UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

SINGLE MOTHERS AND PARENTING IN KENYA: THE CASE OF ZIMMERMAN, NAIROBI COUNTY

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C50/77684/2015

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY (RURAL SOCIOLOGY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT), UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

NOVEMBER, 2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented

for examination to any other university.

Signature..   Date..

NJAU PURITY KAGENDO

C50/77684/2015

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the

University Supervisor.

Signature.. Date...

DR. ROBINSON OCHARO

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my loving husband for his inspiration and love, my beloved parents and siblings whom I owe a lot of love. Thank you for believing in me; for allowing me to further my studies. Please do not ever doubt my dedication and love for you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of intellectual gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Robinson Ocharo for his guidance, constructive criticism and support throughout the research process without which I would not have accomplished this task.

I extend special appreciation to all my friends and relatives for their practical and emotional support.

To you all, May the good God bless you.

ABSTRACT

Parenting is more than just giving birth. Basically, it includes the many specific behaviours that work individually and together to influence the final outcome of the child. The process of parenting has been changing over time with single parenting becoming an increasingly acceptable phenomenon in the contemporary society with a number of households being female headed hence the focus on single mothers in this study. The purpose of the study was to investigate how effective single mothers are in parenting in Kenya. The study objectives were to find out how parenting is conceptualized today, find out the indicators of effective parenting, and identify challenges faced by single mothers and to assess the coping mechanisms among the single mothers. The study was based on two theories: Social learning theory and Structural functionalism theory.

To achieve the objectives of the study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. The study was undertaken among the single mothers from Zimmerman, Nairobi County. Under the quantitative arm, a total of 170 respondents were interviewed. Non probability sampling was used to get the single mothers households and Snow ball technique was used to identify the single mothers. Single mothers rating of various statements under selected indicators of parenting was captured through a ranking scale.

The study findings reveal that today's parents are largely aware of what parenting entails. Majority (63.5%) stated that parenting is more than just giving birth. However, there are increasing aspects of delegated parenting with majority (41.2%) of children being left under the care of house helps while the mothers are away. Despite the many challenges faced by the single mothers, they have adopted coping mechanisms that have resulted in effective parenting. The researcher recommends training of young mothers on parenting and creation of neighbourhood networks that takes care of the children in the absence of their mothers.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Parenting refers to the aspect of bringing up a child. It involves nurturing and moulding the child into a socially functioning individual. Parenting is more than just giving birth. Basically, it includes the numerous precise behaviours that work individually and together to influence the final outcome of the child. Parenting includes promoting and supporting the child physically, emotionally, socially, financially and intellectually from infancy to adulthood. According to Brisbane (1988), parenting is the process of taking care of the children and assisting them grow and learn.

The process of parenting has changed with time. Gander and Gardiner (1988) observe that in the past, a child was raised by the whole village. In the 19th century, the child belonged to the community and therefore, the parents and the entire community spent time with the children influencing and moulding their social and cognitive skills. In Europe, during the middle ages, the community was fully involved in bringing up the children. The relationships between the parent and child were controlled and supervised by kin and other members of the community. Close-by adults and older children acted as surrogate parents and whatever transpired inside the family was quite communal (Collins and Coltrane, 1991). According to Mbithi (1982), fathers, leaders and neighbours took part in the education and socialization of elder kids. The distinct role of teaching and instructing children on sensitive topics like sexuality and marriage, morals, values, history and customs through stories, folklores and talks was played by the grandparents.

Gander and Gardiner (1981) observe that our grandparents conceptualized child rearing differently from us. They somehow had different notions on how children should be disciplined and the role of parents was clearly spelt out unlike today where parenting comes in various forms. In the African families, a child was socialized by the community. According to Kayongo and Onyango (1984), a child would be corrected or disciplined by any grown-up if found misbehaving since the child belonged also to the kinship. There was a variety of socialization agents as compared to the family structures today where just the parents are concerned with the socialization of their children.

In the African modern society, family life has changed. Physically, the distance between the village and the town has significantly diminished the grandparent's roles in child rearing and socialization. The family institution is now privatized; parents have become engrossed with careers and other undertakings and thus most of their time, they are away from home. The amount (quantity) and worth (quality) of time parents spend with their children has diminished significantly. Again, a number of families are now headed by single parents either by choice, death, separation or divorce. According to Kinnear (1999) divorce is common particularly in the developed countries. Such countries are experiencing a rise in single- parent families. Divorce is rare in developing countries like Kenya, but choice, imprisonment, desertion, and death produce single parent families. The emergence and growth of this peculiar 'institution" of single parenthood is emerging so forcefully in our contemporary society because traditional norms, values, and beliefs are slowly eroding. According to the United States Census Bureau of 2016, out of almost 12 million single parent families with children under the age of 18, more than 80 percent

were headed by single mothers. For child's personality growth and development, both parents need to be present to offer good parenting. Good parenting is child-rearing that nurtures emotional adjustment-elements like morality, empathy, independence, humanity, teamwork and self -control. Its parenting that helps children to excel academically, prevents children from delinquency, deviant behaviour, and drug and alcohol abuse. It helps to mould children in all dimensions of life.

Researchers have documented the challenges encountered by children from single parent. Single parenting is raising a kid or kids in the absence of a spouse or a partner. Krohn (2001) asserts that worldwide, close to a quarter or a third of households are headed by single parents. Today, one of the reasons most of the families are increasingly becoming dysfunctional and parenting getting difficult is because one of the partners is absent, leaving all his or her responsibilities to the counterpart while away from home. (Dobson & Dobson, 2009) argues that an increase in women-headed families is as a result of the breakdown of the nuclear family. In such cases, children have to rely on one parent and mostly the mother to meet most, if not all their needs.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Parenting is crucial in shaping the life of an individual. According to Brisbane (1988), parenting is the process of taking care of the children and assisting them grow and learn; it is more than just being a parent. Brisbane further states that nurturing is an essential part of parenting. A parent is said to nurture a child by providing encouragement, showing love, support and inspiring experiences. Studies on parenting have indicated that single-parenthood is associated with a multiplicity of problems. "Good parenting occurs

when an individual provides for a child a stable, nurturing family setting, is a good example, and plays a positive and active part in a kid's life" (BrownHill, 2016).

According to Kirby (2010), some of the challenges faced by single-parent families include: less healthy lives, higher school dropout rates, adjustment problems in adolescence and adulthood and a higher propensity to poverty. Many single mothers have many challenges that influence their capacity to have effective parenting. Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009) point out that single mothers are faced by financial, emotional and social problems. They suffer from loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness, lack of confidence, depression and failure to maintain child discipline due to absence of male members. Since parenting in a typical context is the responsibility of both the father and mother, the absence of a father has been linked to juvenile delinquency, poor ego development and boys to be specific, have more difficulties forming peer relationships and long-lasting heterosexual relationships (Goss, 2013).

According to Bronimann (2016), the deficit in single parenting mainly results from many responsibilities including struggling to make ends meet with inadequate economic resources and trying to bring-up the children single handed. The single mother definitely feels overwhelmed by the responsibility of keeping up with the bills, household chores, maintaining a job and caring for the children. Machera (2003) asserts that as much as singleness is biblical, and from God, singleness is hard-very hard mode of parenting. Parents are the main strengthening agents of children's personality. According to Mead and Wolfenstein (1955), the parent should armour the child to face ''the battle of life". It

is the duty of the parent to see that the growing powers of the child are guided towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities which it must control in life. In the modern society, this role is diminishing especially among the single career parents. According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009) the role of single parent is challenging one particularly where the family head is a woman. The difficulties of single mothers are associated with nurturing of children, their future and settling down in life. They are faced by a number of problems ranging from economic crisis, emotional stress and social discrimination.

The proposed study therefore seeks to explore the challenges faced by single mothers in Kenyan society and how they endeavour to cope with such challenges that can be a barrier to parenting. Although several studies have been done on the challenges faced by single mothers, the contemporary conceptualization of single motherhood in modern day Kenya has not been high lightened. There is need to assess how effective single mothers are in parenting in Kenya so as to help single mothers to cope in both psycho-social and socio-economic aspects of parenting.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate how effective single mothers are in parenting in Kenya.

1.4 Research questions

1. How is parenting in Kenya conceptualized?
2. What are the indicators of parenting?

3. What are the socio-economic challenges faced by single mothers?

4. What are the coping mechanisms used by single mothers?

1.5 Research objectives

    1. To find out how parenting is conceptualized today

    2. To find out the indicators of effective parenting

    3. To identify challenges faced by single mothers

    4. To assess the coping mechanisms among single mothers

1.6 Justification of the study

The study will be of great importance in creating awareness on the need to train the young mothers on parenting and also creation of neighbourhood networks that takes care of the children in the absence of their mothers.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the study

Uchenna (2013) asserts that single parenting is becoming an increasingly acceptable phenomenon in the contemporary society with a number of households being female headed while Goss (2013) asserts that most single-parent households are run by mothers hence the focus on single mothers in this study. The research limited itself to the study of single mothers and parenting in Kenya. The study concentrated on understanding the concept of parenting among the single-mother families and how it has changed with time in Kenya. The research limits itself to only two indicators of parenting namely:

a) Parental presence -where the researcher looked in details at role modelling from a perspective of behaviour monitoring, discipline, guidance and counselling.

b) Provision-The study focused on the aspect of financial support.

Further, the study restricted itself to financial, emotional and social challenges faced by the single mothers in Zimmerman and their coping mechanisms.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL

FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a broad discussion on the process of parenting, how it has changed over time and how it's conceptualized in modern Kenya. Indicators of parenting with detailed focus on provision and parental presence are discussed. The study highlights on the social economic challenges faced by single mothers in parenting and their coping strategies. The closing part of this chapter has discussed two theories upon which the study is based, conceptual framework and conceptual definition of key variables.

2.2 Parenting

According to Booth and Booth (1988), parenting is a social process that is negotiable and flexible. Brisbane (1988) defines parenting as the process of caring for offspring and assisting them grow and learn. It is more than being a parent. It is concerned with nurturing of children. It is the process of promoting and supporting a child from infancy, through adolescent to maturity. It includes all the aspects of raising or bringing up a child physically, emotionally, socially, financially and socially. Steinberg (2004) asserts that basic principles of effective parenting include involvement, positive role modelling, love, independence fostering, support, discipline, fairness and respect. To demonstrate the above reality, Omar (2013) argues that effective parenting sets the parents as limits to the children's rowdy extent. Parents do this by individually overseeing the kid's undertakings, guiding them to make sober decisions in life, creating stable home environment, helping them acquire morals, spiritual guidance and being positive role

models to the child. In cases of single parenting, such roles are challenging and specifically when the woman is the head of the family (Kotwal and Prabhakar, 2009).

According to Bronimann (2016), the deficit in single parenting mainly results from many responsibilities including struggling to make ends meet with inadequate finances and trying to raise the children single handed. Many single mothers have challenges that influence their capacity to have effective parenting. They face emotional, social and financial problems. They suffer loneliness, helplessness, lack of confidence, depression and failure to maintain child discipline due to absence of male members (Kotwal and Prabhakar, 2009).

Further, research has shown that parental supervision, support, and positive modelling which are functions of parental presence and provision are linked to lower anti-social activities and improved academic performances among the children (Miller, 1988). As children grow, parents should train, guide and nurture them into civilized and socialized adults. Mead and Wolfenstein (1955) asserts that the parent should armour the child to face ''the battle of life''. It is the role of the parent to ensure that the powers of the child are guided toward the fulfilment of the responsibilities which it must master in life, a role that is diminishing in today especially among the single career parents.

Parenting and effective parenting to be precise is fundamental in socialization and social development of a child. According to Gander and Gardiner (1981), Socialization is a practice whereby individuals obtain the manners and opinions of the social domain. They

acquire the beliefs in which they live and take on values thus become functional members of a specific group. Effective social, emotional and moral development of children is facilitated by socialisation. Brisbane (1988) says therefore that it is a parents' duty to teach and socialize children. Nurturing parents' role should be to provide enriching experiences, encouragement and positive role models (Mills and Mills, 2000). It is therefore difficult for single parents and especially single mothers to meet this responsibility as they are faced by a number of challenges as compared to two-parent families.

According to Suma (2002), the most important institutions in people's social lives are certainly the families, yet they have significantly changed. Wachege, 2003 explores the change in the smallest and oldest social organisations globally-the family. He looks at the growing phenomenon of today's single motherhood and asserts that six out of every ten Kenyan women are likely to be single either by divorce, desertion, separation, death or by choice by the time they reach 45 years. In agreement with Brisbane's (1988) statement, effective parenting emanating from the socialization assists children to get along with others and avoid anti-social behaviours; it encourages security and high self-esteem. Indeed, parents are a crucial pillar in any household. Mead and Wolfenstein (1955) outline that parents equip children to encounter the difficulties of lessons from life. They do so because life sets tasks and prepares challenging tests that require the children to display autonomy learned and acquired in the course of upbringing. As children continue to grow from infancy through adolescence to adulthood, they need good parenting all the way (Hoeflin, 1960). ''Good parenting occurs when an individual creates for a child a

stable, rearing home setting, is a positive role model and plays an active part in a child's life'' (BrownHill,2016). It is therefore possible that single mothers due to the many challenges facing them, they may not effectively offer this, creating a gap in parenting.

2.3 Parenting today

Parenting styles and normative values of the African family have transformed due to changes in the modern society. Following the high privatization of the African families, the community has a lesser role in socialization of the children. Modern parental commitments have also hindered effective parenting. Serpell (1992), argues that it is because of the fruitful explanation of shared social commitment and support in African "communal solidarity that the African communities succeeded and thrived in parenting in the past". Gander and Gardiner (1988) observe that looking back, the child belonged to the community. The parents and the community at large influenced and shaped the children's social and cognitive skills. Nearby grown-ups and elder children performed as substitute parents and whatever happened to the family was somewhat public (Collins and Coltrane, 1991). Mwanamwambwa and Tadesse (1979) note that children were rarely left alone. They were left in the custody of other family members or taken with their mothers wherever they went. Often present to provide social contact for the child were the elder relations, parents, stand-in or substitute parents and other kin and this ensured effective parenting. Mbithi (1982), alludes that education and socialization of older children was done by the fathers, elders and neighbours while teaching of sensitive topics and passing on ethics, beliefs, history and customs through legends, stories and talks was done by grandparents and this ensured good parenting.

In the contemporary African society, family life has changed. The role of grandparent in child rearing and socialization has diminished in urban areas. The family institution is now privatized. Degbey (1980), argues that the composition and structure of families' today has been altered by rapid demographic and socio-economic changes mainly due to urbanization and modernization. In an African setting, the concept of a family has diminished to become a nuclear family which consists of father, mother and children or one parent and the children. Today, Parents are preoccupied with careers and thus new agents of socialization-house workers-have entered the family to fill the gap left by working mothers. Further still, Uchenna (2013) asserts that single parenting is becoming an increasingly acceptable phenomenon in the contemporary society with a number of households being female headed. All this changes in the family life, have with no doubt affected the quality of parenting and especially among the single mothers as they have reported higher parental distress, depression, social isolation, poverty and lack of quality time with their children.

2.4 Parent presence

According to Trusty (2001), Parents function as a continual and firm resource for their families over the lifetime hence the need to offer effective parenting. According to Brisbane (1988), a parent is said to nurture a child by providing encouragement, showing love, support, monitoring and enriching experiences. A child whose parents are available will be socialized and taken care of in the best way possible Ortese (1998). This is because the socialization process is dependent on the complementary roles played by both parents in up-bringing of the child. Later in life, such a child is probable to attain self-actualization. Children from one-parent families are likely to experience lack and

denial of some opportunities and rights. As children grow older, Brooks-Gunn and Markham observes that parents get an additional type of involvement which include: discipline, teaching, modelling, monitoring and managing schedules. All this work individually and together to influence the final outcome of the child. According to Brooks-Gunn and Markham, discipline entails parental strategies and efforts to monitor and guide children so that they act in socially standard ways. Teaching includes efforts to inspire children to acquire the knowledge and skills valued in their culture while Monitoring includes being aware of how children spend their time and with who. According to API (2008), when parents are there for their children, they can guide and discipline positively, monitor their children's activities both in school and at home, respond sensitively thus promote a sense of security and follow their children's interests thus encourage rich and particularized conversation, and a love of exploration, mastery and learning. According to API, being there for the children means assisting them grow socially and cognitively which are principles of good parenting in line with Steinberg (2004). It's therefore not possible for single mothers, with all the challenges they face, to effectively measure up to these tasks in child rearing.

2.4.1 Single parenting and role modelling

In this study, role modelling entails all those actions and activities (for example discipline, behaviour monitoring, guidance and counselling) by a parent that serve as an example by influencing the children positively or negatively. According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009), single mothers fail to maintain child discipline due to absence of male members. Since parenting in a typical context is the responsibility of the father and

mother, the absence of a father has been linked to juvenile delinquency. According to Kotwal and Prabhakar, single mothers are faced by emotional problems. Research has shown that mothers who are emotionally stressed are most probably likely to use aversive and intimidating discipline methods than others (Conger et al.1984). McLoyd (1995) asserts that children's socio emotional development can be undermined by bad parenting and severe discipline-often associated with partial access to helpful social support, a case of single mothers. It actually undermines effective parenting. Studies also reveal that assistance and support from spouses makes mothers more effective parents (Chase-Lansdale et al.1994). For many children, the parents are their first role models as they are the first people they interact with. Children, when faced by difficult situations in life, they look up to a variety of models to help make a decision hence the need for parents, as their first teachers to offer positive modelling. According to BrownHill (2016), good parenting happens when a parent is a positive role model.

Jeynes, 2011 maintains that both positive and negative influence is linked to the effect of parental participation in their children. Parental involvements prevent behaviour problems in children as parents are primarily responsible for moulding their behaviours. According to Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), parental involvement includes motivating the children, providing moral support, restrictions at home that support learning, modelling desired behaviour like reading for leisure, checking homework and even coaching children at home. They should act as guidance and counselling masters in all matters of life. According to Reeves and Howard (2013), parents are huge contributors to the knowledge, skills and character of their children. The size of the parenting effect is

debatable compared to schooling, economics, genetics, and culture and so on. However, there is no doubt, that one of the most important contributor to a good, fair and responsible society is the quality of parenting. The idea is to offer effective parenting that will provide socially independent adults. Socially, Berk (1997) observes that parents are an effective source of emotional information for children. Academically, Olatoye and Ogunkola (2008) notes that children spend lesser time in school than they do at home and this creates an opportunity for one-on-one interaction. Parents impact new skills and build the children's feelings of capability when they teach them. This in itself inspires the children to do better, setting a cycle of success reinforcement in motion (Henderson, 2009). For the single mothers, performing these roles is a challenge. Single mothers struggle with time management due to dual responsibilities; most of their time is spent searching for finances and material resources so as to sustain their families. They have minimal time with their children and this gives less encouragement to the children. They do not have quality time for guidance and counselling. Due to their busy schedule and many responsibilities, they have no time to talk to their children, no time to monitor their children's homework or if they are attending school and in most cases, such children engage themselves in alcohol abuse, smoking cigarettes, absenteeism from schools and other anti-social behaviour so as to relieve apprehension and forget their problems.

David and Alan (1988) asserts that children from single parent homes tend to have higher records of non-attendance, and skiving in school as compared to peers in both-parent homes. These concerns are more and more being felt in modern Kenya today where a number of families are headed by single mothers arising from divorce, separation, death

or even by choice. Wachege (2003) explores that out of every 10 women in Kenya, most probably six will be single mothers by the time they are 45 years, which constitutes the greatest rates for single-parent families in Kenya.

2.4.2 Single mothers and provision

For the purposes of this study only, provision means financial support and the benefits that come with it.

For most single parent families, financial crisis is a standing situation. According to Oliver and Shapiro (1995), due to high poverty rate, single-parent families are disadvantaged as compared to double-parent families. Reeves and Howard (2013) outlines that parents who are more likely to fall into the ''weakest'' class of parents are the ones who have a low income, are poorly educated, are black, and are unmarried. This is an indication that single mothers may not be effective in parenting. Although some single mothers are rich, many are still poor. Poverty or lack of finances can result to other problems like diseases, low academic excellence as they can't afford to provide school necessities like school fees, textbooks, exercise books and other tution materials for their children. Pong and Ju (2000) comments that for many single parents, the difficulties that are frequently faced by the children is not just the parenting style but also poor economic condition for their families. Access and quality of resources, health and social services and opportunities such as food, shelter and health care are directly reduced by the financial crisis. Fraser (2004) indicates that effective parenting can be hindered by poverty. This is rampant among the single mother families in Kenya. McLanahan and

Booth (1989) state that as a result of the deterioration in the living standards, children in single parent households are more likely to experience health related problems.

Demo and Adcock (1996) asserts that children from single-mother families are likely to be faced by temporary and lasting economic difficulties. Single parents 'children engage in sexual activities and teen pregnancy to get money. Billy et al (1994) comment that children who are raised in homes where the father is absent are more likely to involve themselves in pre-marital sex compared to children raised in homes with both the father and mother, a situation that is prevalent in today's single mother families where such children risk contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDs or even teen pregnancy. From the existing literature, it is almost possible to conclude that single mothers of socio-economic class who earn meagre salary are not effective in parenting.

2.5 Socio-economic challenges faced by single mothers

According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009) mainly where the household head is a single mother, the responsibility of such a parent is a challenging one. To them, the single mothers' problems are connected with the rearing of the children, their future and settling down in life. Single mothers are faced by a number of challenges ranging from economic, emotional and social stress.

2.5.1 Economic challenges

Good parenting includes supporting the child financially. Financial crisis is a standing situation for single mothers. Meeting the basic needs like food, clothing, school fees, and

personal expense and even maintaining the standard of living for the children becomes difficult (Kotwal and Prabhakar, 2009).

Single mothers are the primary wage earners and they are forced to bear the responsibilities of their absentee spouses. Due to limited financial resources, most of the single mothers are always struggling to make ends meet and this can cause them to depression. Mcloyd (1994) revealed that depression in single mothers' can be caused by financial strain.

2.5.2 Emotional challenges faced by single mothers

Wachege (2003) explores the growing phenomenon of today's single motherhood and notes it's not without implications. According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009) the single status of the mothers' affects their emotional life. It is not an easy mode of parenting and Machera (2003) clearly states that as much as singleness is biblical, and from God, singleness is hard-very hard mode of parenting. Wachege (2003) unravels the fact that quite often, the parents who end up single are a victim of forces beyond their control hence their emotional stress. Basically, due to the double responsibility that comes with the absence of the male figure, the single mothers have a new situation every now and then to handle unlike a two-parent family where there is shared responsibility. They are continuously under some kind of tensions due to worries regarding children and their future and to some extent due to condition of financial hardships.

According to a survey carried out in India in 2009 by Kotwal, majority of single mothers testified that they felt isolated, destitute and depressed. They lacked identity and confidence. Jayakody (2000) asserts that single mothers lacked self-confidence. For women whose identity was previously linked with that of their partners, they tend to suffer from a feeling of rootlessness and lack of identity after separation, widowhood or divorce. Majority of the women bring out personality changes due to feelings of guiltiness, embarrassment, bitterness, irritation and apprehension about future that are so dominant.'' (Kotwal and Prabhakar, 2009).

2.5.3 Social problems faced by single mothers

There is little space for you amid the wedded couples if you are single. With the absence of the father, the children have to entirely rely on the mother to meet most, if not all their needs. This in most cases, especially among the middle socio-economic class leaves the women economically handicapped and definitely hinders their participation in many social organizations.

According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009), due to low self-esteem, lack of identity and financial constraints, majority of the single mothers avoided social functions. To them, these women experienced lack of companionship as they were reluctant to make new friends. With the privatization of the family structure today, and the absence of the father, the single mothers are left with no other adult to consult in decision making. Effective parenting in a typical context is the responsibility of both the father and mother thus, due

to absence of male counterparts, single mothers find it difficult to uphold discipline amongst the youngsters.

2.6 Coping mechanisms

From the existing literature, it can be concluded that single mothers face economic, emotional and social challenges. Despite all these challenges, single mothers are always working hard to rear their children. Single mothers therefore deserve interventions to improve their outcomes.

According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009), to avoid depression when overwhelmed by issues, the single mothers should seek medical and professional help. Since financial crisis is the major challenge among the single mothers, they should seek advice from financial experts or ask for help from family and close friends.

2.7 Theoretical frame work

The study hypothesizes that single parenting leads to ineffective parenting in Kenya. To support the argument for this position, the researcher draws from two theories: the socio learning theory and structural-functionalism theory.

2.7.1 Social learning theory

According to the Social learning theory postulated by Bandura in 1977, development is learned and influenced by environment factors. This definitely means that an individual's personality depends on a unique interaction between the outside environment and the psychological processes. Bandura (Figure 1) emphasizes that behaviour, environment and

individual cognition operate together each influencing the other. Bandura observes that individuals and especially children learn from observing others, either personally or through the environment. "Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." (Bandura). In the context of this research, children learn and take feedback from their parents. Parents thus constitute the environment that children need to effectively get through their cycle from infancy through adolescence to adulthood hence the need for effective parenting today.

Children observe the people (models) around them behaving in various ways and encode their behavior and they may imitate the behavior they have observed. This is illustrated during the famous *Bobo doll experiment* (Bandura, 1961). The people around the child will respond to the behavior it imitates with either reinforcement or punishment and reinforcement strengthens the behavior.

Figure 2.1: Bandura theory of social learning
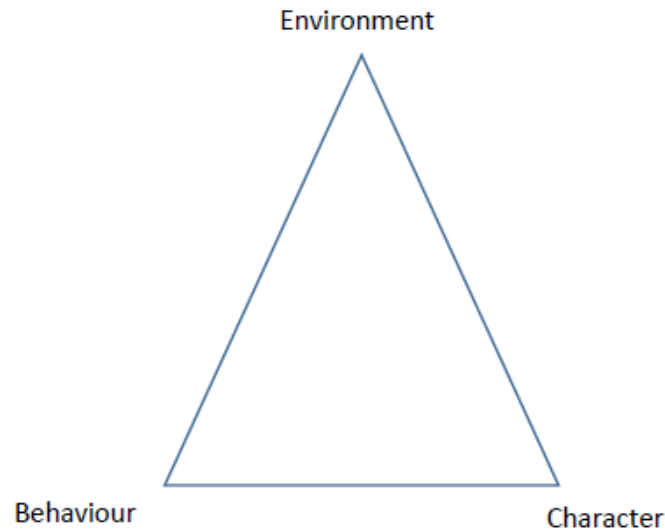
Effective parenting according to Brown Hill (2016) includes providing support, love and enabling environment. Parents who raise their children in a caring and supportive environment can contribute to their development of good self-esteem and socially acceptable individuals which is the bottom line of parenting. Thus this theory is relevant to the study.

2.7.2 Structural functionalism Theory

Structural functionalism proposed by Herbert Spencer and Talcott Parsons sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms. This is also relating to our modern society where the family structure has

evolved from the traditional African extended family to todays privatized nuclear family. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system". This theory basically emphasizes working together as a system to promote solidarity and stability, a situation that is also emphasized in parenting today. If the family structure is broken from a two-parent family to a single parent family with the single mother left to struggle, the stability and solidarity of the family is broken and effective parenting is not guaranteed hence making the theory relevant.

2.8 Conceptual framework

Parenting is a nurturing process to develop socially acceptable individuals. Single parenting is a challenging role resulting from many responsibilities including struggling to make ends meet with limited finances. According to Mcloyd & Steinberg, (1998), negative parenting and harsh discipline associated with single parents undermines children's socio emotional development.

Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework
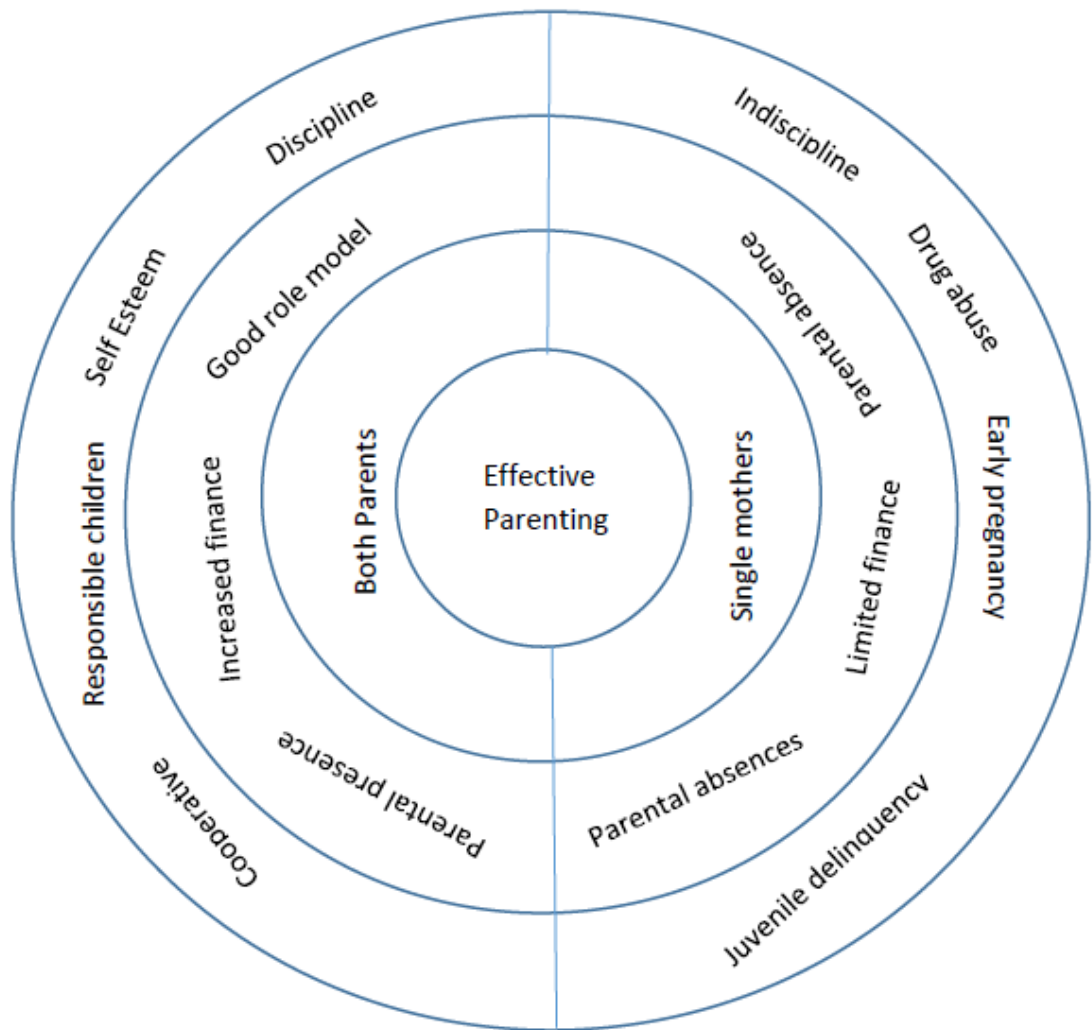
2.9 Conceptual Definition of Variables

Parenting: In this study, parenting will refer to the process of caring for children and helping them grow and learn to be socially acceptable individuals; the rearing of children that is more than just being a parent according to Brisbane, (1988).

Role modelling: For this research only, role modelling will entail all those actions and activities (for example discipline, behaviour monitoring, guidance and counselling) by a parent that serve as an example by influencing the children positively or negatively.

Family identity: For purposes of this study only, family identity refers to the security accorded to wives by the husband**.**

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study. Specifically, this chapter describes the study area, research design, and target population, sampling procedures, methods and tools of data collection, data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Research design

The study adopted descriptive research design in investigating the challenges single mothers are facing in parenting. Descriptive studies answer questions of who, what, when, where, and how of the topic in this case how effective single mothers are in parenting (Cooper and Schindler, 2010). The design was appropriate for the study since the study relied on a flexible and interactive research design using a structured questionnaire. Also, the design enabled the researcher to collect data from the desired population. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected using survey instrument of semi-structured questionnaire.

3.3 Site description

This study was carried out in Zimmerman estate, Roysambu constituency in Nairobi County. Zimmerman is a slumburbia (Mixture of slums and suburbs) in Nairobi. It is located 12km on the Eastern Part of Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. Zimmerman is a residential area for middle and lower class citizens.

According to the 2009 population census report, the population of Zimmerman was estimated to be 38, 912, majority of the residents being women. The population is characterized by poor housing, poor infrastructure, poor access to health and family planning facilities and lack of quality education. The area was purposively selected as a study location because it has a number of single mothers who formed the target population for this study. As a slumburbia setting it provided a good understanding of the effects of modernity on parenting.

3.4 Target population

A target population is the entire group of individuals that meet the desired set inclusion criteria for a study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a target population is the population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study. The target population for this research was single mothers within Zimmerman estate.

3.5 Sample and sampling procedure

A sample is a subject of population which the researcher intends to generalize the finding (Cohen and Morrison, 1994). In order to get representative sample for this study, the researcher employed non probability sampling to get the single mothers households in Zimmerman. Snowballing technique was employed to reach out to single mothers. The respondent single mother recommended other single mothers from Zimmerman who were willing to participate in the study. The process was continued until the sample was saturated. A total of 170 single mothers were picked.

3.6 Sources of data

The study used primary data. This data was collected through interviews with single mothers. Semi-structured questionnaires were prepared to guide the interview process.

3.7 Methods of data collection

Data collection was done through the use of interviews. Interviews refer to getting information from an individual who is considered to be particularly knowledgeable about the topic of interest. According to Barker (2010), interview is a technique that is used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for people's attitudes, preferences or behaviour. Barker states that interviews have the advantage of enabling serious approach by respondent resulting in accurate information, good response rate, completed and immediate possible in depth questions and the interviewer in control can give clarifications if necessary.

3.8 Data collection Instruments

Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the single mothers. The questionnaire contained both open ended and close ended questions. This allowed the respondents to give their opinions.

3.9 Data analysis

Data obtained was coded and clustered into common themes for subsequent statistical analysis using the SPSS software. Presentation of the data was in form of tables and descriptive analysis where it provided successful interpretation of the findings.

To answer the objectives, data was presented using frequency tables to indicate the distribution percentage of how single mothers conceptualize parenting, the indicators of effective parenting, challenges facing single mothers and their coping mechanisms.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The purpose of the study was explained verbally and written to the eligible respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity was assured to the respondents.

<h1 style="text-align:center">CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</h1>

4.0 Introduction

This chapter covers data analysis, presentation, and interpretation of study findings based on the data collected from the field.

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

The researcher administered questioners to a total of 170 single mothers, all of whom fully responded to the questionnaires. All the respondents were analysed using varying characteristics which included their age, education level and type of employment.

4.1.1 Respondent's age group

The study sought to establish the respondents' age group.

Table 4.1: Respondent's age group

Age group	Frequency	Percent %
15-20 years	11	6.5
21-26 years	57	33.5
27-32 years	64	37.6
33 and above	38	22.4
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

As indicated in the table 1 above, majority (37.6%) of the respondents were aged between 27-32 years followed by 33.5 percent who were aged between 21 and 26 years. This was followed by 22.4 percent who were aged 33 years and above and 6.5 percent who were aged between 15 and 20 years. The above findings reflect what Kathleen (2013) says that in Kenya, almost 18 percent of teenage girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are mothers. Of the single mothers interviewed 6.5 percent fall under this category. The variance in the percentage can be attributed to the adoption of sex education amongst the teenagers. ''Sex and HIV/AIDs learning courses that are based on a written syllabus and that are implemented amid groups of youth in schools, clinics, or other community settings are a promising type of intervention for reducing adolescent sexual risk-taking behaviours'' (McDonald, 2014).

4.1.2 Level of Education

Table 4.2: Education level of respondent

Education Level	Frequency	Percent %
Primary	13	7.6
Secondary	28	16.5
College	89	52.4
University	40	23.5
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

Majority (52.4 %) of the respondents had attained education up to the college level followed by 23.5 percent who had attained university education. It is also clear that 16.5 percent had achieved secondary education and 7.6 percent had attained only primary education.

The above findings imply that majority of the respondents had attained professional qualifications to help them seek formal employments or competently run their own businesses. This further implied that the single mothers now had demanding double responsibility-their role as single mothers and their career. The findings are in agreement with Bronimann (2016) who states that single mothers are burdened with double responsibilities and have to balance between their work and their children.

4.1.3 Type of employment

Table 4.3: Respondent's employment type

Type of employment	Frequency	Percent%
Self-employed	61	35.9
Formally Employed	92	54.1
Unemployed	17	10
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

As indicated in the table above, majority (54.1 %) of the respondents were formally employed. This is consistent with MDGs (2015) report that outside the agricultural sector, women now constitute 41 per cent of salaried workers, a rise from 35 per cent in 1990. The variance in the percentage can be attributed to the affirmative action. Lee (1999) describes affirmative action as the proactive plan of making exceptional efforts in employment choices, institution admission, and other areas of public behaviour as a way of compensating for past discrimination. It is also clear that 35.9 percent were self-employed and 10 percent of the single mothers were neither formally employed nor had self-employment.

4.1.4 Main source of income

Table 4.4: Respondent's Main source of income

Main source of income	Frequency	Percentage%
Salary	92	54.1
Business	61	35.9
Casual labourers	7	4.1
Family support	6	3.5
Prostitution (Sponsor)	4	2.4
TOTAL	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

As shown in table 4 above, majority (54.1 %) of the single mothers had salary as their main source of income and 35.9 percent got income from their businesses.

There was a 4.1 percent of the single mothers who relied on casual jobs like washing clothes for others, washing dishes and fetching water. The casual labourers stated that they had to take several jobs when they got the chance because the jobs were hardly available. Only a 3.5 percent indicated that they got their money from their parents and 2.4 percent of the single mothers were honest and admitted that they had to engage in prostitution to make ends meet. One particular respondent stated that she did not need to engage in prostitution daily except on the bad days. ''I have a *sponsor* (rich man) who I give sex and in return get my bills paid.''

The category of single mothers that engaged in prostitution risk contracting the HIV/AIDs disease. The prevalence of HIV is highest among the sex workers (National Aids Control Council of Kenya, 2014). When the casual labourers took more jobs, they had to be away from their children for long. ''A child from a home where the parent is available will be well nurtured of and raised in the best way possible.'' (Tymienieeka, 2005)

4.1.5 Respondents average monthly income

Table 4.5: Respondents average monthly income

Average monthly income	Frequency	Percent%
5000-9000	10	6
10000-19000	29	17
20000-29000	36	21
30000-39000	41	24
40000 and above	54	32
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

The average monthly income for the respondents ranged from Ksh.5000 to over Ksh.40000. Thirty-two percent of the respondents earned over Ksh.40, 000 per month. Twenty-four percent earned between Ksh.30000 and ksh.39000 in a month. Twenty-one percent earned between 20000 and 29000 and 17 percent earned between 10000 and 19000 and 6 percent of the respondents earned between Ksh.5000 and 9000 per month.

4.1.6 Source of financial support

Table 4.6: Source of financial support

Source of financial support	Frequency	Percentage%
Financial institutions	41	24.1
Friends	32	18.8
Other single mothers	19	11.2
Relatives	21	12.4
Chamas	48	28.2
Sponsor/Sexual partner	9	5.3
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

Table 6 above shows that majority (28.2%) of the single mothers sought for financial support from their *Chamas* and 24.1 percent sought support from financial institutions. It's also clear that 18.8 percent sought financial support from friends, 12.4 percent from relatives, 11.2 percent from other single mothers and a minority (5.3 %) sought financial support from their sexual partners or what they called *sponsors*[1].

The above findings illustrate that single mothers are aware that they have a double responsibility of meeting their children's needs single handed. They have joined *Chamas* where they can take loans at low interest rates. ''In Kenya particularly, the formation of *chama*—a swahili word for social group—has helped to increase group agency and

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[1] A wealthy man who provides money and upkeep to a lady in return for sex only.

solidarity entrepreneurialism. The contributions are kept and then given to members on a rotating basis as lump sum loans at low-interest rates'' (Kinyanjui, 2005).

4.1.7 Respondents average monthly expenditure

The study sought to find out the respondent's monthly expenditure on a few items like Clothing, Housing, Food, School fees, Transport and utility bills.

The findings indicated that on average, the category of single mothers earning 5,000-9,000 spent approximately ksh.1500 on clothing, 3000 on housing, 4000 on food, 1000 on school fees, 500 on transport and 300 on utility bills.

The category of single mothers earning 10,000-19,000 per month spent on average 3000 on clothing, Kshs. 4100 on housing, Kshs. 4700 on food items, Kshs. 3500 on school fees, Kshs. 1100 on transport and approximately Kshs. 800 on utility bills per month.

The single mothers earning approximately 20,000-29,000 per month spent on average 3500 on clothing, Kshs. 5500 on housing, Kshs. 5100 on food items, Kshs. 5000 on school fees and Kshs. 2000 on transport and Kshs. 1000 on utility bills per month.

The next category of single mothers earning between 30,000 and 39,000, it was established that on estimate, they spent like 4000 on clothing, 6000 on housing, 5500 on food items, 5000 on school fees, 4000 on transport and 1000 on utility bills per month.

The single mothers earning 40,000 and above spent on average 4700 on clothing,7000 on housing,6000 on food items and 5000 on school fees and 4000 on transport and 1000 on utility bills per month.
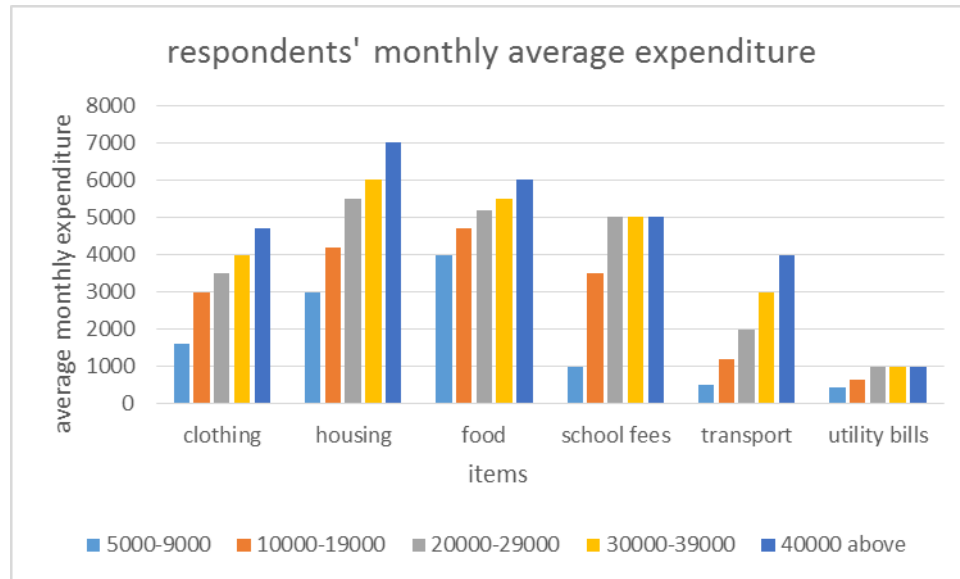
Figure 4.1: Respondent's average monthly expenditure

Source: Author (2016)

The findings on the food items are consistent with Engel's law which states that as income rises, the proportion of income spent on food falls, even if actual expenditure on food rises. The findings further revealed that most of the single mothers spent over and above their average income per month. This indicated that economic crisis was a standing situation amongst the single mothers causing them to live in debts.

4.2 Present Day Conceptualization of Parenting

Table 4.7: Conceptualization of Parenting

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Giving birth	18	10.6
Financial support	2	1.2
Providing basic needs	42	24.7
Producing all-round responsible children	108	63.5
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

The researcher sought to find out how today's single mothers conceptualize parenting. The responses were classified into four categories that included: giving birth, financial provision, providing basic needs and producing an all-round responsible child.

According to table 6 above, majority (63.5) of the respondents stated that parenting entails producing an all-round responsible child. Of the respondents, 24.7 percent stated that parenting is providing basic needs like food, shelter, education, and clothing to the children. It was also clear that 10.6 percent conceptualized parenting as the biological process of giving birth while only 1.2 percent conceptualized it as financial provision.

The results revealed that the single mothers interviewed are aware of what parenting entails going by the definition of parenting by Brisbane, 1988. According to majority (63.5) of the single mothers interviewed, parenting is more than the biological relationship. They stated parenting to entail disciplining, behaviour monitoring, guidance and counselling, role modelling, and financial support to your children until they become adults. A number of them also insisted on spiritual guidance as a part of parenting emphasizing that only God can help one raise their children.

The single mothers emphasized that parenting is self-sacrificing to ensure children get the basic needs and values that make them responsible citizens. They indicated that effective parenting is art of fostering virtues like honesty, self-reliance, good morals, empathy, and cooperation. Generally, the results reveal that parenting entailed moulding a child in all dimensions of life.

4.2.1 Number of children

Table 4.8: Respondent's number of children

Number of children	Frequency	Percentage %
One	60	35.3
Two	74	43.5
Above three	36	21.2
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

Majority (43.5%) of the single mothers had two children while 35.3 percent had only one child and the least percent of 21.2 had more than three children. The results reveal how family structure and size has changed over time with the desire for a small family being on the increase. The findings are in agreement with Fapohunda and Poukouta (2005) who states that the family size that people desire is under four.

4.2.2 Rate at which single mothers interact with their children

The study, guided by Bronimann (2016) that single mothers are burdened with double responsibilities and have to balance between their work and their children, sought to find out if single mothers really interact with their children and if they did, how often and why?

Table 4.9: Rate at which single mothers interested with their children

How often single mothers interacted with their children	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	91	53.5
Weekly	51	30
Monthly	14	8.2
Annually	14	8.2
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

As indicated in table 9 above, 53.5 percent of single mothers interacted with their children daily, 30 percent interacted with their children weekly while 8.2 percent interacted with them monthly and annually. The results indicate that despite the many responsibilities burdening the single mothers, a great percentage (51) of them lived with their children and interacted with them daily, a sign of effective parenting according to Steinberg (2004) who asserts that basic principles of effective parenting include involvement and parental presence. The single mothers who do not interact with their children daily stated that the frequency of how often they travelled to see their children depended on their income and the physical distance between them and their children. This was likely to interfere with their parenting role since parenting is about being there for the children and giving support and guidance that expedite growth (Gander and Gardiner, 1988).

4.2.3 Whom children spend time with

Table 4.10: Whom children spend time with

whom children spend time with while mothers are away	Frequency	Percentage
Grandparents	6	3.5
House help	70	41.2
Day care centres	39	22.9
Friends	12	7.1
On Their own	33	19.4
Neighbours	10	5.9
Total	**170**	**100**

Source: Author (2016)

According to table 10 above, majority (41.2%) of respondents stated that their children spend time with the house helps while 22.9 percent of single mothers said that they took their children to day care centres. Of the respondents, 19.4 percent of mothers stated that their children spend time on their own while 7.1 percent stated that their children spend time with their friends and 5.9 percent spend time at their neighbour's places followed by 3.5 percent that said their children stayed with their grandparents while they were away. The findings are in agreement with Collins and Coltrane (1991) who asserts that the role of grandparents in child rearing and socialization is slowly diminishing in the modern times with the change in the family institution.

This also indicated delegated parenting by the single mothers and it may interfere with parenting as such mothers may not be able to monitor their children's behaviour or even correct them in cases of indiscipline. In some extreme cases, the children can acquire maladaptive behaviours without their parent's knowledge.

O'Brien (1989), asserts that in such instances, parents may not have clear mechanisms of monitoring the delegated responsibilities and it can expose children to aspects of delinquency behaviors.

The findings are consistent with Wachege (2003) explorations on the change in the smallest and oldest social organisations in the globe-the family. The change has seen introduction of other agents in child socialization-the house help and day care centres.

4.3 Indicators of Parenting

The study sought to find out if the single mothers in Zimmerman approved behavior monitoring, disciplining, guidance and counselling and financial support as indicators of parenting and how they ranked them.

Table 4.11: How the respondents ranked the indicators of parenting

Indicators of parenting	Respondents ranking on the parenting indicators			
	Very Necessary	**Necessary**	**Unnecessary**	**Very Unnecessary**
Behaviour monitoring	160	10	0	0
Disciplining	160	10	0	0
Guidance and counselling	160	10	0	0
Financial support	160	10	0	0
Cell representative	**94%**	**6%**	**0**	**0**

Source: Author (2016)

According to the tallied data, 100 percent ranked the indicators as very necessary and necessary. None of the respondents ranked them as unnecessary or very unnecessary. However, according to the tallied data on the rating of parenting indicators, 5.34 percent strongly disagreed and disagreed with the various statements under the selected indicators of parenting. The respondents stated that they interacted more with their families and thus they were their kids' first instructors. Of the respondents, 94 percent ranked all the indicators as very necessary while only 6 percent ranked them as necessary. None of the

respondents ranked them as unnecessary or very unnecessary. The respondents said that there was need to monitor the behavior of their children to prevent misbehaviors from appearing. ''To prevent maladaptive behaviours from appearing, parents need to practice effective discipline, monitoring, and problem solving strategies.'' (Cross white and Kerpelman, 2008). They insisted that the main reason why they monitored their children's behavior was to curtail bad companies stating that Bad Company corrupts good morals. Monitoring includes being alert of where the child is, who their friends are, and what they do during their free time (Barnes 2006). In a research done by Barnes et al in 2006, it was established that monitoring is a strong predictor for juvenile's deviant behaviour. One particular respondent quoted a kikuyu proverb of '*Muceera na mukundu, akundukaga otaguo*" (you get the character of your friends) hence the need to know the child's friends.

The respondents insisted on the need to discipline children whenever they made mistakes. ''Effective discipline is identifying misconducts and keeping track of when they happen. Consistent discipline must be ensured at the detection of these behaviors in order to prevent the development. However, excessively severe punishments will not stop the behaviour; it will enhance it'' (Simons et al, 1991). From the respondents, it was clear that the society had a notion that children of single mothers are in-disciplined and of bad behavior. The prejudice emanates from the theory of lemon bearing lemons. The respondents stated that the main reason why they discipline children is to correct them and deter them from delinquency behavior. A number of them cited the famous *'spare the rod, spoil the child'* saying.

The respondents approved guidance and counselling saying that their children are humiliated and ridiculed by the society on a number of occasions hence the need to guide and counsel them.

Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Conger (1991) states that a parent is an example towards their children. Research on modelling has shown that where parents are held in high esteem and are the main sources for reinforcement, the child is more likely to emulate them. Guidance and counselling was said to mould children in all dimensions of life. Miller and Wolfenstein (1955) asserts that parents should armour the child to face 'the battle of life'. All the respondents said that they worked through thick and thin to provide for their children. They feared that children might engage in anti-social behaviour to get finances.

4.3.1 Single mother's response on indicators of parenting

Table 4.12: Rating of parenting indicators

Indicator	Statement	Single mothers responses frequency				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
Behaviour monitoring	It is important to know the friends to your child	0	0	17	61	92
	There is need to limit the social places that a child attends	0	0	24	109	37
	Parents need to know where their children spend their leisure time	0	0	15	39	116
Discipline	There is need for parents to instil virtues in their children through disciplining them	0	0	2	80	88
	Children should be punished whenever they misbehave	7	24	10	78	51
	It is the duty of parents to correct their children's maladaptive behaviours	0	0	0	80	90
Guidance &	Parents need to guide their	7	15	15	82	51

Counselling	children to make sober and informed decisions in life					
	Parents need to inform their children's of socially accepted values	0	0	20	99	51
	Teachers and baby sitters should guide and counsel the children	0	0	0	46	124
Financial Support	Inadequate finances are a major hindrance to effective parenting.	12	7	30	39	82
	Children from single mother families experience long-term and short-term financial inadequacies	0	7	19	56	88
	Lack of finances cause children to engage in risky behaviour	10	20	56	46	38
Cell Representatives		**1.76**	**3.58**	**10.20**	**39.95**	**44.51**

Single mothers rating on various statements under selected indicators of parenting was captured through a ranking scale with Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree response options. Under Behaviour Monitoring, the study sought to know if the single mothers considered it important to know the friends to their children. Ninety-

two respondents Strongly Agreed, 61 respondents Agreed, while 17 single mother's response was Neutral. None of the respondents stated strongly disagree or disagree.

On the selected statement of there is need to limit the social places that a child attends, 109 respondents Agreed while 37 strongly agreed and 24 were Neutral. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

On the statement if Parents need to know where their children spend their leisure time, 116 respondents strongly agreed, 39 agreed and 15 of them were neutral. None of them strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Another indicator was Discipline. On the selected statement of there is need for parents to instil virtues in their children through disciplining them,88 single mothers' response was strongly agreeing, 80 was Agree and only 2 respondents were Neutral.

On the selected statement of Children should be punished whenever they misbehave, 78 respondents Agreed, 51 strongly agreed and 24 disagreed. Of the response also, 10 were neutral while 7 strongly disagreed.

On the statement, it is the duty of parents to correct their children's maladaptive behaviours, 90 single mothers strongly agreed while 80 of them agreed. None of the respondent's response was neutral, disagree or strongly disagree.

Another indicator used was Guidance and Counselling. The first selected statement was Parents need to guide their children to make sober and informed decisions in life. Eighty-two single mothers' agreed and 51 strongly agreed. Fifteen single mother's opinion were Neutral and Disagreed while 7 of them strongly disagreed.

The next selected statement was Parents need to inform their children of socially accepted values. In this category, 99 agreed while 51 strongly disagreed. Twenty of the respondents were neutral. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

On the Teachers and baby sitters should guide and counsel the children statement, 124 respondents strongly agreed while 46 respondents agreed. None of the respondents' response was neutral, disagree or strongly disagree.

The last indicator used was financial provision. The first selected statement was inadequate finances are a major hindrance to effective parenting. Majority (82) respondents strongly agreed, 39 agreed and 30 were neutral. Twelve respondents strongly disagreed and 7 disagreed.

On children from single mother families experience long-term and short-term financial inadequacies statement, 88 strongly agreed and 56 agreed. Nineteen respondent's response were neutral and 7 disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The last statement was Lack of finances cause children to engage in risky behaviour. Majority (56) of respondents were neutral and 46 agreed. Thirty-eight strongly agreed and 20 disagreed while 10 strongly disagreed.

According to the tallied data, 84.46 percent both strongly agreed and agreed with the indicators of parenting while 10.20 percent were not sure and could therefore be swayed to either side of the divide. A few of the respondents 5.34 percent both strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings reveal that the single mothers interviewed are aware of their roles as parents.

4.4 Socio Economic Challenges Facing the Single Mothers

4.4.1 Emotional challenges

The study sought to find out the emotional challenges facing single mothers today. A number of the respondents clearly stated that they felt an underlying feeling of unfulfilment and emptiness in them. They expressed persistent feelings of being failures.

Another emotional challenge that was prevalent in all respondents was irritability due to disturbing questions they get from their children about their fathers. The single mothers explained that they were not comfortable with such questions and could not answer some of these questions and that more often, they were forced to lie to their children. Identity crisis though brought out differently by the single mothers was also established to be a major challenge facing the single mothers.

Single motherhood accelerates feelings of loneliness and solitude. It was established that the single mothers also felt helpless, hopeless and lacked confidence so that in some extreme cases, depression was paramount.

Table 4.13: Emotional problem faced by single mothers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of identity	105	62
Loneliness	165	97.1
Lack of confidence/Low self esteem	98	58
Irritable	130	77
Helpless and hopeless	85	50

Source: Author (2016)

Table 12 depicts that majority (97.1%) of the respondents felt lonely, 77 percent suffered from emotional imbalance and had become irritable and short tempered. Sixty-two percent of the respondents felt that they lacked identity, 58 percent of the women lacked confidence in handling the issues of life and 50 percent felt hopeless and helpless. Jayakody (2000) states that single mothers lacked self-confidence.

4.4.2 Social Challenges

Majority of the single mothers explained that the greatest challenge they have to overcome is the society itself. The kind of discrimination they face from the society was maddening. A particular single mother stated, "The society does not seem to understand

that I chose to be single. They keep nagging me with questions of my children's father whereabouts. A question that I don't take kindly". This social challenge was more prominent on the category of single mothers that are single by choice and have no intentions of getting married whatsoever.

Another challenge mentioned was the way the society perceived this single mothers. They were perceived to be of loose morals compared to their married counterparts who expressed a holier than thou attitude. The singles were seen to be a threat to the married women's husbands. This was consistent with the findings of Wachege (1994) that the single mothers are *turwigi* (eagles), who snatch away husbands.

It was clear that single mothers had a challenge when it came to decision making. Majority of the single mothers stated that they had no one to consult. They made decisions and at times regretted as they ended up in bigger problems. Unlike the married couples who could consult each other, the single mothers had no one to consult.

Another challenge that was eminent was the prejudice that the single mothers' children would also end up being single like their mothers. This was emphasized by the Agikuyu proverb *kori kaiyaga ota nyina.* The society does not seem to care the damage they do to the esteem of such mothers and to a larger extent to their children.

Majority of the single mothers also quoted lack of identity as a big challenge from the society. They were made to feel unwanted as they have no roots. They lacked the security given to wives by husbands. Due to lack of male protection, some men took advantage of the single mothers. A particular mother actually explained that these men refer to them as common 'goods'. This created a feeling of guilt and dirty sinners amongst the single mothers.

The single mothers also experienced political discrimination. It was evident that those who had tried to engage themselves in politics, their ambitions were killed by the people who thought electing such mothers is giving them mandate to poison and influence other women. They were more often told to get husbands that they can be answerable to first. Wachege (1994) asserts that in nation building, the single mothers are subjected to derogatory manoeuvers whenever they initiate a project.

Table 4.14: Social problems facing single mothers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Stereotyping	170	100
Lack of family identity	159	94
Discrimination	106	61
Social isolation	47	28

Source: Author (2016)

Table 13 depicts that (100 %) of the respondents faced stereotyping from the society, 94 percent had family identity crisis which created a feeling of rootlessness and they felt like they did not belong anywhere. Sixty-one percent of the respondents faced societal discrimination and 28 percent faced social isolation.

4.4.3 Economical Challenges

Guided by the fact that these single mothers had to entirely bring up their children single handed, financial constraints were a major challenge. To the single mothers, economic crisis was a standing situation. The single mothers explained that they strained in accessing education for their children, they could not always afford to meet the basic their basic needs, a situation that led them to always either borrow from friends, take loans from their chamas or even look for what they called *sponsors.* Another major financial problem was in accessing the food items, medical facilities, clothing, paying house rent, clothing, and water and electricity bills.

The category of single mothers that was formally employed stated that they faced discrimination from their employers. They stated that when it came to promotions and job opportunities, a number of employers preferred employees from stable families.

Another economic challenge was in accessing credit facilities. A single mother explained that when they apply for loans, some of the financial institutions scrutinise their marital status and at times denied them credit facilities despite their individual merits.

Table 4.15: Economic challenges faced by the single mothers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Education of children	163	96
Food items	109	64
Utility bills	98	58
Clothing	88	52
Work-related discrimination	66	39
Accessing credit facilities	43	25
Medical facilities	93	55

Source: Author (2016)

Table 14 depicts that majority (96 %) faced problems linked to the studies of their children. It was challenging to pay for their fees. Sixty-four percent of the respondents had a challenge in providing food for their families, 58 percent had a challenge in paying the utility bills. Fifty-five percent stated they had a challenge in accessing medical facilities, 52 percent had a challenge in buying clothes and 39 percent quoted work related discrimination as a challenge and 25 percent had challenges in accessing credit facilities. It is clear from the table above that economic crisis was a standing situation with most of the single mother families.

4.5 Coping Mechanisms

The study sought to find out the coping mechanisms adapted by the single mothers in Zimmerman. One single mother revealed that anytime she is faced by a challenge, she

goes somewhere alone and cries herself to sleep. Most of the single mothers revealed that crying helped to relieve them a lot. Another single mother was actually quoted saying 'only my pillow understands what I go through'.

The single mothers also revealed that they would more often avoid the social places crowded by their counterparts the married. They revealed that when they were going out to such places, it was only to meet other single mothers. It was actually evident that even when they formed Chamas, they considered who and who was part of it. Majority of the single mothers stated that their Chamas have only single mothers like them. It was established that the married women refused to accommodate the single mothers in their Chamas citing they were warned against such company by their husbands.

Another mechanism entailed praying and keeping to personal fellowship. The single mothers stated to a large extent that even the church discriminated against them. One mother said she could not be allowed to partake the Holy Communion since she separated with her husband. They explained that their comfort only came from reading their bibles and praying in their own secret places. The respondents revealed that though most of them do not belong to a particular church, they know the power of a praying women.

There was a category of the single mothers that was honest and stated that they commercialise their bodies. That they have identified sponsors who they give sex in return for money.

When asked how they cope with the disturbing questions from their own children, the single mothers revealed that they are more often forced to lie to their children or dawdle such questions. Another mechanism established was clubbing and partying. The single mothers stated that drinking made them forget their challenges for a while and though it interfered with their finances, they did not mind doing it as it kept them going.

On bad days, when depression was taking toll on them, the single mothers revealed that they would seek for medical help. It was established that they would visit medics and guidance and counselling experts. It is on such days when the single mothers also revealed they would stay indoors and sleep for longer hours. One peculiar instance was when a particular lady said that she could sleep from Friday night to Monday morning without eating.

Enjoying their children's company was also established as a coping mechanism. The single mothers stated that they often found joy in bonding with their children when they felt lonely. It was evidence that these mothers would take their children out and have fun together as this was not only fun to the kids but also therapeutic to the single mothers. Borrowing was another strategy used by the single mothers. The study revealed that majority lived beyond their income. They survived on borrowing from their chamas, financial institutions, other single mothers or their friends and relatives.

For those who were doing the casual jobs, the study revealed that on bad days they would

work day and night whenever the jobs were available to supplement the other bad days.

Coping Mechanism adopted by single mothers

Chart showing coping mechanisms (vertical axis: Coping mechanism) against Frequency (horizontal axis, 0 to 180). Categories listed: Crying, Guidance and counselling, Watching Movies, Taking alcohol, talking to friends, Praying.
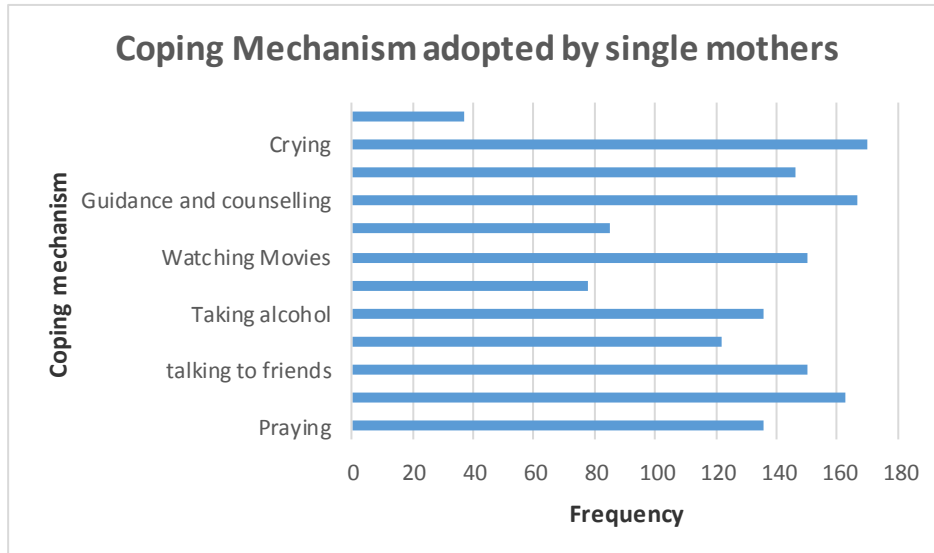
Figure 3.2: A graphical representation of the coping mechanism

Source: Author (2016)

Table 4.16: Coping mechanism adopted by single mothers

Challenge	Coping mechanism
Social	- Socialising with other single mothers - Staying alone - Reading inspirational materials - Enjoy my children's company - Guidance and counselling
Emotional challenge	- Praying - Crying off - Reading the bible - Visiting counsellors - Sleeping - Clubbing - Seek medical help
Economic challenge	- Borrowing from chamas, friends and relatives - Working odd shifts - Looking for a sexual partner to support financially

The findings indicate that there are both positive and negative coping strategies adopted by the single mothers in Zimmerman.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The overall objective of the study was to investigate how effective single mothers are in parenting in Kenya. The study was based on four specific objectives including: How parenting is conceptualized in Kenya, the indicators of parenting, the socio-economic challenges faced by single mothers and their coping mechanisms.

Going by Brisbane (1988) definition of parenting that it is a process that goes beyond the biological relationship to include taking care of the children and assisting them grow and learn, the study revealed that the single mothers are fully aware of what parenting entails. It was established that majority of the single mothers had two children and that such children depended on them fully to cater for all their needs. The respondents also indicated that majority of them interacted with their children daily even amidst their busy schedule encumbered with double responsibilities. Further, the study established that majority of the children spend time with house helps when their mothers are absent. This indicated that house helps as another agent of socialization has been adopted in the modern Kenya though their role in correcting children's maladaptive behaviour is limited to some extent.

When interviewed further on how much they spent on housing, food items, clothing, School fees, Transport and utility bills, each category of single mothers had different approximate expenditure depending on the average income per month. The category of single mothers earning Ksh.5, 000-9,000 spent the least amount per month compared to

the category of single mothers earning Ksh.40, 000 and above. It was clearly established that the single mothers approved behaviour monitoring, disciplining, guidance and counselling and financial support as indicators of parenting and ranked them as necessary.

The study also indicated that the single mothers are faced by various challenges ranging from Emotional, Social to Economic. According to Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009), the challenges of single mothers are linked with the upbringing of children, their future and settling down in life.

5.2 Conclusion

The study established that parenting today is different from what it was many years ago. According to Gander and Gardiner (1981), the process of child rearing has changed over time. Children are raised in more privatized families. The role of child rearing has shrunk with the changes in the modern society. The family structure has changed with most of the households now being female headed. According to Uchenna (2013), single parenting is becoming increasingly acceptable phenomena in the contemporary society with a number of households being female headed.

Children whose parents are always present are likely to be fully equipped to face the battle of life unlike those who are more often left to the house helps. According to API (2008), when parents are there for their children, they can guide and discipline positively, supervise their children's undertakings both in school and at home, respond sensitively

thus promote a sense of security and follow their children's interests thus encourage rich and elaborated discussion, and a love of exploration, mastery and learning thus produce an all-round shaped individual.

The study established that single mothers are faced by a number of challenges ranging from social, economic to emotional challenges. Despite all these challenges, the single mothers are always working hard to rear their children. Single mothers are likely to perform better in their parenting role if the society, which forms a greater barrier to them, does away with the prejudice and bias and apparent condemnations.

Single parenthood though cannot be affirmed to be a family style saturated with only negative elements. This can be confirmed by the fact that the study has revealed there are mothers who chose to be single. Better still, the study has revealed that these single mothers have alternative strategies that they adopt in the process of parenting.

5.3 Recommendations:
- There is need to train the young mothers on parenting.
- Majority of the single mothers are away most of the time. This introduces the twin-burden of parenting given that the fathers are not there. The study therefore, recommends the creation of neighbourhood networks that takes care of the children in the absence of their mothers.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends that similar studies should be carried out in other areas. It is also important for another study to be carried out targeting the married women to get their views on the socio-economic challenges they face and how they affect their role as parents.

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APENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Hallo;

My name is Purity Kagendo, a Master of Arts student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on single mothers and parenting in modern Kenya a case of Zimmerman Estate-Nairobi. The information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will help unearth how parenting is conceptualized and the challenges facing single mothers.

Thanks as you take part in the research.

Part I: BACKGROUND DATA

Instructions: Tick appropriately (√)

1. **Mother age group**

   15 - 20   [ ]

   21-26   [ ]

   27-32   [ ]

   33 and above [ ]

2. **Education level:**

   Primary   [ ]

   Secondary   [ ]

   College   [ ]

   University   [ ]

3. **Type of employment**

    Self-employed [ ]

    Employed   [ ]

    Unemployed   [ ]

4. **What is your main source of income?**

    ……………………………………

    …………………………………..

5. **What is your average monthly income?**

    5,000-9,000   [ ]

    10,000-19,000   [ ]

    20,000-29,000   [ ]

    30,000-39,000   [ ]

    40,000 and above [ ]

6. **Where do you seek for financial support when in need?**

    Financial institutions   [ ]

    Friends   [ ]

    Other single mothers   [ ]

    Relatives   [ ]

    Others (Please specify)…………………………………………..

7. **How much do you spend in a month on the following items;**

Item	Approximate Amount in Kshs.
Clothing	
Housing	
Food	
School fees	
Transport	
Utility bills	

Part II: PRESENT DAY CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PARENTING

8. **What does parenting mean to you?**

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9. **What does effective parenting mean to you?**

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…………………………………………………………………………………………

10. **How many children do you have?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

11. **How often do you interact with your children(s)?**

Daily   [ ]

Once in a week [ ]

Weekly   [ ]

Monthly   [ ]

Semi-annually   [ ]

Annually   [ ]

12. **With whom do your children spend time with while you are away?**

Grandparents   [ ]

House help   [ ]

Day care attendants   [ ]

Others (Please specify)…………………………..

13. (a) In your own opinion, do you approve the indicators of parenting as indicated below?

Indicators	Yes	No
Behaviour monitoring		
Disciplining		
Guidance and counselling		
Financial support		

13. (b) If yes to the above statement, how do you prioritize the indicators?

Indicators	Very Necessary	Necessary	Unnecessary	Very Unnecessary
Behaviour monitoring				
Disciplining				
Guidance and counselling				
Financial support				

13. (c) briefly give reasons for your above response.

INDICATORS	REASON
Behaviour monitoring	
Disciplining	
Guidance and counselling	
Financial support	

14. In a 5-point ranking scale of 1-strongly Disagree (SD), 2-Disagree (D), 3-Neutral (N), 4-Agree (A), 5-Strongly Agree (SA) rate the following indicators of parenting accordingly

	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Behaviour monitoring	It is important to know the friends to your child					
	There is need to limit the social places that a child attends					
	Parents need to know where their children spend their leisure time					
Discipline	There is need for parents to instil virtues in their children through disciplining them					
	Children should be punished whenever they misbehave					
	It is the duty of parents to correct their children's maladaptive behaviours					
Guidance and	Parents need to guide their children to make sober and informed decisions in					

Counselling	life					
	Parents need to inform their children's of socially accepted values					
	Teachers and baby sitters should guide and counsel the children					
Financial Support	Inadequate finances are a major hindrance to effective parenting.					
	Children from single mother families experience long-term and short-term financial inadequacies					
	Lack of finances cause children to engage in risky behaviour					

Part I11: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

15. What are some of the challenges facing you as a single mother?

a) **Emotional challenges**

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b) Social challenges

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c) Economic challenges

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Part IV: COPING MECHANISMS

16. How do you cope with the following single parenting problems mentioned

earlier on?

Problem	Coping mechanism
Social challenges	
Economic Challenges	
Emotional Challenges	