

## **Influence Of Type Of Single Parenthood On Student's Self Esteem In Selected Secondary Schools In Nakuru Municipality, Kenya**

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**ABSTRACT** :- Children from single parent families tend to be viewed as having low self esteem and challenges associated with it despite the fact that children from duo parent background are not immune to the same challenge. This study therefore aimed at establishing whether the type of single parenthood influences a student's self esteem from selected schools in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. It adopted the causal comparative research design. A total of 4257 Form 3 and Form 4 students comprised the population of the study. The study was carried out in 18 public secondary schools within Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. A sample size of 180 students, from single parent families took part in the study. Stratified and Purposive sampling techniques were used to obtain the sample. Data was collected by use of a questionnaire that included a self esteem test. Analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics including ANOVA. The level of significance was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 17. Findings of the study indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between the type of single parenthood and the levels of students' self-esteem ( $p > 0.05$ ). This then implies that effect on the self esteem of students in a single parenthood setup does not depend on the cause of the absent parent. The study recommended that since self-esteem is a concern for children from single parents, teachers, counselors, adults and other educational stakeholders should address the issue from a more holistic position and seek to come up with unique strategies to boost self esteem of each student's situation.

**Keywords** - *Influence, Self-esteem, single parenthood, duo parent, level of significance*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

There is an increasing rate of single parenting in Kenya and the world at large today, yet this type of parenthood is viewed negatively. This negative perception of single parenting by the Kenyan society implies that children brought up in such family structures may not get adequate acceptance, support and recognition from teachers, students and the society at large compared to children brought up in dual parent households. Indeed children from single parent households may be stigmatized which may adversely affect their self esteem and result in indiscipline, drug abuse and poor academic achievement. It is also important to note that low self esteem is not a preserve for children from single parent families. There exists a general condemnation of children from single parent households and much indiscipline, drug abuse, truancy among other ills tend to be attributed to them yet children from dual parent families may have similar challenge to contend with. This study therefore sought to determine the influence of type of single parenthood on student's self esteem among single and dual parent households.

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.1 Self-esteem: Meaning and how it is acquired**

Self-esteem has been defined differently by different writers. According to Harter, (1990), self-esteem is our evaluation of ourselves. Muchinsky (1989), defines self-esteem as the extent to which people see themselves as competent and needs satisfying. Maslow (1970), in his theory of hierarchy of needs, says that "satisfaction of the self-esteem needs leads to feeling of self-confidence, worth, strength capability and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness". Children cannot articulate a concept of self-worth at the age 8 years, but they show by their behaviour that they have one (Harter, 1990, 1993). In young children, self esteem - the judgement one makes about one's worth - is not based on a realistic appraisal of abilities or personality traits. Children between 4 years and 7 years usually overrate their abilities. Thus, children tend to accept the judgements of adults, who often give them positive, uncritical feedback (Harter, 1990).

Confidence is directly related to one's self-esteem. A background of stability and warm relationships, particularly in childhood, helps to boost self-esteem and confidence, but if things go wrong and one feels under stress, confidence can ebb away. It thus follows that low self-esteem can be a major factor in many problems

we experience (Powell 2000). Thus, underachievement, destructive relationships, chronic depression, and substance abuse have all been linked to a lack of positive self-esteem (Powell, 2000).

### **2.2 Influence of Single Parenthood on Children's Self-Esteem**

A number of indiscipline cases among children can be attributed to absent parents who abdicate their parental responsibilities to housemaids. Hence children lack adequate parental guidance in their character formation. Drafoo (1990), postulated that having insufficient bonding with parents, as well as parents who do not monitor, supervise, offer guidance, or communicate with their children, or who are either authoritarians or too permissive, are all strongly associated with children's indiscipline. In one study (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1999), contends that by encouraging some behaviours and discouraging others, parents transmit the culture's standard. In addition, the way they provide for their children's psychological need for attention and affection affects the child's behaviour, exerting a strong influence the kind of person he or she becomes.

### **III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To determine how the type of single parenthood influence a student's self esteem.

### **IV. HYPOTHESIS**

There is no statistically significant difference between types of single parenthood and student's self-esteem levels.

### **V. METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in 18 public secondary schools with a target population of 4257 comprising of form three and four secondary school boys and girls, in Nakuru Municipality. A sample of 180 students from single parent families took part in the study. Both purposive and stratified random sampling were used to get the sample for the study. The study adopted a causal- comparative research design. This design was appropriate for this study because it was used to explore causal relationships between levels of self-esteem among students from single parent families. A structured questionnaire which consisted of a self esteem test was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using inferential statistics mainly the ANOVA. The analysis was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17.

### **VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The objective of the research was to determine how the type of single parenthood influence a student's self esteem. Data was first analyzed using descriptive statistics to enable the researcher to describe and summarize the data. The individual self esteem mean scores for each type of single parenthood are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Means of students self esteem and type of single parenthood

<b>Type of single parenthood</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Death	91	56.95	39	75
Divorce/separation	40	58.20	41	75
Never got married	18	57.00	40	70
Abandonment	12	53.17	37	66
Imprisonment	3	61.67	42	74
No idea	16	59.56	46	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>57.29 *</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>75</b>

The mean score for self esteem levels of students brought up by single parents as a result of imprisonment, divorce/separation and single parents by choice, were relatively higher than those of other causes of single parenthood. This could mean that students in this type of single parenthood had their self esteem least affected as compared to other types of single parenthood. The results also indicated that the absence of the other parent as a result of death constituted the largest number of single parents (91 cases). This was followed by divorce/separation which had 40 cases. The lowest was single parenthood as a result of imprisonment with only 3 cases.

Table 2 ANOVA Determining Differences on the Influence of Types Single Parenthood on the Overall Self esteem Level of Students

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F Sig.</b>
Between Groups	.974	5	.195	.757 <sup>ns</sup> .582
Within Groups	44.776	174	.257	
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.750</b>	<b>179</b>		

denotes not significant at 0.05 level.

Findings in Table 2 indicate that  $F = .757$ ,  $P > 0.05$ . Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis that "there is no significant relationship between types of single parenthood and self esteem levels of students." As such then, this implies that effect on the self esteem of students in a single parenthood setup does not depend on the course of the absent parent. This research finding however disagrees with earlier researchers who found out that single parenthood resulting from divorce/separation and abandonment, rated highly in adversely affecting the self esteem of children as compared to other causes of single parenthood (Hamner & Turner, 1985). This difference in research findings can be explained by the fact that the cultural background of the sample population was different. Moreover, these researches were conducted in totally different environments. In addition, single parenthood is slowly gaining acceptance among many modern communities and consequently reducing the adverse effects previously associated with this type of family on children (Hamner & Turner, 1985).

## VII. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that type of single parenthood did not influence the overall self esteem levels of students. As such, the overall self esteem levels of students brought up by single parents was affected in the same manner irrespective of what caused the absence of the other parent.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study indicate that students from single parent households generally have low self esteem. Therefore, school counsellors, teachers and school administrators should endeavour to assist students from single parents, with an aim of raising their self esteem levels. Guidance and counselling programmes in schools and other learning institutions should be strengthened and supported so as to facilitate identification, understanding and assistance of students with special needs. Parents, teachers, school administrators and other caretakers of children should be encouraged to take charge of children's psychological, emotional, physiological, social and intellectual development of their children particularly during adolescence, when most young people are developing a sense of identity and hence prone to being rebellious. Adolescents from single parent families should be informed of the realities concerning their parent(s)' socio-economic status as this would help them have a positive attitude towards their parent(s) and as a result, have high regard about themselves, leading to high self esteem.

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