

**THE INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF UGANDA
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

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CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my own work and it has not been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Signature 

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Date: 18/05/2026

APPROVAL

I approved that this research was written under my supervision.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of single parenting on the academic performance of university students at Uganda Christian University, Mukono Campus. The study was guided by three objectives: to examine students' perceptions of single parenting and academic performance, to identify the challenges faced by students from single-parent households, and to explore the coping strategies they use to achieve academic success. A qualitative research approach was used, and data were collected through interviews with 20 undergraduate students who were raised in single-parent families. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common experiences and views among the participants.

The findings revealed that students held different perceptions about single parenting. While some viewed it as a challenge due to financial difficulties, emotional stress, and limited parental support, others considered it a source of motivation and personal growth. The study also found that financial constraints, emotional challenges, and social stigma were the major factors affecting students' academic performance. Despite these difficulties, students adopted coping strategies such as effective time management, participation in group discussions, seeking counselling, relying on social support, and maintaining a positive attitude. The study concludes that single parenting does not automatically lead to poor academic performance, as academic success depends on the support available to students and their ability to overcome challenges. The study recommends strengthening counselling services and support systems for students from single-parent households.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, justification of the study and theoretical frame framework. The study aimed at assessing the influence of single parenting on the academic performance of university students, a case study of Uganda Christian University, Mukono campus.

1.1 Background of the study

The family is traditionally considered the most fundamental unit of society and is held accountable for shaping a child's behavior, character, and academic excellence (Elechi et al., 2018). Traditionally, a family consists of two parents, the mother and the father, who come together to nurture and support their children. However, social and economic transformations have led to the emergence of one-parent families worldwide (Finley & Schwartz, 2006). Single parenting is when either one of the parents, due to reasons of divorce, separation, death, or choice, bears the sole responsibility of raising a child in the absence of the other parent (Households, 2016).

In the majority of African societies, such as in Uganda, the phenomenon of single parenting is on the rise due to high rates of divorce, mortality from diseases like HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, and labour migration. In Uganda, nearly every fifth household is headed by a single parent, the majority being females (*No Title*, 2022).

The academic performance of university students is a matter of growing concern since it directly contributes to their professional achievements and future contributions to national progress. Students brought up by single parents may encounter personal, emotional, psychological, and financial issues that impact their academic performance (Campbell, 2021). Negative concentration and stress can be caused by the lack of parental care, poor availability of resources, and emotional instability, thus impacting academic performance.

However, not all students from single-parent households underperform or lack support from their parents. Some are extremely resilient and develop coping strategies enabling them to excel academically despite adversity. The mixed findings in previous studies raised important questions about how single parenting actually affects the academic performance of university students, the challenges they experience and the ways they cope to achieve success (Jayatilake et al, 2023).

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the influence of single parenting on the academic performance of university students focusing on their perceptions, challenges they face and coping strategies they use to succeed academically.

1.2 Statement of the problem

University education is a critical stage of professional and personal development, and it requires emotional stability, economic support, and family support (Vannest & Vannest, 2022). Single-parent students are likely to experience issues such as inadequate financial support, emotional distress, and poor family involvement, which all affect their academic performance (Anton et al., 2015).

Despite the growing percentage of single-parent students in Ugandan universities, fewer studies have been conducted to identify the impact of single parenting on their

academic achievement(Kakuru et al., 2019). Although most of the past research was at primary and secondary levels, the trajectory in the higher institutions of learning was unknown.

If the policymakers and universities do not have such data, they may fail to design an effective support system for such students. This study thus seeks to investigate the impact of single parenting on the academic performance of university students, to identify the specific issues they face, and to explore the coping mechanisms they employ to survive.

1.3 Purpose of the study

To examine how single parenting influences the academic performance of university students.

1.4 Research objectives

1. To examine the perception about single parenting and academic performance of university students.
2. To identify the challenges faced by university students from single-parent households that affect their academic performance.
3. To assess the coping strategies university students from single parent households use to achieve academic success.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the perceptions of university students regarding single parenting and its effect on academic performance?

2. What challenges do university students from single parent households face that influence their academic performance?

3. What coping strategies do university students from single parent households use to achieve academic success?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out at Uganda Christian University, Mukono campus. The university has students from different family backgrounds which made it suitable for examining issues about single parenting and academic performance.

1.6.2 Content scope

The study focused on student's perceptions of single parenting, challenges they faced and coping strategies they used to succeed in academics.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study covered academic year 2023 to 2025. This period reflects the current experiences of university students from single parent households.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is important because it will help to increase the understanding of how family structure affects academic performance at university level. It will provide information about the challenges faced by students from single parent families and how they cope with them.

The findings will also be useful to policy makers, social workers and NGOs to design programs and interventions that support students from single parent households. It

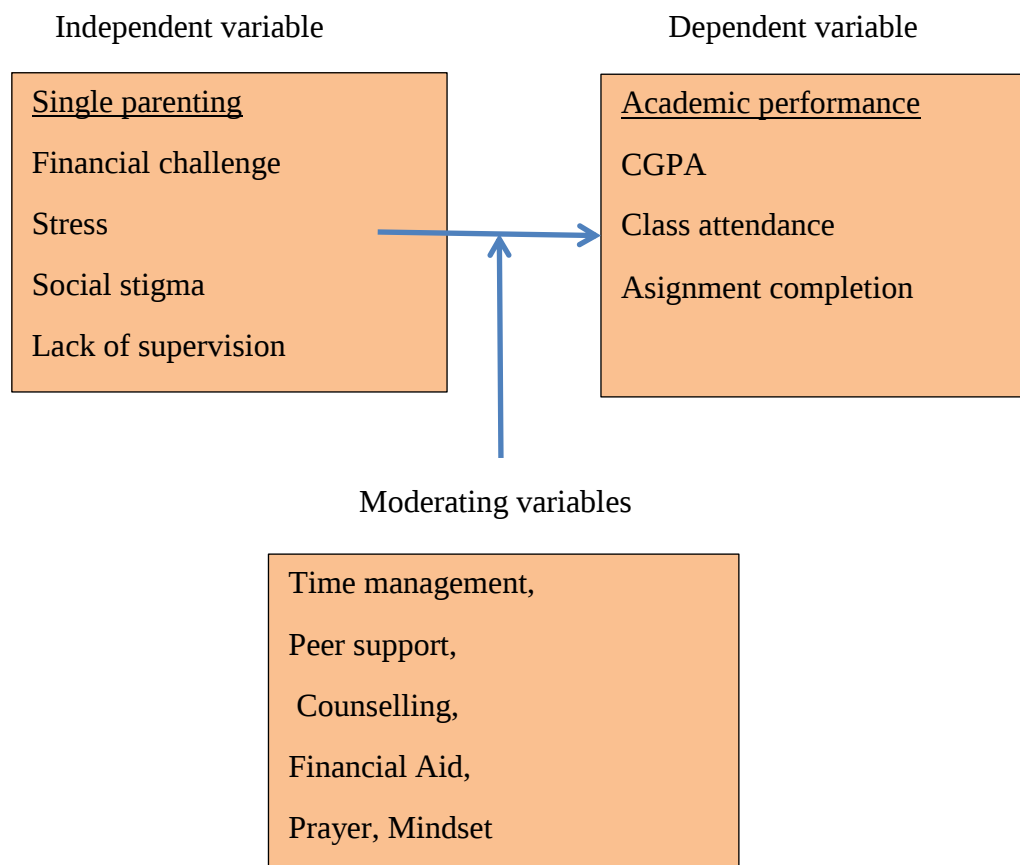
will also contribute to academic knowledge by providing data that can be used to for future research on family structure and education.

1.8 Justification

Single parenting is a growing social problem that impacts the growth and success of young people. Although most research focuses on children in primary and secondary schools, there has been inadequate focus on university students who are more responsible and independent. This study is necessary since it addresses this gap by providing statistics and data that can help universities understand and support students from single parent families.

Moreover, understanding how such students accommodate can help educators, counselors, and policymakers design interventions that promote equal academic opportunities and well being.

1.9 Conceptual framework



1.10 Theoretical framework

Developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, Ecological Systems Theory highlights that personal development is shaped by multiple layers of environmental systems, from immediate surroundings to broader societal influences (Ecol-, 2013). These systems include immediate settings such as family, school, and peers (Microsystem), interactions between these microsystems, like the family-school relationship (Mesosystem), and external environments that indirectly impact the individual, such as parents' workplace (Ecosystem) (Popa et al., 2020).

In single parent and achievement settings, this theory helps explain how different systems influence a student's education. For example, a single-parent home (microsystem) might face economic challenges or limited parental availability, while societal attitudes about single parenting (macrosystem) could affect the support and resources offered. The theory encourages us to consider the interconnected factors family, school, community, and culture that impact the academic success of university students from single-parent families.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the current literature related to the impact of single parenting on the performance of university students. So, this chapter will examine the current literature based on the objectives of this research outlined in previous chapters, including the perceptions of single parenting, challenges experienced by university students from single-parent families, and strategies used to overcome to attain academic success. Additionally, this chapter will establish this research within the current body of literature, hence establishing a gap for conducting this research.

2.1 The Concept of Single Parenting

Single parenting is depicted as a situation where a child, together with other minors, is brought up by one parent because of factors like divorce, separation, death, out-of-wedlock conception, or choice (Households, 2016). Unlike a two-parent family system, in a single-parent family, there is a focus on one person being responsible for care, economic, and emotional support (Study et al., 2015).

Globally, there has been a rise in lone parent families as a result of modernization, changes in marriage patterns, urbanization, and the acceptance of non-traditional families (Jain, 2019). In Africa, single parenthood has often been linked to widowhood, teenage motherhood, work migration, and marital fragility (Clark &

Hamplová, 2013). In Uganda, single parenthood has been mainly female-led and has often been associated with vulnerability and resource constraint.

Single-parent families are not necessarily dysfunctional; nonetheless, the problems emanating from the structure and context of single parenting could have implications for the education of the children, especially in higher education, where the academic rigor and autonomy are considerable (Farrington, 2002).

2.2 Perceptions about Single Parenting and Academic Performance of University Students

Perception is how individuals interpret a phenomenon based on their experience. The perception of single parenting among university students significantly influences their self-esteem and performance (Kessie, 2023).

Various studies suggest that the experience of single parenthood is generally looked upon negatively due to certain stereotypes that link it with lack of discipline, emotional instability, and underachievement (Kerubo, 2017). Students from single-parent families tend to incorporate these perceptions within themselves, hence developing the feeling that they lack confidence and tend to feel isolated (Kim et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, there is evidence of a complex approach, in which some learners embrace single parenting as a sign of autonomy, resilience, and responsibility, which has a positive impact on their learning attitude and behavior (Taylor & Conger, 2017). In an African setup, extended family and community support can play a role in regulating negative views, enabling learners to treat single parenting as a normal social reality rather than a weakness (Nsamenang, 2013).

In Ugandan universities, attitudes towards single parenting are shaped by culture, religion, social interactions, and economic circumstances. While for some students, single parenting is associated with hardship and adversity, for others, the strength and sacrifice of single parents in ensuring that students pursue higher education are recognized.

2.3 Challenges Faced by University Students from Single Parent Households that Affect Their Academic Performance

University students coming from single-parent families encounter several interconnected challenges that may influence their performance. Financial struggle is one of the frequently mentioned difficulties. Single parents depend on one income, which might not meet the tuition, accommodation, learning materials, and general living costs (McLanahan, 1986). Financial hardships might force the student to look for part-time jobs, thus reducing the time dedicated to learning (Hinton-smith, 2016).

Another big concern for the child is stress related to emotions and psychology. The absence of a single parent can cause the child to feel a sense of loss, anxiety, or emotional insecurity, which can hamper his or her ability to concentrate and feel motivated or inspired (No Title, n.d.). The child could feel worried about his or her single parent as well.

Lack of parental supervision and educational direction is also prevalent. Single-parent families usually have very limited time to offer due to multiple responsibilities taken on within the family (Marie & Sara, 1991). These can influence educational conduct and commitment on the part of the student, especially during trying academic times.

Social stigma and discrimination add to this burden for students from lone-parent families. Single-parent families face stigma and discrimination from their peers and

society as a whole, which affects their social integration and academic participation. (Graham & Juvonen, 2008).

2.4 Coping Strategies Used by University Students from Single-Parent

Households to Achieve Academic Success.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, many students from lone-parent families can develop effective ways of coping in order to thrive in academics. Coping strategies are the cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes that people implement to cope with stress and adversity (Forehand & Univer-, 1990).

Coping with this situation could include self-empowerment and self-reliance. Research has shown that a certain degree of independence and determination to achieve educational success can be developed by those raised in lone-parent families to better their family situation (Masten, 2014).

Social support networks are also very important. Friend support, lecturer support, extended family support, religious organizations, as well as university counseling services, are all very important in managing stress and difficulties in higher education (Wilcox et al., 2006). For African cultures specifically, kinship structures and religions play a very important role in social support networks (*A Publication of the Association for the Promotion of African Studies*, 2021).

Time and adaptive learning skills are also employed by students juggling education requirements and family obligations. Good planning and allocation of education resources like libraries and learning teams, improve academic outcomes (Purity, 2017).

Likewise, some students adopt problem-focused strategies like applying for scholarships, financial aid, or part-time job opportunities in order to cope with economic related limitations, while other students adopt strategies like prayer, counselling, and talking things over with others to cope with stress (Carver et al., 1989).

2.5 Research identified a gap

Despite the great amount of literature available on single parenting and academic outcomes from lower levels of education up to the tertiary level, there is still limited evidence on university students in Uganda and the perception and coping strategies involved. Most of these available pieces of literature are quantitative and do not focus on the experience and strategies involved by the students. This document will ensure that the gap is filled by providing evidence from Uganda Christian University.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the literature on single parenting, learning achievement, perceptions of students, challenges experienced by students from lone-parent families, and strategies employed to succeed academically. It was confirmed that even though single parenting is one of the biggest challenges faced by academically qualified individuals, the students exhibit resilience and adaptability. These identified gaps confirmed the relevance of the current study, aimed at providing empirical information on how to assist university students from lone-parent families.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explained the methods that were used to carry out the study. it includes the research design, study area, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, quality control, ethical considerations and limitations to the study.

3.1 Research design

The employed a research design based on the principle of circulation. This circular process continued until no new information emerged. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to deeply explore the complex and evolving experiences of students from single parent households and ensuring that findings were grounded in the participants own perspectives and verified through repeated reflection and comparison within the data collection process.

3.2 study approach

The study used a qualitative research approach. This approach was selected because it helped the researcher to understand student's experiences, opinions and feelings in

details. Since this study focused on student's perceptions, challenges and coping strategies, the approach was most suitable.

3.3 Study area

The study was carried out at Uganda Christian University, Mukono campus. The university was selected because it has students from different family backgrounds including those raised by single parents.

3.4 Sources of data

The study used primary data. Data was collected directly from students through interviews. This helped the researcher to get firsthand information about their experiences, perceptions and challenges.

3.5 Study population

The targeted population for the study included year 2 and 3 undergraduate students pursuing a bachelor of social work and social administration at UCU who were raised in single parent households.

3.6 Sample size

The study involved a total of 20 participants which included students from year 2 and 3 who were raised in single parent households.

3.7 Sampling techniques and procedures

The study used snowball sampling. This technique involves identifying one or more initial participants who meet the study criteria and then asking them to refer other potential participants who qualify for the study.

The study focused on students pursuing bachelor of Social Work because social work students are ethically oriented to understand sensitive topic which increased the chances of obtaining honest and reflective data.

3.8 Data collection methods

The study used interviews to collect data. This method allowed the researcher to ask prepared questions while giving participants freedom to explain their views in details.

3.9 Data collection instruments

The study used interview guide. The guide contained open ended questions that focused on the student's perception, challenges and coping strategies.

3.10 Quality control

To ensure the quality of the study, the interview guide was pretested before data collection to check if the questions were clear and mistakes were corrected. The researcher also ensured consistency during data collection by carefully noting down responses. The data was checked for accuracy and completeness after collection and triangulation was used where data from students and lecturer was compared to ensure consistency. This helped to improve the reliability and validity of this study.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, they were also told that participation was voluntarily and they could withdraw at any time without any problem. The researcher-maintained confidentiality by not using names in the study and all data collected was kept safe and used only for academic purpose; research proposal was also submitted for approval to ensure that the study followed ethical guidelines.

3.12 Data analysis

The study used thematic analysis to analyze data. The method involved identifying common themes from the interview responses. The researcher carefully read through the responses, grouped similar ideas together and developed themes according to the objectives of the study.

3.13 Limitations of the study

The study used a small sample size because of limited time and resources which means that the findings may not be generalized to all university students.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the study. Data was collected using interviews from students in Year 2 and 3 of bachelor of social work and social administration of Uganda Christian University. The raw data were grouped into themes according to the objectives of the study which include.

4.1 Perception about single parenting and academic performance of university students

Findings from the interviews showed that students have different views about single parenting. Some students perceive it as negative, others as positive and some students believe the effects depends on the situation. This perception influence how students how students think, feel and behave in their academic journey and the way students interpret their family background can affect their confidence, motivation and performance.

4.1.1 Negative perception

From the findings, many students showed negative perceptions about single parenting. They believed that being raised by single parent creates limitations that affect academic performance. Respondent said “students from single parent families struggle more academically because there is poor supervision at home” the response show that students associate single parenting with lack of parental supervision. The

researcher interpreted that lack of supervision lead to poor habits of study and reduce academic discipline which affects performance.

Respondent also said “one parent cannot provide everything so academically it affects performance” this shows that students believe single parenting is associated to financial difficulties. The researcher interpreted that when students lack enough resources, it becomes hard for them to meet academic requirements which affects their performance.

Some participant emphasized emotional challenges as part of their perception respondent said “when you grow up without one parent you feel a gap and it affects your concentration” this shows that students associate single parenting with stress. The researcher interpreted that emotional instability can reduce focus and negatively affect academic performance.

Some students believed that single parenting affects confidence and participation in academic activities. Respondent said “students from dingle parent families may have low self-esteem which affects class participation” this shows that students associates single parenting with low confidence. The researcher interpreted that low self-esteem might prevent students from active participation in class, asking questions and engaging in discussions.

Some participants also mentioned social perception and stigma. Respondent said “people sometimes judge you when they know you come from a single parent family” this shows that social judgement affects how students feel about themselves.

4.1.2 Positive perception

The findings also showed that some students have positive views about single parenting. The students believed that being raised by single parent motivate them to work harder and succeed academically. Respondent said “being raised by a single mother makes me work harder because I want to make her proud” the response shows that students can be motivated by the efforts of their parents and sacrifices. Respondent said “single parenting makes someone more responsible and focused in school” this show that students see single parenting as a factor that builds confidence and self-discipline.

Some students looked at their situations as a source of determination. One respondent said “education is my only hope so I must work hard to succeed” which shows that students use their background as motivation to improve their future.

4.1.3 Mixed perception

Some participants expressed mixed perception, they believed that the effects of single parenting depend on different factors like financial support, emotional care and parenting involvement. Respondent said “it depends on the parent. If the parent is supportive, the student can perform well” and another respondent said “single parenting does not mean poor performance, it depends on the situation” the responses show that students understand that academic performance is influenced by more than just family structure.

Therefore, the findings show that perceptions of students about single parenting are not the same. Some students perceive it as a disadvantage because of financial and emotional difficulties, some see it as a source of motivation and others believe that the effects depend on the level of support available.

4.2 Challenges faced by university students from single parent families

The findings show that students experience financial, emotional and social difficulties which affect their ability to concentrate, participate and perform well academically. This challenge varies from one student to another and as a result, they create pressure on students which make it difficult for them to fully focus on their studies.

4.2.1 Financial challenges

The findings showed financial challenges as one the most significant challenges faced by students from single families. Many participants emphasized that being supported by only one parent limits the availability of financial resources required for academic success. Respondent said “sometimes my parent delays tuition because she is the only provider. When I am sent out of lectures, I miss important content” this shows that delayed payment of tuition affects class attendance. The researcher interpreted that when students miss lectures because of financial issues, they lose miss important things during the lectures which affects their understanding and performance.

Respondent also said “I lack some school materials because my father cannot afford everything alone” this shows that students do not always have access to essential learning materials such as handouts. The researcher interpreted that lack of these materials limits the ability of students to revise, complete assignment and prepare adequately for exams.

Some participants also mentioned mental pressure caused by financial challenges. Respondent said “financial pressure at home makes me think a lot instead of concentrating fully in class” which shows that financial challenges do not affect only physical needs but also mental focus of the students. The researcher interpreted that

constant worries about tuition and basic needs reduce concentration and engagement during lectures.

4.2.2 Emotional challenges

Many students explained that growing up without one parent leads to emotional stress which affects their academic performance. Respondent said “growing up with one parent leaves an emotional gap. Sometimes I feel emotionally drained and it affect my concentration” this shows that the absence of one partner leads to feeling of sadness. The researcher interpreted that emotional instability reduces the ability of students to focus and perform well. Respondent said “I sometimes feel isolated because most students talk about both their parents. It lowers my confidence” this shows that students from single families may feel different from others which affect their self-esteem.

Some participants also expressed feelings of pressure and responsibility. One respondent said “there is a lot of pressure on me to succeed because I am the hope of my parent” which shows that students feel a strong responsibility to succeed academically which leads to stress and anxiety.

4.2.3 Social challenges

The findings also showed that students face social challenges. Some participants explained that they experience stigma and negative attitudes from other students because of their family background. Respondent said “sometimes people judge you when they know you are from a single parent family. It makes you withdraw socially” this shows that social judgement affects confidence and interaction among students. Another respondent said “I experienced bullying before because I did not have both parents. It affected my confidence” this shows that past experience of bullying can

have long term effects on self-esteem and participation in academic activities. Some students also said they feel uncomfortable to share their family background.

4.3 Coping strategies used by university students from single parent families

The findings showed that students develop personal and external ways to manage their situations. The strategies help them to remain focused, motivated and committed to their academic goals. The strategies identified from the interviews were grouped into 2 main category, personal coping strategies and external support system which work together to help students adjust to their situations and perform well.

4.3.1 Personal coping strategies

From the findings, many students explained the benefits of personal effort and self-discipline in managing their academic responsibilities.

Time management

The most common strategies that were identified were effective time management. Students explained that because they face different challenges, they are forced to plan their time carefully to balance academic work and personal responsibilities. Respondent said “I plan my time carefully and create reading schedules so that I do not fall behind in class” this shows that students take responsibility for organizing their studies in a structured way. The researcher interpreted that proper time management helps students to stay on track with coursework and complete assignment on time no matter the situations.

Group discussion

Participation in group discussion was also identified as a copying strategy. Students explained that group discussion help them to understand difficult concepts and feel

supported. Respondent said “group discussion helps me to understand better and also encourage me when I feel stressed” this shows that group discussion support not only academic performance but also gives emotional encouragement. The researcher interpreted that group discussions reduce feelings of isolation and improve academic performance.

Prayer and positive mindset

Many participants emphasized that maintaining hope and faith helps them to remain strong despite their situations. Respondent said “prayer and positive thinking keep me going even when things are hard at home” this shows students rely on prayer, hope and internal strength to manage stress. The researcher interpreted that positive mindset helps students to stay motivated and focused on their long-term academic goals.

Open communication

Some participants emphasized that discussing their academic challenges with their parent helps them to feel supported and encouraged. Respondent said “I talked to my mother about my academic struggles and she always encourage me to keep going” this shows that communication strengthen the relationship between student and parents which helps to reduce emotional stress.

4.3.2 External support

Financial assistance

Many participants emphasized benefiting from scholarships, bursaries, financial aid programs. Respondent said “financial aid programs reduce the pressure and allow me to focus on my studies” this shows that financial assistance helps students to overcome economic challenges that might affect their academic performance. The

researcher interpreted that access to financial aid improves attendance, access to learning materials and academic performance.

Counselling and professional support

Participants also emphasized the importance of guidance and counselling services provided by the university. This service helps students to deal with stress and personal challenges. Respondent said “counselling services help students who feel overwhelmed and stressed” this shows that professional support help students to manage their emotions.

Some participants also explained that lecturers give academic guidance and encouragement beyond class room teaching. Respondent said (some lecturers guide us and motivate us to work hard” the researcher interpreted that mentorship from lecturers help students to stay focus and confident in their studies.

Friends and religious institutions

Participants also explained that friends and church members give emotional encouragement and sense of belonging. Respondent said “talking to friends and church members helps me feel supported and less stressed.” this shows that social support networks help students to cope with emotional challenges. The researcher understood that having people to talk to reduces stress and improves well-being.

Therefore, the findings show that students from single families do not passively experience challenges but respond to them through different coping strategies which help them to remain resilient and focus on their academic goals no matter the circumstances.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendation of the study. The discussion links the findings with literature reviewed in chapter 2 and the theory that guided the study.

5.1 Perception about single parenting and academic performance

Many participants believed that single parenting negatively affects academic performance because of limited financial support, emotional stress and lack of parental supervision. Students emphasized that these factors lead to poor concentration, low confidence and limited academic support. The findings are similar to research which showed that economic challenges and emotional stress in single parent households can affect academic performance of students (McLanahan, 1986, Campbell, 2021). Research also indicates that lack of financial resources reduces access to learning materials and creates unstable environments for study which affects academic performance.

Some students had positive perception about single parenting. Participants explained that being raised by a single parent motivates them to work harder, become responsible and take education seriously. This is in line with resilience theory which emphasized that difficult situations can build strength, independence and determination (Masten, 2014).

Some students showed mixed perceptions explaining that academic performance depends on the level of support from the parent than family structure alone (Taylor & Conger, 2017). This means that a supportive single parent can still help a student to perform well in academics.

5.2 Challenges faced by students from single parent households

Financial challenges were the most common. Students explained delay in tuition payment, lack of scholastic materials and limited financial support. These challenges caused students to miss lectures, struggle to access learning materials and lose concentration in class.

The findings are in line with literature which showed that financial difficulties reduce academic performance by limiting access to educational resources (McLanahan, 1986).

The research also found that students experienced emotional and psychological challenges such as stress, loneliness, low self-esteem and pressure to succeed. The absence of one parent creates emotional gap which affects student's confidence and concentration.

This was supported by psychological perspective which explain that a stable emotional environment is important for effective learning (Kim et al, 2023).

The study found that some students experience social challenges like stigma and discrimination. Students explained being judged and feeling different from others which affected their participation and confidence in academic activities. The findings are consistent with research that show that social stigma and peer discrimination can affect student's academic engagement and self-esteem (Graham & Juvone, 2008).

5.3 Coping strategies used by students from single parent households to achieve academic success

The study found that students use personal strategies such as time management, group discussions, paying attention in class, positive thinking and prayer. The strategies help students stay focused, organized and motivated in their studies. The finding is similar to literature which show that students who develop self-discipline and positive coping strategies are more likely to succeed academically no matter the challenges (Carver et al, 1989, Purity, 2017).

The findings also showed that students rely on external support systems such as financial aid, counselling services, lecturer support, peer support and religious support. This agrees with studies which emphasizes the importance of social support networks such as peers, lecturers and religious institutions in helping students to manage stress and succeed in academics (Wilcox et al, 2006). The findings also agree with resilience theory which shows that individuals can overcome challenges when they have a strong support systems and self-determination (Masten, 2014).

5.4 Theoretical framework of the study

The study was guided by ecological systems theory which explains that a persons' development is influenced by different environments such as family, school and society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The findings support this theory because students' academic performance was influenced by different factors such as family background, financial situation, emotional wellbeing and the social environment.

For example, the single parent family (micro system) affected financial and emotional support. Interaction between family and school (meso system) affected academic

guidance and societal attitudes (macro system) affected how students were treated by others.

5.5 Conclusion

The study concludes students have different perceptions about single parenting. Some see it as a disadvantage because of financial and emotional challenges and others see it as a source of motivation and strength.

Students from single parent house hold face challenges especially financial and emotional challenges which affect their academic performance,

Students use different coping strategies such as time management, peer support, counselling and financial assistance to succeed in their academics

Single parenting does not automatically lead to poor academic performance, academic performance depends on the level of support available and the ability of students to cope with challenges.

5.6 Recommendations

The university should strengthen counselling services to support students who experience stress and hardship

Parents should maintain open communication with their children and give emotional support

Students should be encouraged to participate in group discussions, counselling sessions and develop good time management skills

Research should be conducted on the influence of single parenting on students in other universities to compare findings.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear respondent,

My name is KEBIRUNGI SONIA, a student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Bachelor Degree of Social Work. I am conducting a research study on “*The Influence of single Parenting on the Academic Performance of University Students as case study of Uganda Christian University*” Therefore, this interview is intended to gather information on this topic. The information is for academic purposes only and all responses will be handled with utmost confidentiality.

Section A

1. Program/Course
2. Year of study
3. Are you from a single parent family?
4. Which parent raised you?

Section B

To examine the perception about single parenting and academic performance of university students

5. How do you think being raised by a single parent affected your academic performance?
6. What is your experience as a student raised by a single parent?
7. Do you think students from single parent families face different academic experiences compared to those from two parent families? Please explain.

Section C

To identify the challenges faced by university students from single parent households that affects their academic performance

8. What challenges have you faced as a student from a single parent family that affected your academic performance?
9. How does financial support from your parent/guardian affected your academic performance?
10. Have emotional or social challenges affected your academic performance?
Please explain.

Section D

To assess the coping strategies university students from single parent families use to achieve academic success

11. What strategies do you use to cope with the challenges you face to achieve academic success?
12. What motivates you to continue performing well in academics despite the challenges?
13. What kind of support helps you improve or maintain your academic performance?

THANK YOU