and lastly, to investigate whether there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population included 80 boys and 90 girls, 60 single mothers and 40 teachers in Kalundu Zone schools. The sample for the study was selected using purposive sampling for children and parents and simple random sampling to select teachers and schools. The study used questionnaires and observation schedules in data gathering and the instruments were piloted in the neighboring Nzambani zone schools. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be of practical value to early childhood teachers and care givers, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, the school administrators, the government and scholars. The findings of the study were; there is a very strong positive correlation $r(1, 29) = 0.85, P < 0.05$, between single motherhood and children's socio-emotional development, there was significant association ($\chi^2(1, 4) = 51.412, p < 0.05$) between teachers' role and socio-emotional development of children of single mothers and there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families, ($\chi^2(1, 29) = 35.0, p < 0.05$). The recommendations of the study were; The teachers of children from single parents should be more sensitive to the social needs of the children and always be ready to assist them, the single mothers should be sensitized in by schools on the importance of taking time with their children so that they do not learn amoral behavior elsewhere and that schools should allow the single mothers to pay schools fees in installments and also allow them to pay in kind so that their children can continue learning.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYM

US- United States

ECDE- Early Childhood Development Education

MDGS- Millennium Development Goals

SPSS- Statistical Packages for Social Sciences

KM- Kilometers

MOEST – Ministry of Education Science and Technology

WHO- World Health Organization

CA-Child Act

SEVAI-Society for Education Village Action

HIV-Human Immunodeficiency Virus

AIDS-Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

SEKU-South Eastern Kenya University

NACOSTI-National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

DEO-District Education Officer

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Growing up without two biological parents in the home increases children's risk of a variety of cognitive, emotional and social problems. Many marriages these days end in divorce, majority of people carry traits that “select” them into single parenthood. Family structures have really changed not only in Kenya but all over the world. There is an increase in the numbers and proportions of children born outside marriage and a rise in divorce rates that have contributed to a three-fold increase in the proportion of children growing up in single-parent families since 1960 (Julie, Kelin, Nancy & Viven, 2000). Family situations often change, which makes understanding the effects of family structure on children complicated. Many children live in more than one type of family during the course of their childhood. For instance, the majority of children in step-families have also lived in a single –parent family at some point (Adegoke, 2003).

In the United States, the effects of single motherhood on children fall into two categories, one, those attributed to the lower socio-economic status of single parents and two, the short term consequences of divorce that moderate overtime. Julie and others (2000) further argues that there are four factors predictive of U.S. Children’s adjustment to the divorce of their parents; the passage of time, the quality of the children’s relationship with their residential parents, the level of conflicts of parents and the economic standing of the children’s residential family. A study by Demo, Small and Savin (2000) show that in the first few years of divorce, the children have higher rates of antisocial behavior, aggression, anxiety, and school problems than children in two parent families. However, these problems may be attributed to a decrease in available resources

and adult supervision but many of the negative effects disappear where there is adequate supervision, income and continuity in social networks.

In mother-only families, children tend to experience short and long-term economic and psychological disadvantages; higher absentee rates at school, lower levels of education, and higher drop-out rates and more delinquent activity, including alcohol and drug addiction. Later, as children from single parents families become adults, they are to marry early, have children early and divorce (McLanahan, 1994). A common explanation for the problems found among the children of single parents has been the absence of a male adult in the family. The relationship between children and non-custodial fathers can be difficult and strained. Fathers often become disinterested and detached from their children; in the study, more than 50% of fathers either did not visit their children or had no contact with them for over a year. McLanahan (1994) further argues that the loss of a father in a family can have implications beyond childhood. However, the lack of a male presence may not be as critical as the lack of a male income to the family.

Children in the United States grow up in a variety of family structures. Single motherhood families and two-parent families are created and recreated through marriages divorce, remarriages, cohabitation and births outside of marriage. One third of all children are born to unmarried mothers (Bampass, 1990). In fact, single motherhood families are the fastest growing family structures. In 1992, 26% of children were living in a single-motherhood family and this number has been increasing since the 1960's (U.S census, 1992). The majority of single motherhood families are through divorce.

In Britain, half of all marriages end in divorces although about 65% of women and 78% of men who divorce eventually remarry. However, the remarriage rate has been declining since 1960.

This may be as a result of the increase in cohabitation, with the increasing diversity of family structures, it has been estimated that in 1992, only 59% of children lived with both biological parents (Chorlin & Fursten, 2004). The question the researchers ask is what are the effects of these family structures on children? Family structure is hypothesized to indirectly influence children's psychological well-being by affecting family processes, such as parent-child relationships and parental conflicts, background variables, such as income, and individual characteristics, such as mother's psychological well-being. Thus, family processes and other variables are predicted to mediate the effects of family structure on children's psychological well being (Acock & Demo, 1994). In Africa, women play a central role in supporting themselves and their families, surprisingly, little is known about single motherhood over women's life-course. Since the early 1990's, researchers and policy makers have been interested in the links between female-headed households and poverty (Edlund, 2005).

In Kenya, family life in the recent past has undergone some major transformation as a result of the changes in the wider socio-cultural economic system (Jayson, 2009). Urban Kenyan families are in transition from the traditional structures that tend to favor large families living together to the modern trend towards smaller nuclear family units. Female headed families are extremely vulnerable with highly negative potential repercussions; they make women more vulnerable and isolated, and give rise to an entire generation of boys and girls exposed to statelessness, poverty and marginalization, including the risk of ending up in the streets as street children (Turner & Johnson, 2003). Moreover, being children of a single mother may increase their risk of living in a home run by a single parent (Jayson, 2009).

In Kitui County, more specifically Kalundu Zone schools, the number of children being raised by single-mothers increase every year. This trend has posed many challenges to this society which

is based on the collective identification on the “nyumba” (home) because of its genealogical construction in terms of blood, terms and descent. Additionally, these children of single-mothers tend to be facing more challenges on economic, social, and emotional stability, which researchers associate with the family structure, since it has been proven that single mothers face higher economic challenges compared to married couple who shared responsibility in child rearing. It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate whether there are any existent effects of single-motherhood on the socio-emotional development of children in Kalundu Zone School, Kitui County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The major transformation and changes occurring on family structure, has led to increase of single-motherhood and it's argued that, this has brought serious effects on the socio-emotional growth and development of many children. Single motherhood families are more vulnerable to poverty and economic crisis than two parent families, hence these children from single-motherhood families are more likely to lack basic needs and the absence of fatherly love and father figure to emulate as well as stigma by the society and other children at school is overwhelming for these children. Single-motherhood is strongly associated with negative outcomes for children.

Children from single motherhood families are among the most vulnerable category. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that there is no clear policy on how these children should be treated by the government as well as the members of the society. As other vulnerable children are being catered for, these ones are left out and it is not clear how these children should be treated in order to enhance the positive process of socio-emotional development among them. This has more often placed the single mothers in a dilemma. In order to provide for developmental needs of

these children from single mother families, it is inevitable that, combined efforts, provision of all necessary growth requirements and creation of opportunity for these children to grow socially and emotionally is essential. Many philosophers, psychologists and educationists have done a lot of extensive research on children development. Most of these prominent researchers are based on developed world and only discuss about what applies to the children in the West. This generalization has made it difficult to understand the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children in Kenya, more so in Kalundu Zone, hence this issue has been considered serious enough to warrant a study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children in Kalundu Zone Primary schools, Kitui County.

1.4 Research Objectives

The research was guided by the following objectives:

- i) To find out whether there is any statistical significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children.
- ii) To establish the role of teachers and caregivers in promoting socio-emotional development of children from single motherhood families.
- iii) To investigate whether there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families.

1.5 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions.

- i. Is there any statistical significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children?
- ii. What is the role of the teachers and caregivers in promoting socio-emotional development of children from single mother families?
- iii. Are there any statistical significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single mother families?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be of practical value to early childhood teachers as well as teachers dealing with children and caregivers in helping to provide proper social and emotional activities which enhance socio-emotional development of children not only from single motherhood families but also from other family structures. It is hoped that the study pinpointed areas that have not been effectively addressed. The findings of the study may also help the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and the school administrations with new ideas and knowledge especially on the steps which would be taken towards provision of the requirements for socio-emotional development of children from non- stable families and especially single motherhood families.

The key results of the investment is hoped to be seen in the lives of children living with their single mothers after the trained ECDE teachers and school administrators apply the appropriate techniques. The government and scholars were also be targeted in enriching them with the information of this study for they need to know the burden of single motherhood and upbringing of children especially if it's not out of choice.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study was faced by various challenges. The researcher encountered problems while accessing the respondents due to the tight schools' programme which should not be interrupted. Due to the nature of the study, that is, being very delicate, some mothers and children may not have opened enough or weren't willing to give some information and this is likely to have led to distortion of information and may have affected the final outcome of the study.

1.8 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The study was based on children of single mothers in Kalundu Zone, Kitui County. The study focused on children who had been in the schools for not less than a year and were four to eight years old. The findings of the study are in a position to be generalized to Kalundu Zone Primary schools and their neighboring zones. However the generalization should be extended to other zones and schools with similar characteristics such as economic activities and educational background differences; it is hoped that they may be used by other scholars to generate relevant information about similar situations.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The researcher embarked on this study with certain assumptions. One, that those children from single mothers did not face any challenges whatsoever, socially and emotionally. It was also assumed that the teachers and caregivers were providing all the necessary activities, materials and opportunities for development of these children's socio-emotional abilities. It was also assumed that the school had a good number of single mothers and that those sampled were willing to co-operate and respond appropriately to the research questions during data collection. Lastly, it was assumed that Kalundu Zone Primary schools provided adequately and effectively for socio-emotional needs of the children from single motherhood.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one includes the background to the study, Statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, limitations and delimitations, definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter two delves into literature review which has been discussed together with theoretical and conceptual framework. Chapter three comprises of methodology used in the study. This has research design, population and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity of the study, reliability of the study instruments and data collection procedures. Chapter four discusses data presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion. The fifth and the last chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

1.11 Operational Definitions of Terms

Attachment: A pattern of organized behavior within a relationship between the child and the caregivers where the child is offered a secure base from which to explore, helps to shape the child's internal working models which guides the child's engagement in interpretations of interactions with others.

Child: A young person aged between 2 -15 years who has not completed primary school learning.

Cognitive development: Is the process of acquiring mental abilities which enable children to solve life problems easily. They involve reasoning, imagining, remembering and problem solving.

Socio-emotional development: It is the process of acquiring social and emotional skills such as co-operation, sharing, a better way of anger expression, aggressiveness, joy and happiness.

Development: Refers to the process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people or object in the environment, in other words, acquisition of various skills.

Early childhood development centre: An institution that prepares children aged between 4-6 years living with single mothers for formal education.

Family: A group of people who live together and are related to one another, usually parents and children.

Quantitative research: Use of numbers and statistics to present information.

Qualitative research: Use of words to describe or define findings of a study.

Single motherhood: Heading a family as a woman (mother) alone and her children.

Home: The set up where the family members reside and do most of their activities there.

House-hold: Those who dwell under the same roof and compose a family.

Cohabitation: An arrangement where two people who are not married live together in romantic relationship without marriage.

Genealogy: It's the study of family and the tracing of their lineage and history.

Adoption: A process whereby a person assumes the parenting of another, usually a child, from that person's biological or legal parent or parents, permanently transferring all rights from the biological parent.

Prevalence: A term which means being widespread and it is distinct from incidence. A measurement of all individuals by a disease at a particular time.

Challenges: The situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore test a person's ability.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section focuses on Literature review. It discusses related literature on prevalence of single motherhood and its challenges to children, significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development in children, role of teachers and caregivers in promoting positive socio-emotional development and the significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families.

2.2 Single Motherhood and Child Rearing Practices

According to Blau, Kahan and Waldforgel (2004) single mothers are parents who care for one or more children without the physical assistance of the other biological parent. The definition and the legal aspects associated with single mothers may vary according to jurisdictional laws of different regions. The presence of single mothers may arise from a variety of reasons; typically single mothers assume sole responsibility of their child following adoption, single motherhood out of choice, or the result of an unforeseeable occurrence, such as child abuse, child neglect, abandonment, or the death of the biological father (Angrist, 2002). Single mothers are responsible for the day to day responsibility of raising the child or children (Blau *et al*, 2004). The prevalence of single motherhood families increased dramatically in the United States and other parts of the world during the past four decades. The proportions of all families with children that were headed by a single mother rose from 8 percent in 1960 to 24% in 2002 (US census Bureau, 2001). Single motherhood is associated with poverty and negative outcomes for children. In 2001, 42 percent of single mother's households in the US were poor, compared with

8 percent of households headed by married parents (US census, bureau, 2001). The likelihood of a woman becoming a single mother is undoubtedly affected by social, cultural and religious factors. It is also undeniable; however, that there are economic variables with potential to influence fertility and partnership decisions (Blau *et al*, 2004).

Studies hypothesize one of the following alternatives explanations for the rise in single motherhood families in the US; one, welfare incentives (Moffitt, 2001&Blau *et al*, 2004) two, increased economic opportunities for women (Mclanahan, 1994, Edlund 2005) and three, reduced supply of marriageable men, or a combination of those. Increase in the level of public support for single mothers is significantly and positively associated with a higher prevalence of both the never married and divorced mothers. Single mothers are more prevalent when female wages are lower. Better marriage market conditions (higher male earnings and employment rates) seem to be associated with lower incidences of never married mothers, (US census Bureau, 2001).

Higher child support payments are associated with a higher prevalence of divorced mothers. Willis (1999) develops a theoretical framework that implies that out of wedlock childbearing should be more prevalent when females are in excess supply and when the gains to marriage are small because male incomes are low.

It has been found through varied research that children in single motherhood homes generally fare worse than those homes with two parents (Edlund, 2005). Statistically, in the United States, a family structure does contribute to certain characteristics of a child's well being. For example, there is a prevalence of lower birthrates and higher death rates among infants when there is just one parent. Also, the number of children ages 15-17 in school and in good health is much lower

in this group of children, and the number of children becoming pregnant at these ages is increasing (Rich & Kim, 2002).

Rich and Kim (2002) further argue that there are signs that children who have gone through a divorce may have problems with depression, emotional stress, and difficulties in school. It has been found that adolescents from single-parent families were found to be three times more likely to be depressed than those living with two parents. Single parent homes are also associated with criminal activities in the U.S.A. children from single-parent household accounts from 72% of teenage murders, 60% of people who commit rape crimes and are eleven times more likely to exhibit violent behavior (Neol, 2004). These statistics are astounding and the problems that accompany single motherhood appear volatile. Problems found in the single parent households may not be because of the parent who raised these children, but can be linked to other things that are also related to single parenting. It has been pointed out that when there is only one parent, the family is often less well off financially and this is the main reason for so many family problems (Moffitt, 2001). Reports show that the effects of coming from a low-income family can include things like lower economic achievement and class result, leaving the child feeling isolated and lonely (Coleman, 2002).

Being a single parent and struggling for money often coincide. It is also true that children of one parent households are generally less supervised, their actions are less monitored and there this usually less monitoring and less communication between the child and the parent. Cooper, Holman and Braithewaite (2005) add that children who grow up with only one of their biological parent (nearly always the mother) are disadvantaged across a broad array of challenges. They are twice likely to drop out of school, 2.5 times likely to become teen mothers, 1.4 times likely to be idle out of school and out of work, as children who grow up with both parents. Children in one

parent families also have lowered grade points averages, lower college aspirations, and poorer attendance records. As adults, they have higher rates of divorce.

These patterns persist even after adjusting to differences in race, parents, education, number of siblings, residential locations (Demo, *et al*, 2000). Children of single parents often face conflicting emotions. They are faced by a variety of challenges depending upon circumstances; children may be set with feelings of abandonment, rejection, self-blame, entitlement or many other puzzling reactions (Schmidt, 2003). Despite good intentions, it's easy for parents to compound the problem through attempts to make their child feel better or to get them to accept the realities of life. This can set the stage for later problems in a child's development. Fears of attaching to the opposite sex, ingrained attitudes about what is "owed" to them or pent up emotions that compromise the quality of life, are examples of how parents' Absence can leave lasting psychological scars (McLanahan, 1994).

2.3 Relationship between Single Motherhood and Socio-emotional Development.

O'Hare (2001) states that family structure is hypothesized to indirectly influence children's psychological well-being by affecting family processes, such as parent- child relationship and parenting conflicts, background variables such as income and individual characteristics, such as mothers' psychological well being. Thus, family processes and variables are predicted to mediate the effects of family structure on children's psychological well being.

According to Lavie (2014) children's psychological well being is important for several reasons. First, depressed mood impacts their social relations and their performance abilities. Second, psychological well-being in youth predicts future adult well-being. Depressive episodes in youth are likely to be chronic and recurrent throughout the life course. Depressive moods early in life

are an indicator for developing serious depressive disorders later in life. Divorced mothers may feel distressed over their children having to experience a parental divorce and may internalize the social disapproval of divorce. As a result, these mothers may become overly pessimistic about the wellbeing of their children. In addition, divorced mothers have higher levels of depression than mothers in other family types and depressed individuals are more likely to perceive events and the people around them in a cynical and pessimistic manner (Jayson, 2009).

Jayson (2009) further argues that quality of parent –child relationships are often measured by mothers' reports on the level of involvement, supervision, control, discipline and enjoyable times with their children. However, this may not be the case with single motherhood families. Many single mothers face the challenge of supporting their families financially, hence most of the time they spend at work places even working overtime to earn extra money. They arrive home late, exhausted, worn-out and stressed. This denies them quality time with their children since they may not have enough time to share their days' experiences, and this affects both the mother and the children in emotional build up (Lavie, 2004).

2.4 Gender Differences and Socio-Emotional Development in Single Motherhood.

According to Holden (2002) single parents have a unique position in their children's lives because they have to play the role of both mother and father in situations where the other parent has passed away, is divorced, has neglected the child, or never was involved in the child's life. Researchers have found that when children grow up in single motherhood homes, boys are affected more adversely than girls, especially when the available parent is the mother. The merging gender gap in labor markets and education websites show that sons of single parents may experience financial, emotional, social and psychological issues.

On the financial issue, according to Schmidt, (2003) the single parent is the sole provider for the home, and boys growing up in such families experience higher incidences of poverty. A 2012 study of single parenthood in the U.S and 16 other higher income countries, found that U.S single parents are the worse off in these countries because single parents are given little support for balancing job and care-giving responsibilities. Single parents have to work for long hours and still the income may not be enough to meet the needs of the family. As a result, single parents may not be in a position to make available the education and economic opportunities their sons need to get ahead.

Boys in single motherhood families may suffer from social challenges because these homes lack well rounded development that intact families enjoy. Single mothers are not as adept in rearing boys as they are raising girls. Single mothers may also invest less time and emotions in their sons than in their daughters, causing the boys to misbehave and act out especially in school. Boys exhibit at-risk behaviors such as getting low grades, skipping school or dropping out, and they often refuse to attend college or make choices that could affect their ability for greater economic opportunities in the future. The study found that boys in single parent homes would benefit from greater parental input and from having a greater number of positive home influence (Hilton & Devall, 2012).

Eagan (2011) states that emotional effects are also associated with fatherless boys. Mothers head a significant number of single –parent homes and in spite of mother’s efforts to be present for their sons, boys might feel incomplete, alone, and that they lack a strong sense of identity. The need to belong might push them to join a group to get a sense of identity; in many cases, boys are more likely to be influenced towards substance abuse, truancy and crime. A single mother needs to be compassionate, patient, supportive and actively involved in seeking out activities and role

models for her son to help him cope with feelings of anger, alienation, vulnerability and confusion he might experience (Hilton & Devall, 2012).

The sons of single parents are more likely to be pre-disposed towards psychological disturbances. The largest study to date on the mental state of single-parent children, by McLanahan (1994) found out that children of single parents and boys in particular, are at greater risk of suffering mental hardships because they have to adjust to the reality, which is different from that of children in two-parent households. The children need to learn to cope but the study shows that they are sometimes unable to cope, because of situational stress and that they tend more towards depression, addiction, suicidal tendencies and low-self esteem (Snowdown, 2011).

A study by Holdon (2000) shows that little boys who grow up in neighborhoods without married fathers tend to reach adolescence not socialized to the norm of behavior that they will need to stay out of prison and to hold jobs. They hypothesized that boys suffer disproportionately compared to girls when they live in family structures that do not include their biological fathers. This is an argument that opponents of marriage equality will welcome, since it implies that men who grow up in single-mother households are 2.8 percent likely to attend college while for women who grew up in single parent households, there is no effect (Mulkey, Crain and Harington, 2002). In fact, signs that the nuclear family melt down of the past century has been particularly toxic to boys' well being are not new. Studies show that while both girls and boys showed distress when their parents split up, they had different ways of showing it. Girls tended to "internalize" their unhappiness; they became depressed and anxious, and many cut themselves, or got into drugs or alcohol. Boys on the other hand "externalized" or became "antisocial". Both reactions were worrisome, but boys' behavior had the disadvantage of annoying and even frightening classmates, teachers, and neighbors' boys in fatherless homes

were still getting into more trouble compared with their sisters and male peers with marriage parents (Bankston & Caldes, 1998).

2.5 Teachers' Role in Promotion of Socio-Emotional Development

Children from single motherhood face numerous challenges which may impact in their growth and development and teachers who deal with these children should take part in helping them in ensuring that each child's needs are catered for (Julie *et al*, 2000). You can promote socio-emotional development in your classroom by embedding your teaching practices throughout the day. Remaining sensitive to children's needs helps them feel secure and confident, and act as a model for effective social behavior. For example, asking questions to help children find a solution to a social conflict helps them develop problem –solving skills.

Reading a story and engaging children in a conversation about a socially challenging situation can also serve as a lesson in handling social problems as well as in literacy (Durnbusch & Gray, 1999). Being attentive to each child's needs and to the social and emotional skills and needs of each unique child so that you can respond with lessons and interventions tailored to help every child develop their skills. Your attention and presence as a teacher can be a pillar of confidence for children who are dealing with stressful life circumstances. Letting children know that you are there to help them build their trust that you are a source of guidance (Peggy, 2007) early emotional experiences matter, recognize that the emotional domain is fundamental to all other developmental domains.

If children start school in an emotionally supportive environment, they will acquire the love of learning necessary skills for success in all areas of school. As young children develop, their early emotional experiences literally become embedded in the architecture of their brains; therefore, great care should be given to children's emotional needs (Rich & Kim, 2002).

Jayson (2009) argues that promoting consistent structure with play, providing your transitional preschoolers with consistent structures and expectations about appropriate behavior through play activities helps them remember and follow classroom norms and behave in ways that are conducive to learning. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2008) play is integral to the academic environment. It ensures that the school setting attends to the socio-emotional development of children as well as their cognitive development.

Building relational capacity and importance of close relationship and having positive relationship with peers and adults including parents and teachers are key to children's socio-emotional development. Mutual caring relationship provides opportunity for children to develop and practice important social skills. Positive and consistent relationship among teachers and children by trying to go beyond expectations of compliance with school rules, and support socio-emotional development by crafting a positive; emotionally supportive climate in the classroom that skillfully connects new experiences with children's unique home experiences (Jayson, 2009).

The literature review dwells on how single motherhood influences the process of socio-emotional development of both boys and girls in those families. Socio-emotional development of children according to different psychologists has been discussed not only for the children of single mothers but for all children. Literature of gender differences in socio-emotional

development of only mother's children has been ground inadequate by the researcher. Literature on the challenges of children in single motherhood has also been revealed in relation to socio-emotional development. Most of the literature reviewed concentrated on prevalence of single motherhood and the challenges of this structure to children, gender differences on socio-emotional development of children of single mothers. The reviewed literature focused on several studies carried out on children living with their lone mothers all over the world. Very little literature has been available to the researcher's concerning Kenyan single mother families, creating a gap for this research study.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by family composition and processes theory. Three theorists, Acock, Allen and Demo, (2005) on the family composition perspective argue that two parent intact families are the best family structures for children. They claim that children who are not raised by both biological parents suffer lower levels of well-being than children from intact families. Children who grow up in single parent families or reconstituted families have lower levels of well being because they lose social capital. Social capital refers to the emotional, economic and educational support that parents provide to their children. The decision of parents to live apart, whether a result of divorce or an initial decision not to marry damages and sometimes destroys, the social capital that might have been available to children had the parents lived together. When biological parents do not live in the same house hold, children lose a close connection to the non residential parent. When the non residential parent does not feel emotionally involved in their children's lives, they are less likely to feel financially responsible for their children. As a result, many children from non-intact families are likely to receive lower levels of emotional, educational and economic support.

Theorists who favor the family composition perspective see this loss of social capital for children from single parent and non-intact families as inevitable. Thus, they argue that family structure has a direct connection to the well-being of children. They fail to realize that the loss of social capital from one parent can be replaced by another individual or that the residential parent can compensate for the absent one (Acock, Allen & Demo, 2005).

However, these same theorists on the family process perspective argue that family process influence children's well-being and these processes mediate the effect of family structure (Acock & Demo, 2005). Two family processes important for children are the quality of the parent-child relationship and the quality of the relationship between parents. They argue that if children have good family processes, such as high quality parent-child relationships and low parental conflicts, then their well-being will be high regardless of their family structure. However, this can have an impact on family processes. For example, in family structures where biological parents are separated from their children, the parent-child relationship can be more difficult to maintain. Parent-child emotional ties are more important than the physical presence of a parent in the household. Single parent families typically have the lowest household incomes. However, Acock & Demo (2005) conclude that this model does not recognize that socio-economic and demographic variables differ across family structures.

The child's first world is that of his family. It is a world in itself, in which the child learns to live, to move and to have his being within it, not only the biological tasks of birth, protection and feeding take place, but also develop those first and intimate associations with persons of different ages and sexes which form the basis of the child's personality development. The family is the primary agency of socialization .It is here that the child develops an initial sense of self and habit training, etc. To a very large extend, the indoctrination of the child, whether in primitive or

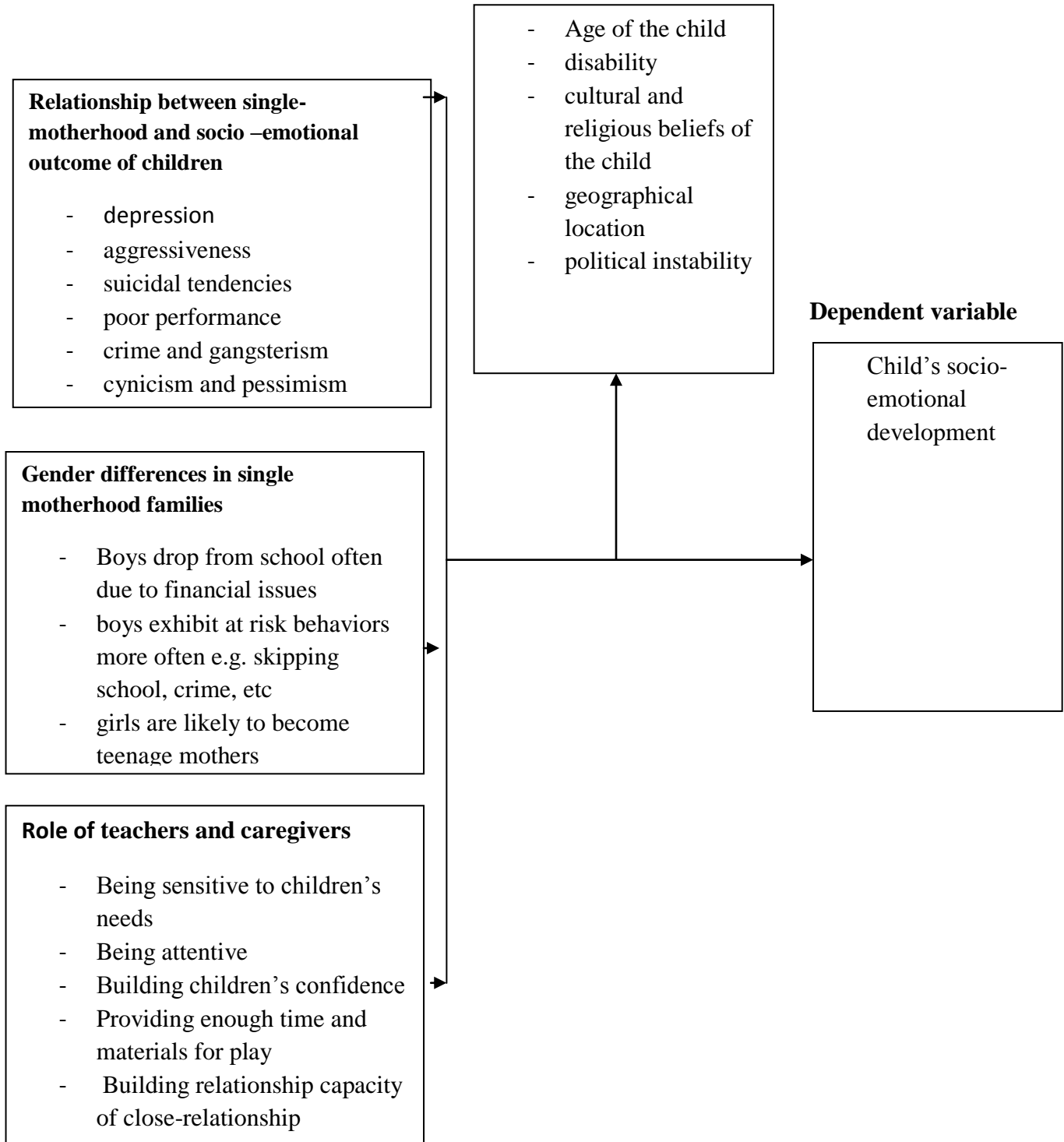
modern complex society, occurs within the circle of the primary family group. The child's first human relationships are with the immediate members of his family-mother or father, siblings and other close relatives. Here he experiences love, co-operation, authority, direction and protection. People's perceptions of behaviors appropriate of their sex are the result of socialization and major part of this is learnt in the family. Parents play a critical role in guiding children in to their gender roles deemed appropriate in a society. They continue to teach gender role behavior either consciously or unconsciously, throughout childhood and when one of the parents is absent then the child lacks a very vital part of socialization supposed to be played by the absent parent.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Extraneous variables

Dependent variable



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses research design, target population, sampling and sample procedures, research instruments, validity of the instruments, reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey design. The major purpose of descriptive survey design is to give a description of the state of affairs as they exist at present (Yin, 2009). According to Jackson (2009), this design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomenon, “what exists” with respect to variable or conditions in a situation. This type of design is conclusive in nature and so the researcher gave detailed information based on observations and questionnaire responses. It gathers quantifiable information that can be used for statistical inference on target audience through data analysis and it takes the form of closed-ended questions (Wiersma, 2005). It’s also used in surveying of demographical traits in a certain group (age, income, marital status, gender). In survey method participants answered questions administered through questionnaires. After participants answered the questions, the researcher described the responses given. For it to be reliable and valid, the questions were constructed properly for clarity and easy comprehension (Flick, 2011).

3.3 Target Population

A population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement while the target population is the total of the subjects studied, (Orodho, 2005).

This study's target population involved 280 respondents: 100 girls and 80 boys who come from single motherhood families, 60 single mothers and 40 teachers. This was done in 20 primary schools in Kalundu zone, Kitui County.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

In order to ensure that all the categories were well represented, the researcher used different sampling techniques to sample different categories. First, Purposive sampling technique was used to select children of school going age in Kalundu Zone, growing up in single motherhood homes, male and female. According to Bell (2010), purposive sampling focuses on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, this best enabled the researcher to answer the research questions.

Simple Random sampling was used to select the teachers, schools and other key informants. To avoid gender biasness when sampling the teachers, the researcher first selected a given number of mixed gender respondents (male and female) and then issued them with written numbers from which selected number holding selectors would be selected as the respondents. Creswell, (2011), simple random sampling selects samples or units such as schools so that any individual has an equal chance or probability of being selected from the population and any bias in the population is equally distributed among those being chosen. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), 20-30% of the population is adequate while sampling, however the larger the better. The researcher therefore sampled 30% of the parents, teachers and the children.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Categories	Total	Percentage	Sample size
Girls	100	30%	30
Boys	80	30%	24
Parents	60	30%	18
Teachers	40	30%	12
TOTAL	280	30%	84

3.5 Research Instruments

The study employed questionnaires and observation schedule as methods of data collection. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and parents while observation was done on children.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to Bell (2010), a questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample. It can reach a large number of subjects who are able to read and write independently. This instrument contained structured questions and respondents were expected to write their response in the spaces left. They contained two parts; part A collected the demographic information of the respondent while section B collected information on impact of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children. They contained both closed and open-ended questions. There were two sets of questionnaires, one for the parents and the other for the teachers.

3.5.2 Observation Schedule

This involved a list of what the researcher wanted to observe from the respondents. Observation was used to obtain information on single mothers' children socio-emotional development (4-8 years). They were observed while undertaking their daily routine activities such as learning and play activities, both indoor and outdoor. This instrument is appropriate for children as it enables the researcher to study various aspects of behavior in a particular condition and setting and enables the observer to code behavior at the time it occurs. The researcher observed socio-emotional skills (co-operation, sharing, turn-taking, expression of anger, joy and happiness, aggression) developed by these children during interaction between them and their teachers. The information collected was recorded in a schedule. A content analysis was later done qualitatively.

3.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study with a sample of a tenth of the total sample with homogenous characteristics is appropriate for the pilot study, (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Pilot testing is important because it reveals vague questions and unclear instructions in the instruments. It also captures important suggestions from the respondents that enable the researcher to improve on the efficiency of the research instrument. The pilot study was carried out in the neighboring schools in the Nzambani Zone, Mutito Sub-County.

3.6.1 Validity of the Instruments

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) validity of an instrument is the meaningfulness or appropriateness of the interpretations to be made from test scores and other evaluation results. It is therefore a measure or the degree to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. Validity of a test is a measure of how well a test measures what is supposed to measure, (Kombo,

2010). Content validity was used where the items in the questionnaires were checked against the objectives of the study. The validity helped identify items in the questionnaire that would need restating and removed those that were not important in the study.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of a test is the degree to which a test is consistent, stable, dependable or trustworthy in measuring what it is intended to measure (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Reliability of a test seeks to find out if the ability of a set of testers are determined based on testing them two different times using the same test, or using two parallel forms of the same test, or using scores on the same test marked by two different examiners, and find out whether the relative standing of the tests on each of the pair of scores remain the same, Test re-test method was applied on the questionnaires where comparison between answers obtained in the test and retest was made. A Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula will be used.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

A letter of authorization was obtained from the university, South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU), which was used to get a permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation to allow the researcher to collect the required data. Then the District Education Officer, Kitui Central Sub-County was conducted to seek permission for conducting the research in the sampled schools. The researcher then visited the identified schools and with the permission of the school administrators identified the respondents to be used for the study. After that, the researcher made appointments with the respondents on when to visit them and collect data. On the planned day the researcher visited and administered the questionnaires to sampled teachers and parents. The observation checklists were also filled. Later the filled questionnaires were collected for analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

This is the process of bringing meaning to raw data through coding, analyzing synthesizing and then cross-examination was done to ascertain their accuracy, competence and identity of those items that are not suitable. Once questions are completed the collected data was checked for errors in responses, omissions and biases. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data was done. The data was presented quantitatively and qualitative data was used to reinforce the quantitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe the data and for this reason Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Frequencies (f) and percentages (%) obtained from the SPSS output was used to discuss the findings. Tables were used to present the data. Chi-square tests of association were used to measure presence of any significant association between variables like teacher's role and socio-emotional development. Items focusing on a given research question were analyzed together and conclusions made.

3.9 Ethical Issues

After obtaining permit at the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation and other relevant authorities, the researcher started the process of data collection by interacting with the respondents. The following was let known to the research respondents by the researcher.

3.9.1 Researcher's Honesty on the Study Purpose.

The researcher explained to the respondents that the research study was purely for academic purpose. The respondents were told what the study was all about and what was expected of them. Honesty is needed on researcher's part where if the study requires concealment the researcher should explain to the subjects the reason for this action and make an attempt to correct any

undesirable consequences of the participants. Some researchers do lie to respondents that sponsorship or grants will be given to them in order to comply. This should be avoided.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

They were assured that information given was treated with absolute confidence. To ensure confidentiality, the respondents of the study remained anonymous, that is, were not required to write their names on the questionnaires. Again the researcher listed data numbers rather than names and destroyed the original questionnaires as soon as the study was completed.

3.9.3 The Right to Withdrawal

Voluntary participation of respondents was encouraged and where they felt uncomfortable to give information, they were not forced. A respondent had the right to decline or discontinue from participating in the research at any time.

3.9.4 Informed Consent

Informed consent in everything or activity involved was sought. Nothing was done to them without being informed. Where electronic equipment was needed, such as tape-recorder, permission was sought before the session started. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) also notes that it is unethical and a waste of resources to hind findings of a research undertaken.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter data was presented, analyzed, interpreted and discussed following research objectives. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children aged 4 – 8 years old in Kalundu Zone schools, Kitui County. Three research objectives were formulated to guide the study. These were; to find out whether there is any statistical significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children, to establish the role of teachers and caregivers in promoting socio-emotional development of children from single motherhood families and lastly, to investigate whether there are statistical significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families. The study collected data from a sample of 18 parents and 12 teachers while observation schedule were used to gather information from 54 pupils. The instruments were piloted in the neighboring Nzambani zone schools which were not be used in the study. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.2 Respondents' Demographic Information

In the questionnaires for both teachers and parents, the respondents were required to indicate their demographic information. The responses were presented in the sub-sections which follow.

4.2.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The researcher requested the respondents to indicate their gender. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Teachers			Parents		
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Total
Male	3	25.0	0	00.0	3(10%)
Female	9	75.0	18	100.0	27(90%)

Table 4.1 reveals that majority (90%) of the respondents interviewed were female while 10% were male. This was likely to give information necessary for this study as the study was about single motherhood hence mothers were mostly involved.

4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

The respondents were also required to indicate their age as part of demographic information. The results were presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent
Below 25	0	0.0
25-35	8	26.7
36-45	20	66.6
Over 45	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that, majority (60.6%) of the respondents were 36 – 45 years followed by 26.7% who were aged 25 – 35 years. The least of the respondents were those aged over 45 years (6.7%). This shows that a big number of the study respondents were middle-aged, that is, between 36 and 45 years of age.

4.2.3 Academic Qualification of Respondents

The researcher sought to investigate the academic qualification for respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Parents’ Academic Level

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Doctorate	0	00.0
Masters	0	0.0
Bachelors	3	15.0
Diploma	5	25.0
Certificate	10	60.0
Total	18	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that majority (60%) of the parents had a certificate as their highest level of academic qualification followed by (25%) with diploma and 15% with bachelors degree. This shows that, a big number of the parents were in a position to understand the effects of single motherhood on socio- emotional development of children.

4.2.4 Parents Marital Status

The parents were requested to indicate their marital status. The responses are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4. 4 Parents Marital Status

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Divorced	4	25.0
Never married	5	30.0
Widowed	7	35.0
Remarried	2	10.0
Total	18	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that there were relatively more (35%) widowed parents compared to the other categories. This was followed by 30% who never married and 25% who were divorced. The remarried are 10%. This further explains why majority are middle aged of 36-45 years as revealed in the previous table and that's why a good number of them are widowed and not remarried.

4.2.5 Working Experience of the Respondents

The teachers were requested to indicate their working experience. The responses were presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Respondent’s Working Experience

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	3	25.0
6 – 10	5	41.7
11 – 20	3	25.0
20 and above	1	8.3
Total	12	100.0

Table 4.5 shows that majority (41.7%) of the teachers interviewed had worked for 6 -10 years, followed by those who had worked for less than 5 years and 11 – 20 years each with 25% responses. Above six years of working experience with the children are enough for the teachers to understand socio-emotional needs of those brought up by single mothers.

4.3 Relationship between Single Motherhood and Socio-Emotional Development of Children.

This study first sought to establish whether there is any statistical significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children. To achieve this objective the researcher first sought to establish the economic status of the single mothers interviewed. The responses were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Financial Status of Parents

Financial status	Frequency	Percent
Stable	4	30.0
Not stable	14	70.0
Total	18	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that majority (70%) of single parents interviewed were not financially stable and therefore were not able to cater for their children basic needs while only 30% were financially stable. The researcher further sought to establish the length of time the parents were working per day and whether they had quality time with their children. The responses were presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Length of Stay at Work

Time in hours	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5	2	10.0
5 – 8	3	15.0
More than 8	13	75.0
Total	18	100.0

Table 4.7 shows that 75% of the parents interviewed spend more than 8 hours at work hence lacking enough time to stay with their children. This was likely to affect the children's socio-emotional development.

The researcher further used Spearman's correlation coefficient to test whether there was statistically significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children. The responses were presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Relationship between Single Motherhood and Children's Social – Emotional Development

		Children's social -	
		Single	emotional
		motherhood	development
Single motherhood	Pearson		
	Correlation	1	0.86
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	30	30
Children's socio- – emotional development	Pearson		
	Correlation	0.86	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	30	30

Table 4.8 shows that there is a very strong positive correlation $r(1, 29) = 0.85, P < 0.05$, between single motherhood and children's socio-emotional development. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children. These results are in line with Jayson, (2009) who argues that, the quality of parent –child relationships are often measured by mothers' reports on the level of involvement, supervision, control, discipline and enjoyable times with their children. However, this may not be the case with single motherhood families. Many single mothers face the challenge of supporting their families financially, hence most of the time they spend at work places even working overtime to earn extra money. They arrive home late, exhausted, worn-out and stressed. This denies them quality time with their children since they may not have enough time to share their days' experiences, and this affects both the mother and the children in emotional build up (Lavie, 2004).

4.4 Role of Teachers and Caregivers in Promoting Socio-Emotional Development of Children

The study also sought to establish the role of teachers and caregivers in promoting socio-emotional development of children from single motherhood families. To achieve this objective first the parents were requested to indicate the social emotional problems associated with their children. The responses were presented in Table 4.9.

The researcher further sought to establish the roles of teachers in supporting socio – emotional development of children of single mothers. The responses were presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.9: Social Emotional Problems Associated with Children of Single Mothers

Problems	Often	Sometime	Rarely
Emotional stress	5(25%)	13(65%)	2(10%)
Criminal activities	2(10%)	3(15%)	15(75%)
Difficulties in school	3(15%)	10(50%)	7(35%)
Violent behavior	1(5%)	11(55%)	8(40%)
Self Esteem	9(45%)	8(40%)	3(15%)
Negative attitudes on life	2(10%)	5(25%)	13(65%)
Mean responses	4(20%)	8(40%)	8(40%)

Table 4.9 revealed that most (65%) of single mothers children suffer from emotional stress sometimes, often low self-esteem (45%) and sometime violent behavior (50%). However it was also noted from the data that most respondents (75%) indicated that the children rarely engage themselves in criminal activities. This implies that the teachers understood the emotional problems of the children and therefore were doing what they can to support them.

Table 4.10 Teachers Role in Supporting Social – Emotional Development of Children

Teachers' role	Practiced	Not Practiced
a) Being sensitive to their needs	10(83.3%)	2(16.7%)
b) Being attentive to them	11(91.7)	1(8.3%)
c) Building their confidence	8(66.7%)	4(33.3%)
d) Providing them with enough materials and time to play	6(50%)	6(50%)
e) Helping them cope with reality (single motherhood)	8(66.7%)	4(33.3%)
Mean responses	9(75%)	3(25%)

Table 4.10 shows that most (91.7%) of teachers indicated that they were attentive to the children of single mothers, 83.3% were sensitive to their needs, 66.7% were helping them cope with reality and build confidence while 50% were providing them with enough materials. These results explain the teachers' role in supporting socio– emotional development of children of single mothers.

The researcher further tested whether there was an association between teachers' role and socio– emotional development of children of single mothers using Chi-square test. The results were presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Chi-square Tests for Association between Teachers Role and Socio - Emotional Development

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.412 ^a	29	.001
Likelihood Ratio	12.111	29	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.01	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	30		

A42 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 7. The minimum expected count is .05.

Table 4.11 reveals that there was significant association ($\chi^2 (1, 4) = 51.412, p < 0.05$) between teachers' role and socio-emotional development of children of single mothers. This shows that teachers play a significant role in the socio-emotional development of children of single mothers. These results agree with Durnbusch & Gray, (1999) who argued that children from single motherhood face numerous challenges which may impact on their growth and development and teachers who deal with these children should take part in helping them in ensuring that each child's needs are catered for (Julie, Kelin, Nancy & Viven, 2000). You can promote socio-emotional development in your classroom by embedding your teaching practices throughout the day. Remaining sensitive to children's needs help them feel secure and confident, and act as a model for effective social behavior.

For example, asking questions to help children find a solution to a social conflict helps them develop problem –solving skills. Reading a story and engaging children in a conversation about a socially challenging situation can also serve as a lesson in handling social problems as well as in literacy.

4.5 Gender Differences and Socio- Emotional Development in Children from Single

Motherhood Families

The last objective for this study was to investigate whether there are statistically significant gender differences in socio- emotional development in children from single motherhood families. To achieve this objective the researcher required teachers to indicate the gender related socio- emotional traits displayed by boys and girls in single motherhood families which they have observed.

Table 4.12: Gender Differences and Socio- Emotional Development

Socio-emotional traits	Boys	Girls
a) At-risk behaviors e. drugs & alcohol	10(83.3%)	2(16.7%)
b) School difficulties e.g. getting low grades	5(51.7%)	7(48.3%)
c) Depression	4(33.3%)	8(66.7%)
d) Low self esteem	4(33.3%)	8(66.7%)
e) Aggressiveness	7(58.3)	5(41.7%)
f) Withdrawal	6(50%)	6(50%)
g) Antisocial	8(66.7%)	4(33.3%)

Table 4.12 shows that, majority (83.3%) of the respondents indicated that boys of single motherhood families have At-risk behaviors like drugs & alcohol, are Antisocial (66.7%) and have school difficulties (51.7%) compared to girls. On the other hand, girls from single mothers are more depressed and with low self esteem each (66.7) compared to boys. It was however noted that both girls and boys were equally affected in terms of withdrawal (50%).

To determine whether there are statistically significant gender differences in socio- emotional development in children from single motherhood families, the researcher used Chi-square test of association. The results were presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Chi- square Test for Association between Gender Differences and Socio-Emotional Development in Children from Single Motherhood Families

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.000 ^a	29	.000
Likelihood Ratio	24.470	29	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.007	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 42 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .14.

The results in Table 4.13 shows that there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families, ($\chi^2 (1, 29) = 35.0, p < 0.05$). These results agree with Hilton and Devall (2012) who argued that boys in single motherhood families may suffer from social challenges because these homes lack well rounded development that intact families enjoy. Single mothers are not as adept in rearing boys as they are in raising

girls. Single mothers may also invest less time and emotions in their sons than in their daughters, causing the boys to misbehave and act out especially in school. Boys exhibit at-risk behaviors such as getting low grades, skipping school or dropping out, and they often refuse to attend college or make choices that could affect their ability for greater economic opportunities in the future. The study found that boys in single parent homes would benefit from greater parental input and from having a greater number of positive home influence.

4.6 Children Observation Information

From the observation of the sampled 24 boys and 30 girls, the researcher established the following table 4.14;

Table 4.14: Children’s Observation Information

Items for Observation	Comments (Rated in percentage)	
	Girls	Boys
Interaction	80%	50%
Friendliness	90%	60%
Truancy	20%	20%
Aggressiveness	65%	70%
Self-esteem	75%	50%
Irritability	60%	60%
Coping with class work	80%	80%

The results in Table 4.14 show that there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families. From observation, majority of girls, 80%, interacted well with others while indoor and outdoor during learning and outdoor activities as compared to boys whose interaction rated 50%. 90% of girls were highly friendly in all what they did while the boys were 60% friendly. Both boys and girls were equal in truancy aspect each group with 20%. Boys were highly aggressive with a rate of 70% and girls with 65% in all their school activities meaning majority of boys were aggressive compared to girls. The boys and girls were equally irritable with 60% and both boys and girls equally coped with class work, 80%. 75% of girls and 50% of boys had high self esteem. This shows that boy's self esteem is highly affected by the absence of the father figure. The boys lack an identity to identify with and regardless of the mother's degree of provision, they feel incomplete and alone. This is in line with Eagan (2011) ideas who states that emotional effects are associated with fatherless boys. Mothers head a significant number of single –parent homes and in spite of mother's efforts to be present for their sons, boys might feel incomplete, alone, and that they lack a strong sense of identity. The need to belong might push them to join a group to get a sense of identity; in many cases, boys are more likely to be influenced towards substance abuse, truancy and crime. A single mother needs to be compassionate, patient, supportive and actively involved in seeking out activities and role models for her son to help him cope with feelings of anger, alienation, vulnerability and confusion he might experience (Hilton & Devall, 2012). Girls' self esteem isn't much affected at this early age by father's absence although this may affect them later in life.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children in Kalundu Zone schools, Kitui County. Three research objectives were to find out whether there is a statistically significant relationship between single motherhood and socio- emotional development of children, to establish the role of teachers and caregivers in promoting socio-emotional development of children from single motherhood families and lastly, to investigate whether there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families. The study used questionnaires to gather information from a sample of 12 teachers and 18 parents while checklists were used to gather information from 54 children. The collected data was analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The study established that majority (70%) of single parents interviewed were not financially stable and therefore were not able to cater for their children basic needs while only 30% were financially stable. The study also revealed that 75% of the parents interviewed spend more than 8 hours at work hence lacking enough time to stay with their children. This was likely to affect the children socio-emotional development. The study established that there is a very strong positive correlation $r(1, 29) = 0.85, P < 0.05$, between single motherhood and children's socio- emotional

development. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between single motherhood and socio-emotional development of children.

From objective two, the study established that most (65%) of single mothers' children suffer from emotional stress sometimes, often low self-esteem (45%) and sometime violent behavior (50%). However, the study noted that most respondents (75%) indicated that the children rarely engage themselves in criminal activities. The study also revealed that most (91.7%) of teachers indicated that they were attentive to the children of single mothers, 83.3% were sensitive to their needs, 66.7% were helping them cope with reality while 50% were providing them with enough materials. These results explain the teachers' role in supporting socio-emotional development of children of single mothers. The study also established that there was significant association ($\chi^2(1, 4) = 51.412, p < 0.05$) between teachers' role and socio-emotional development of children of single mothers.

The study revealed that majority (83.3%) of the respondents indicated that boys of single motherhood families have at-risk behaviors like drugs & alcohol, are antisocial (66.7%) and have school difficulties (51.7%) compared to girls. On the other hand, girls from single mothers are more depressed and with low esteem each (66.7%) compared to boys. It was however noted that both girls and boys were equally affected in terms of withdrawal (50%). The study also shows that there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families, ($\chi^2(1, 29) = 35.0, p < 0.05$).

5.3 Conclusions from the findings

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that most children of single mothers have more problems in their socio-emotional development than other families. The reason for

this was stated as lack of adequate income and time for the mothers as they take care of their children. The researcher also concluded that the teachers and care givers have a very major role in socio-emotional development of children from single motherhood families. This is because there is a significant association between teachers' role and socio-emotional development of children of single motherhood families.

The researcher finally concludes that there are statistically significant gender differences in socio-emotional development in children from single motherhood families. This is because boys of single motherhood families have At-risk behaviors like drugs & alcohol, are Antisocial and have school difficulties compared to girls.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings of this study the researcher made the following recommendations

- i. The teachers of children from single parents should be more sensitive to the social needs of the children and always be ready to assist them.
- ii. The single mothers should be sensitized in by schools on the importance of taking quality time with their children so that they do not learn negative socio-emotional and amoral behavior elsewhere to undertake positive socio-emotional behavior.
- iii. Schools should allow the single mothers who are not financially stable to pay school fees in installments so that their children can continue learning due to the fact that they are not economically stable.

5.5 Suggestions for further study

This study investigated the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of children in Kalundu Zone schools, Kitui County. Further research can be done on the following:-

- i. The relationship between time spend with children by parents and their socio-emotional development.
- ii. The influence of parents' character on socio-emotional development of children.
- iii. The effect of single fatherhood on the socio-emotional development of children.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction

Jacinta Philip

P.O BOX 906-90200

KITUI

Dear Sir/Madam.

RE; RESEARCH STUDY

I am a student from South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) Kitui Campus, pursuing Master of Education in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE). Currently, I am in the process of undertaking research on the Effects of Single Motherhood on Social and Emotional Development of children in Kalundu Zone, Kitui County.

I therefore kindly request to be granted permission to carry out the study in your school.

Yours Faithfully,

Jacinta Philip,

E/KIT/20402/2013.

MED Student,

SEKU Kitui –Campus.

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Parents

This questionnaire aims at investigating the effects of single motherhood on the socio-emotional development of children, 4-8 years in Kalundu Zone Schools, Kitui County. Please answer all the questions. Thank you in advance. The responses will be treated with a lot of confidentiality.

Do not write your name.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. What is your age?

20 and below

36 -45

21-35

45 and above

3. Marital status

Divorced

widowed

Never married

Remarried

4. What is your academic qualification?

Certificate

Diploma

Graduate

Others specify

5. Are you employed

Yes

No

6. What is your financial status?

Stable

Unstable

7. How many children do you have? _____

SECTION B: Effects of Single Motherhood on Social-Emotional Development of Children.

1. Does your economic status enable you to cater for your children's basic needs?

Yes

No.

2. How many hours do you spend in your work place every day?

Below 5 hours

5-8 hours

8 hours and above

3. Do you ever have quality time to hold dialogues with your children?

Yes

No

4. Apart from you, are there male figures in your family who your children look upon for support?

Yes

No

5. Who are they?

Step father

Grand father

Brother

Uncle

6. Do you think the absence of father figure in your home affects your children emotionally and socially?

Yes

No

Please explain how _____

7. Please indicate which social and emotional problems you think your children encounter.

Problems	Often (80% and above)	Sometime (50-80%)	Rarely (below 50%)
Emotional stress			
Criminal activities			
Difficulties in school			
Violent behavior			
Self Esteem			
Negative attitudes on life			

8. Do you think these problems can have negative outcomes on your children's lives?

Yes

No

9. Who among the children do you think are affected by fatherlessness the most?

Boys

Girls

10. The following are some gender related challenges faced by boys and girls in single mother families. Which one have you observed in your child?

Challenges	Boys	Girls
h) At-risk behaviors e. drugs & alcohol		
i) School difficulties e.g. getting low grades		
j) Crime e.g. stealing		
k) Low self esteem		
l) Antisocial		

11. Do your children share with you their social and emotional problems that they undergo?

Yes

No

12. Have you been taking these initiatives to help your child cope with his/her emotions?

Initiative	Yes	No
Engaging them in a conversation		
Being sensitive to their needs		
Being trustworthy		
Allowing them enough time to play		
Building a close relationship with them		

13. Do you think there is a big challenge in raising children alone and would need assistance from other caregivers and teachers?

yes

No

14. Do your son's / daughter's current school understand his/her situation?

No

Yes

15. Do you think the school is playing any role in promoting positive social and emotional development in your child?

Yes

No

Appendix C: Questionnaire for Teachers

This questionnaire will be intended to collect information on the effects of single motherhood on socio-emotional development of 4-8 years old children in Kalundu Zone, Kitui County. The responses will be treated with a lot of confidentiality. Please answer all the questions. Thank you in advance. Do not write your name.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Instructions: tick (✓) where appropriate

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. What is your age?

Below 25 years

36 -45 years

25-35 years

45 and above

3. Indicate your level of professional training

Certificate in ECDE

Diploma ECDE

Higher Diploma in ECDE

Higher Diploma in ECDE

Undergoing training

Others (specify)

4. What is your working experience in years?

Less than 5

6-10 years

11-20 years

20 and above

SECTION B: Single Motherhood and Socio-Emotional Development of Children.

5. Is the relationship of single mothers with their children different from that of children from two parents?

Yes

No

6. What is your opinion about development of social skills and expression of emotions as far as these children are concerned?

Very good Good Fair Poor

7. Do these children display these traits while in school?

Traits / Behaviors	Yes	No
a) Anxiety		
b) Happiness		
c) Aggression		
d) Low self esteem		
e) Antisocial		

8. The following are some gender related socio-emotional traits displayed by boys and girls in single motherhood families. Which ones have you observed in the children you are teaching?

Socio-emotional traits	Boys	Girls
m) At-risk behaviors e. drugs & alcohol		
n) School difficulties e.g. getting low grades		
o) Depression		
p) Low self esteem		
q) Aggressiveness		
r) Withdrawal		
s) Antisocial		

9. The following are some of the roles of teachers in supporting socio-emotional development of these children, indicate those practiced in your school and those not.

Teachers' role in supporting socio-emotional development of children of single mothers	Practiced	Not Practiced
f) Being sensitive to their needs		
g) Being attentive to them		
h) Building their confidence		
i) Providing them with enough materials and time to play		
j) Helping them cope with reality (single motherhood)		

10. From your view, who do you think are most affected in single motherhood?

Boys

Girls

11. Give your explanation to support your answer above.

Appendix D: Children Observation Schedule (4-8 years).

Items for Observation	Comments
Interaction with other children	
Friendliness	
Truancy	
Aggressiveness	
Self-esteem	
Irritability	
Coping with class work	