

Single Parental Status: Effects on Learners' Emotional Behaviour in Public Primary Schools in Kanduyi Sub County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The family is the stimulus behind the growth and development of an individual. Children emerge from different parental status, this include intact and single parental status. However in schools, learners from single parenthood display different emotional behaviour compared to those from intact parenthood. The objective of the study was to establish the effects of single parental status on learners' emotional behaviour. The study was guided by family systems theory and adopted comparative research design. The study targeted a total of 458 participants, including 440 standard eight learners (212 boys and 228 girls), 9 class teachers, and 9 guidance and counseling teachers from 9 public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub County, Bungoma County. The standard eight learners were selected due to their unique experiences and maturation, as well as their physical, mental, and emotional development, which enabled them to express themselves in a manner that was comparable to that of their peers in other classes. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain participants according to their gender; simple random sampling was used to give equal chance to all learners to participate in the study. Purposive sampling was employed to select class teachers and Guidance and Counselling teachers as key informants on matters concerning learners. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The study utilised content validity while reliability of the instruments was established by cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.697. Simple linear regression was used to analyse data. Data analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of single parenting on learners emotional behaviour $F(1,198)=4.731, p<0.05$. The findings revealed that single parenting negatively affected learner emotional behaviour since the $p\text{-value}<0.05$ hence the null hypothesis rejected. The study recommended for effective guidance and counselling services for learners from single parental status to help them improve on their emotional behaviour such as low self-esteem, aggression and anxiety while in school.

Keywords: Emotional Behaviour, Family Structure, Parental Status, Single Parent, Learners

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, single family structures come about as a result of choice, breakups or other separations. Studies suggest that rates of single parenthood may be relatively high globally with the following pathways leading into it: Divorce among partners, marriage against the wish, extra marital affairs, poverty, migrations to urban areas, denied paternity, rape, death of spouse, unintended pregnancy, single person adoption and Single mother by choice among other reasons (Nasir & Patil, 2019).

Amato (2011) posits that single parent households are more prone to exhibiting dysfunctional parenting styles and behaviours in contrast to intact families. Studies suggest that single parents experiencing poverty and depression often display parenting behaviours characterized by hostility, inattention, and harshness. As a result, they might employ severe disciplinary techniques, including corporal punishment, to impose stringent control over their children's conduct. This behaviour is frequently shaped by the complex dynamics typically linked to single-parent households.

Amato (2011) further revealed that single moms encounter challenges in maintaining their parental authority and exercising control over their children. These difficulties may arise from limited time or patience, the need for practical assistance and emotional support, or the fear of losing custody of their children. Additionally, it is demonstrated that the challenging environmental circumstances experienced by children from single-parent households have a profound impact on their emotional behaviour, thereby adversely affecting their happiness and self-esteem (Smith, 2023). According to Candelanza et al. (2021), children who have parents of this nature are prone to

experiencing difficulties with their self-esteem, displaying frequent behavioural disorders in the form of excessive concerns, scoring low in happiness, and exhibiting poor academic performance (Candelanza et al., 2021).

Niolon (2021) suggests that children aged 7-12 possess enhanced emotional expression and acceptance of parental separation. However, they frequently exhibit suspicion towards their parents, seek external assistance and encouragement, and may experience difficulties in social and scholastic domains. Adolescents have the poorest coping mechanisms when faced with divorce; they experience the greatest difficulty in adapting to the changes and may even completely distance themselves from their family, choosing to handle their circumstances independently. They frequently encounter difficulties in articulating emotions, akin to very young infants, and may experience challenges in establishing and maintaining long-term relationships as a result of these emotional struggles (Niolon, 2021).

Hoskins (2014) observes that the development of children is profoundly shaped by parenting processes, which can be assessed through various factors including family functioning, parental behavioral control, parental psychological control, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Family functioning pertains to the extent of emotional connectivity among family members, the efficacy of their communication, and their collaborative efforts in addressing challenges. Parental behavioral control encompasses the regulations and limitations that caregivers impose upon their offspring, alongside their understanding of the actions exhibited by their children. Parental behavioral control can be delineated into five distinct dimensions: the extent of parental knowledge regarding the child, the expectations set by parents concerning the child's behaviour, the level of parental oversight, the nature of disciplinary measures employed, and the anticipated adherence to rules by the child. Parental psychological control refers to the deliberate exertion of influence by parents, characterized by the intrusion into or manipulation of their children's emotions and cognitive processes. Studies indicate that enhanced family dynamics and effective behavioral regulation are positively associated with favourable psychological results in children. On the contrary, heightened levels of psychological control correlate with negative outcomes (Hoskins, 2014).

Anyakoha (2016) discovered that single parents can successfully support their children's education, as financial resources are available, regardless of the parents' gender or educational background. Single parents provide comprehensive support to their children in the realm of education. Single parents dedicate their efforts to inspire and uplift their children, even amidst their various commitments, professional responsibilities, and entrepreneurial endeavours.

A study conducted in South Africa by Davids et al. (2016) revealed that children from single-parent households exhibited a greater motivation towards intrinsic goals and aspirations, demonstrating performance levels comparable to those of their peers from dual-parent families. This would facilitate their success as they strive to achieve established objectives and assume accountability for their actions.

The prevalence of single parenting in Kenya has risen and has also been accepted more widely. Offspring of single parents have likewise accomplished various milestones in life. A study conducted in Taita Taveta by Magara (2017) revealed a correlation between the educational status of single parents and the academic attainment of their children. The research indicated that single parents allocated minimal or no time to oversee their children's academic performance, while also uncovering that larger family sizes adversely affected students' performance. Due to the parent's lack of time to oversee and evaluate their children's performance.

A further investigation conducted in Nyeri revealed that both single and dual parents recognized the advantages of their participation in their children's educational activities, expressing a desire for increased involvement. The research additionally revealed a significant shortcoming in parental engagement, as there were instances where parents did not visit the school whatsoever (Ndirangu & Kibaara, 2014). This study sought to examine the effects of single parental status on the emotional behaviour of learners in public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub County, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the implications of single parental status on children's emotional behaviour, especially within educational contexts. Research indicates that children raised in single-parent households frequently encounter emotional and psychological difficulties, such as diminished self-esteem, heightened anxiety, and challenges in forming peer relationships, all of which can profoundly influence their academic success and general well-being (Amato, 2005). The occurrence of single parenthood in Kenya has been on the rise, primarily influenced by factors including divorce, separation, and the demise of one parent. This phenomenon has resulted in a considerable proportion of children being nurtured in single-parent households, thereby necessitating a thorough examination of how these familial structures impact the emotional growth of learners. In Kanduyi Sub County, Bungoma County, public primary schools have observed instances of behavioral challenges among students, with educators linking a significant number of these issues to the difficulties encountered by children from single-parent households. Notwithstanding these observations, there exists a paucity of empirical research aimed at investigating the

particular emotional ramifications of single parental status on learners within this framework. Prior research conducted in Kenya has predominantly concentrated on the academic outcomes associated with various family structures (Kimani & Kombo, 2010). However, there exists a significant gap in understanding the emotional and behavioral effects that single-parent households exert on primary school learners. The existing gap is intensified by the absence of localized studies that take into account the distinct socio-cultural and economic factors inherent in rural sub-counties like Kanduyi. This study aims to address the existing gap by investigating the impact of single parental status on the emotional behaviour of students in public primary schools located in Kanduyi Sub County. This research aims to enhance comprehension of the impact that single-parent family dynamics have on children's emotional well-being in this region, while also guiding the formulation of supportive strategies within the educational setting. Therefore, this study examined the effects of single parental status on the emotional behaviour of learners in public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub County, Kenya.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of single parental status on learners' emotional behaviour.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The researcher engaged Kerr and Bowen (1988) Family systems theory. Kerr and Bowen defined the family as a complex social system in which members interacted to influence each other's behaviour. They argued that it was advantageous to focus on the family as a whole other than individual components. The intact family was considered complete with father, mother and children whereas single parent family with either mother or father and their children was considered an incomplete family. They posited that children could inherit many types of challenges as well as strengths from their parents. In relation to the study, the experiences that children went through in single parent homes was what affected them emotionally and what shaped their behaviour.

2.2 Empirical Review

Presently, the causes of single parenthood encompass divorce, familial dissolution, desertion, the demise of the other parent, childbirth by an unmarried individual or unplanned pregnancy, and single person adoption (Shimfe & Wajim, 2020).

Schmuck (2013) from Brigham Young University conducted a study on single parenting and found that the negative impacts on children's behaviour were not as significant as believed in the United States. The study utilized the Single Parents' Stress theory. The theory emphasized that single parents faced several obligations on their own, resulting in a high occurrence of stressors that led to reduced parental warmth, involvement in their child's life, and support.

A study conducted by Gunarti and Rezka (2017) in Surabaya, Indonesia on parenting techniques of single parents and their impact on the social and emotional development of young children, concluded that the family played a crucial role as the initial environment that children identify and as a builder of their character.

Based on the researches conducted by Chandra (2010); Creech (2014); Moeller (2015), established that children who were abandoned by their parents were more prone to experiencing a rise in emotional behavioural and social difficulties, along with a decline in their academic performance. The studies additionally showed that schools exerted a substantial influence on regulating children's behaviour. This had a profound impact on children who were abandoned by their parents, necessitating increased attention. The sources included: Lester (2010), Osofsky & Molinda (2013) and Trauttman (2015).

Tubei (2012) conducted a study in the municipality of Eldoret, Kenya. The study aimed to ascertain the impact of single parenting on the psychological well-being of secondary school students. The study examined the impact of single parenting on the emotional well-being, self-esteem, self-discipline, and attitudes towards marriage among adolescents in secondary schools. The study employed a causal comparative research strategy. A total of 281 children from form 2 and 3 were chosen as the sample from the 10 schools. The questionnaires were utilized to gather data from the pupils. The findings indicated that there was no statistically significant disparity in the psychological well-being of adolescents hailing from single parent households compared to those from households with both parents present. The study exclusively focused on adolescents enrolled in secondary schools and solely relied on questionnaires for data gathering. The present study examined the emotional behaviour of students from single-parent families. The researchers utilized Kerr and Bowen family systems theory to guide the comparative research design. Stratified simple random and purposive sampling methods were employed to select participants. Two data collection

instruments, questionnaires and interviews were used to gather information from students studying in public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub-County, Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in public primary schools located in Kanduyi Sub County, Bungoma County, Kenya. The Sub County is bordered by Webuye to the east, Kabuchai to the north, and Bumula Sub County to the west. The location was chosen due to its status as the most populous urban sub county with the highest concentration of primary institutions. Furthermore, the sub-county is home to a variety of ethnic groups, each of which has significant cross-cutting family structures. The study area's urban orientation resulted in a high rate of sexual interactions, which led to unplanned pregnancies, family separations, unstable marriages, and family divorce. This has resulted in a significant number of single and intact parental statuses, where the children of both families attend the same schools and classes

3.2 Research Design

We utilized comparative research design conducted in public primary schools located in Kanduyi Sub County, Kenya.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted a total of 458 participants, including 440 standard eight learners (212 boys and 228 girls), 9 class teachers, and 9 guidance and counseling teachers from 9 public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub County, Bungoma County. The standard eight learners were selected due to their unique experiences and maturation, as well as their physical, mental, and emotional development, which enabled them to express themselves in a manner that was comparable to that of their peers in other classes.

3.4 Sample size and Sampling Procedure

Stratified sampling was employed to select learners based on their gender and parental status. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure that every student in standard eight had an equal opportunity to take part in the study. The researcher inscribed numbers on the pieces of paper, after which both girls and boys were granted permission to select. The individuals who selected the fortuitous number took part in the research. Purposive sampling selected the class teachers and the guidance and counselling teachers since they were the key informants on matters concerning learners' behaviour. This was conducted in every school that the researchers visited. The sample size consisted of 205 learners, 9 class teachers and 9 GAC teachers selected from public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub County.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

This study utilized data collected through self-administered questionnaires given to the learners selected for the study. In addition, interviews were administered to class teachers and GAC teachers to collect data that was corroborated with information obtained through questionnaires.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Content validity was used to ensure all items in the questionnaires were centred on the same subject of knowledge. A reliability assessment was performed to ascertain the precision of the data gathering instruments. The coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and it yielded a reliability index as follows: self-esteem 0.68, anxiety 0.72, and aggression 0.69. This gave an average of 0.697 that was found suitable with regard to the study.

3.7. Data Processing and Analysis

The study aimed at establishing the effects of single parental status on learners' emotional behaviour. We performed simple linear regression analysis to establish the effects of single parenthood on the emotional behaviour of learners in public primary schools in Kanduyi Sub County.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographics

The demographic information of the respondents are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Data of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Per cent
Male (Boys)	65	32.5
Female (Girls)	135	67.5
Total	200	100
Age in Years		
10-11	4	2
12-13	87	43.5
14-15	103	51.5
16-17	6	3
Total	200	100
Birth Position		
1st Born	69	34.5
2nd Born	53	26.5
Middle Born	72	36
Last Born	6	3
Total	200	100
Parental Marital status		
Single	58	29
Both Parents	142	71
Total	200	100

Table 1 shows the gender, age, birth position and parental status of the learners. Based on the information, 65 learners (32.5%) were male learners while the remaining 135 (67.5%) were female. The age distribution of the group was as follows: 2% of the learners were between 10-11 years old, 43.5% were between 12-13 years old, 51.5% were between 14-15 years old and the remaining 3% were between 16-17 years old. Majority of the learners were either first born or middle born, with first borns being 69 (34.5%) and middle borns comprised of 72 (36%) of the total. The second and last borns accounted for 53 (26.5%) and 6 (3%) of the total. In terms of parental status 29% came from single parented homes.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics for Parental Status

The researcher sought to understand the status of parental status. The respondents were asked to rate statements from strongly disagree to strongly Agree. The results are summarised in Table 2.



Table 2
Learners' Parental Status

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Std. Dev.	Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Learners from single-parent homes tend to withdraw from social activities with their peers.	9	4.5%	9	4.5%	27	13.5%	155	77.5%	1	3
Learners from single-parent families find it harder to trust their teachers and peers.	29	14.5%	33	16.5%	64	32.0%	74	37.0%	1	2
Single-parented learners are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviours in social settings.	14	7.0%	16	8.0%	32	16.0%	138	69.0%	1	2
Learners from single-parent households tend to feel isolated from their classmates.	12	6.0%	32	16.0%	44	22.0%	112	56.0%	1	2
Single-parented learners frequently express hopelessness about their academic future.	9	4.5%	20	10.0%	37	18.5%	134	67.0%	1	2
Learners from single-parent households tend to have poor attendance records.	34	17.0%	33	16.5%	54	27.0%	79	39.5%	1	2
Single-parented learners frequently display defiant behaviour towards authority figures.	13	6.5%	13	6.5%	50	25.0%	124	62.0%	1	2

A considerable proportion (77.5%) firmly concurs that students hailing from single-parent households often exhibit a tendency to disengage from social interactions with their contemporaries. This suggests that children from these backgrounds might encounter difficulties in social interactions, potentially stemming from emotional distress or insufficient parental support in fostering social engagement. The average score of 3 indicates that respondents predominantly concurred or expressed strong agreement with this statement. The status of being a single parent could significantly restrict children's opportunities for social engagement, which may have implications for their emotional growth and relationships with peers. A significant proportion of respondents (69%) concur or strongly concur that students hailing from single-parent households experience greater difficulty in establishing trust with their educators and fellow students. The absence of trust may stem from emotional difficulties encountered within the home environment, potentially resulting in a struggle to cultivate significant connections beyond familial ties. A mean score of 2 indicates a propensity for agreement, albeit with a subset of respondents expressing dissenting views. The presence of trust issues among learners can significantly affect their interactions with educators and fellow students, thereby obstructing their social and emotional growth.

A significant proportion (69%) firmly concur that learners from single-parent households are more prone to display aggressive behaviours in social contexts. This may represent an expression of frustration, a lack of emotional equilibrium, or unfulfilled emotional requirements. The average score of 2 indicates a general consensus among respondents that learners from single-parent households exhibit elevated levels of aggression. In social contexts, aggression may serve as a coping strategy for these individuals, potentially exacerbating their alienation from peers and obstructing constructive social engagements.

A majority, specifically 56%, express strong agreement that students hailing from single-parent households often experience a sense of isolation from their peers, while an additional 22% also concur with this observation. This illustrates a widespread feeling of isolation that can impact one's emotional health. The average score of 2 suggests a consensus, yet a significant minority (22%) holds a differing perspective. The experience of isolation may lead to emotional turmoil, potentially diminishing self-worth and heightening susceptibility to academic setbacks or disengagement from educational pursuits.

A significant portion (67%) firmly concurs that learners from single-parent households often convey a sense of hopelessness regarding their academic prospects. The absence of emotional support and guidance from both parents may result in diminished optimism regarding their educational prospects. The average score of 2 indicates that respondents predominantly concur that these learners experience a sense of hopelessness. Experiencing hopelessness can significantly constrain learners' motivation and ambition for academic success, resulting in disengagement and diminished academic performance.



Over 60% of participants concur or strongly concur that students from single-parent households often exhibit subpar attendance records. This could stem from insufficient oversight or emotional challenges that impact their engagement in academic activities. A mean score of 2 suggests that inadequate attendance is a significant pattern observed among students from single-parent households. Inadequate attendance may serve as an indicator of academic underperformance, perpetuating a cycle of emotional turmoil and educational challenges.

A significant majority (62%) express strong agreement that learners from single-parent households often exhibit defiant behaviour towards authority figures. This may serve as a reaction to the absence of organization or regulation within the household, or as an emotional response to the difficulties encountered. The average score of 2 points indicates a consensus that defiance poses a challenge for learners from single-parent households. Resistance to authority figures can lead to disciplinary challenges within the educational environment, subsequently impacting the academic and social development of these students.

The findings indicate that individuals from single-parent households in Kanduyi Sub County are predisposed to encountering emotional difficulties, including social withdrawal, trust issues, aggression, isolation, hopelessness, poor attendance, and defiance. The observed behaviours may indicate the emotional distress stemming from the absence of one parent, potentially leading to a deficiency in emotional and psychological support. Addressing these emotional behaviours necessitates interventions at both the educational institution and community level, encompassing counseling, mentorship initiatives, and enhanced support for single-parent households.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics for Learners’ Emotional Behaviour

The researcher sought to understand the status of parental status. The results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3
Status of Learners’ Emotional Behaviour

	Not at all like		not much like		Like		Very much like		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Always making fun when in good mood	7	3.5%	21	10.5%	53	26.5%	119	59.5%	2	1
Ready to ask in case of anything	14	7.0%	27	13.5%	54	27.0%	105	52.5%	2	1
I care for others feelings	10	5.0%	29	14.5%	68	34.0%	93	46.5%	2	1
Accept others views	26	13.0%	46	23.0%	49	24.5%	79	39.5%	2	1
I join peers in church activities	19	9.5%	24	12.0%	37	18.5%	120	60.0%	2	1
I show hygiene skills suitable for my age	6	3.0%	14	7.0%	52	26.0%	128	64.0%	3	1
Peers and friends help me when I ask them	14	7.0%	39	19.5%	51	25.5%	96	48.0%	2	1
Enjoy doing activities I like	4	2.0%	8	4.0%	30	15.0%	158	79.0%	3	1
I like sharing my problems with others who can help me	18	9.0%	24	12.0%	57	28.5%	101	50.5%	2	1
Am happy and accept the closeness of other	18	9.0%	36	18.0%	52	26.0%	94	47.0%	2	1
Am aware of how I feel	15	7.5%	15	7.5%	40	20.0%	130	65.0%	2	1
Am aware of what I can do best	5	2.5%	12	6.0%	30	15.0%	153	76.5%	3	1
Talk well with my brothers and sisters	21	10.5%	23	11.5%	62	31.0%	94	47.0%	2	1
Am well liked with my peers	12	6.0%	31	15.5%	62	31.0%	95	47.5%	2	1
I like listening to others	7	3.5%	27	13.5%	71	35.5%	95	47.5%	2	1
Am concerned about others	14	7.0%	33	16.5%	53	26.5%	100	50.0%	2	1
Accepts when am in the wrong	13	6.5%	28	14.0%	59	29.5%	100	50.0%	2	1
Participating in family activities is my joy	13	6.5%	12	6.0%	50	25.0%	125	62.5%	2	1
Always joyful	8	4.0%	34	17.0%	63	31.5%	95	47.5%	2	1
Always keen on what goes on in my life	7	3.5%	16	8.0%	49	24.5%	128	64.0%	2	1
Take life positively	13	6.5%	22	11.0%	70	35.0%	95	47.5%	2	1
Am loving towards others	7	3.5%	34	17.0%	62	31.0%	97	48.5%	2	1
I speak the right language to the right people	7	3.5%	16	8.0%	37	18.5%	140	70.0%	3	1

The respondents were asked to rate statements from strongly disagree to strongly Agree as shown in Table 3. The majority of respondents (59.5%) express a pronounced affinity for humour when in a positive state, suggesting a notable prevalence of joy and wit among the learners. The literature indicates that children from single-parent

households frequently cultivate resilience via peer interactions, serving as a coping mechanism for emotional challenges

A significant portion of the respondents (47.5%) express a sense of being highly respected by their peers, indicating that numerous learners in the study cultivate robust social connections, even in the face of potentially difficult home circumstances. Studies indicate that constructive peer relationships may mitigate the emotional challenges faced by children from single-parent households.

A noteworthy proportion (65%) possesses awareness of their emotions, a fundamental aspect of emotional intelligence. Emotional awareness is frequently developed in settings that promote the expression of feelings among children. Research suggests that children raised in single-parent households may face challenges in emotional regulation when compared to their peers from two-parent families, especially in instances where parental involvement is minimal. The study findings are in line with (Amato, 2005).

The data indicates that 50.5% of individuals are inclined to disclose their issues to others, a practice that can serve as a vital strategy for navigating emotional difficulties. Research regarding emotional behaviour indicates that the lack of one parent may lead children to depend more on teachers and peers for emotional support (Cefai & Cooper, 2010).

A significant proportion (47.5%) of respondents demonstrate an optimistic perspective on life. Children raised in single-parent households often develop an early capacity to navigate life's challenges, which can result in resilience and constructive emotional responses (Hetherington, 2003). Nevertheless, certain research indicates that children from single-parent households might also encounter pessimism if their emotional needs are insufficiently addressed within the home environment.

Approximately half of the learners express apprehension regarding the well-being of others, which corresponds with the cultivation of social responsibility. Research suggests that children raised in single-parent households may cultivate empathy and a sense of social responsibility, as they frequently assume increased responsibilities at home, which can contribute to their emotional maturity (Spiteri et al., 2014).

A significant proportion (62.5%) of learners find pleasure in engaging in family activities, indicating that a considerable number continue to partake in enriching familial interactions. Nevertheless, current studies (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001) indicate that children from single-parent families frequently encounter emotional difficulties stemming from diminished familial involvement, particularly when the parent is overwhelmed by financial and caregiving responsibilities.

This aspect reveals a varied reaction, with 47% expressing a strong preference for effective communication with their brothers and sisters. Robust sibling relationships frequently serve as a vital support system for children hailing from single-parent households, offering emotional stability and companionship.

A significant portion of respondents, specifically 47.5%, indicate experiencing joy, suggesting an overall favorable emotional disposition. Nonetheless, studies indicate that children raised in single-parent households may conceal their emotional turmoil through expressions of joy or various coping mechanisms (Furstenberg & Kiernan, 2001). One must critically evaluate whether these responses signify authentic emotional well-being or merely serve as coping mechanisms.

Approximately half of the respondents demonstrate a readiness to acknowledge their errors, reflecting a commendable level of emotional maturity. Research indicates that children raised in single-parent households may cultivate self-discipline and emotional independence at an earlier stage, attributed to the heightened responsibilities they encounter.

Research suggests that children from single-parent families are more likely to experience emotional and behavioral issues compared to those from two-parent households due to factors such as financial stress, less parental supervision, and emotional strain (Amato, 2005). However, resilience and adaptive behaviours, such as the development of strong peer relationships and a positive outlook on life, are also common among these children.

In summary, the data indicates that while many learners exhibit positive emotional behaviours (e.g., joy, awareness of feelings, good peer relationships), underlying challenges such as coping mechanisms and emotional vulnerability may exist, especially considering the potential strain of being raised in a single-parent household. These findings align with existing literature on emotional and behavioral development in children from single-parent families. Further interventions, such as increased emotional support from teachers and peers, could enhance emotional well-being in this group.

4.1.3 Regression Analysis for the Effects of Single Parental Status on Learners' Behaviour

The researcher sought to test the effect of single-parenthood status on learners' behaviour. The results for the regression are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.153a	0.023	0.018	0.374	1.729

Predictors: (Constant), students with single parent

b. Dependent Variable: Emotional Behaviour

Table 5

Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the Effects of Single Parental Status on Learners' Behaviour

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.663	1	0.663	4.731	.031b
	Residual	27.762	198	0.14		
	Total	28.425	199			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.321	0.031		73.849	.000
	students with single parental status	-0.127	0.058	-0.153	-2.175	0.031

a Dependent Variable: Emotional Behaviour

b Predictors: (Constant), students with single parents

The R square value from the model summary in table 4 is 0.023. This indicates that a one unit change in single parental status explains 2.3% of the differences in learners' emotional behaviour. Results of the Simple Linear Regression test, as presented in Table 4, showed that the proposed simple linear regression model was a suitable match for the research dataset. This was demonstrated by the statistical values of $F(1, 198) = 4.731$ and $P < 0.05$. The regression coefficient analysis revealed that the value of β was -0.127 , with a corresponding t-value of -2.175 . The p-value was less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance.

The independent variable of single parenting had a significant impact on the dependent variable of emotional behaviour with a percentage of 0.023(2.3%). This was because single parented learners faced fundamental challenges related to their basic needs such as food, clothing and health care. However they had freedom to express their problems in any environment and were provided assistance to alleviate their stress and enhance their psychological wellbeing.

Concerning single parental status the outcome from interview with class teachers revealed that as much as there existed a number of learners from single parented backgrounds; they were embraced in school through guidance and counselling as well as provision of basic needs like food, uniform and medication. A respondent said

"Besides the learners being assisted through constant guidance and counselling, they are provided with lunch, uniform and medication as well as supported financially. 'Tunawasaidia tu sasa tufanyeje?'"(Class Teacher Respondent).

Qualitative data from interviews with class teachers revealed that equal psychological support given to learners by teachers was corroborated by guidance and counselling teachers who equally provided counselling services to all learners.

On the same note, the interview with guidance and counselling teachers revealed that as much as they had encountered learners from single parent backgrounds, a number of them were open to share in case of the challenges incurred while at school, though not all. As respondents reported;

"Learners are open to share the challenges they go through as long as they have developed trust, though not all. Some fear to talk about their issues, which can only be learnt through their peers who want to assist them" (Guidance and Counselling Teacher).

4.2 Discussions

The study found out that girls were the majority compared to boys. This indicated that the majority of the learners in the school and in standard eight were girls. Based on the age, it was evident that the majority of the respondents, 51.5%, were within the range of 14 and 15 years while on the same note it was inferred that the majority of the participants were eldest siblings.

The results of this study were consistent with those of Tubei (2012), who showed in her research that there was no notable distinction in the psychological behaviour of students based on their single parental status. The study demonstrated that there was no significant difference in the emotional levels of students from single parent families and those from two parent families.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The study found out that single parental status significantly affected emotional behaviour of learners in public primary school in Kanduyi Sub County, Kenya negatively. This is based on the assumption that single parents were overwhelmed in the upbringing of the children, perhaps due to stereotypes and negative profiling from the community.

5.2. Recommendation

Finally the study recommended for effective guidance and counselling for learners from single parental status to help them improve on their emotional behaviour such as low self-esteem, aggression and anxiety while in school.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no undue interests that may have comprised the outcome of the study.

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