

**INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KIRINYAGA DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF
MWEA DIVISION**

BY

SAMSON ELIZABETH MUNINI

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and that it has not been submitted to any other institution for academic purposes.

.....Date.....

Samson Elizabeth Munini

This project has been submitted to the University of Nairobi for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

.....Date.....

Dr. Agnes Kibui

.....Date.....

Ms Juliet Muasya

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my dad, **Samson Githuku** my brother, **Jackson Githinji**, my sisters, **Muthoni, Wairimu**, and my children, **Margaret, Mercy** and **Brian**.

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I wish to thank God for his unconditional love for me and for seeing me through my studies. Success is achieved through prayer, determination and hard work. I thank all those who assisted me in one way or the other to make this project a reality especially my supervisors Dr. Agnes Kibui and Ms. Juliet Muasya. I also give thanks to the teachers of Mwea Division for providing me with accurate data. And not also forgetting my dad, brothers and sisters for their financial support. God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

This study intended to investigate the Influence of Single Parenthood on Pre-School Children's Academic Performance in Kirinyaga district and the influence of the following variables; risk and protective factors, absence of a father and mothers' employment were the basis of the study objective and questions for the study on the influences of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design because it enabled the research to gather the relevant data from a target population from all the pre-school children in Mwea division of Kirinyaga district and an accessible population of 160 respondents from the 80 pre-schools that are registered by the Ministry of Education department of ECD; and which had been in operation for over one year. Multi-stage sampling included simple random sampling of the 80 teacher respondents and the 80 parents' respondents. From this total of 160 a simple random sampling was done to determine the 30% respondents for each category to yield a total sample of 48 (30% of 160). Two sets of data collection instruments were employed; a questionnaire for the teachers and an interview schedule for the parents. Validity and reliability were ensured through a pilot study and professional advice were included in both quantitative and qualitative analysis in which descriptive statistics were employed as measures of central tendencies, (mean, mode and median) and measures of dispersion were also used with the aid of excel computer package. The study found that fathers absent and risk protective factors were the major influences on pre-school child's performance. The study made the conclusion that Influence of Risk and Protective are a major threat to pre-school children behaviour and academic performance. However this study could not establish at what point to isolate other factors like religion and culture and modern life styles e.g. the single parent by choice status as contributing to risk and protective factors. On mother's employment, the study findings are in agreement with other researchers on the influence of income and mother's employment that working is not a predictor of negative outcomes and working can have both positive and negative effects on student achievement. The study recommended that there is need for pre-school managers and teachers to be aware and vigilant to mitigate the Influence of Risk and Protective factors.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ECD: Early Child Development

MoE: Ministry of Education

KMC: Kirinyaga Municipal Council

KU: Kenyatta University

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

There are many types of learning disruptions which influence a child's learning and adjustment in school. Influence of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance is one of immediate concern to an educationist as the pre-school children's most immediate environment is the family

The divorce rate has generally been going up throughout the 20th century until its peak in the late 1970s. The rate of divorce has slowly been declining since that peak (Barber, 1998). In the most recent data, there were about 20 divorces for every 1,000 women over the age of 15. This number has gone down from about 23 divorces per 1,000 women in 1978, but it is still significantly greater than the rate of divorce during the 1950s. At that time, the rate of divorce was about 5 per 1,000 women (Bowlby, 1992).

The divorce rate has been increasing in every industrialized country in the world. There are two significant factors affecting the rising divorce rate in the United States and elsewhere: men and women are less in need of each other for economic survival, and gains made in birth control allow men and women to separate sexual activity from having children. A variety of factors are producing the current leveling off of the divorce rate. We may be at the end of the effects produced by the emergence of reliable birth control in the 1960s, but there are also other factors (Hart, 1992). Our population is aging, and in general longer marriages are more likely to remain intact. Also, more young people are cohabiting rather

than getting married. The breakup of this kind of relationship does not get recorded as a divorce (Cummings, 1994).

It is important to note that while divorce increases children's risk for a variety of problems, not all children who experience divorce have problems. Children of divorce are twice as likely as children living in non divorced families to experience difficulties. Roughly 20% to 25% of these children will have problems. Another way of saying this is that 75% to 80% will not experience these difficulties. In other words, while children of divorce are at greater risk, most of them will not have major problems (Barber, 1998).

Children from divorced families are more likely to have academic problems. They are more likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school authorities. These children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed. Children who grow up in divorced families often have more difficulties getting along with siblings, peers, and their parents. Also, in adolescence, they are more likely to engage in delinquent activities, to get involved in early sexual activities, and to experiment with illegal drugs. In adolescence and young adulthood, they are more likely to have some difficulty forming intimate relationships and establishing independence from their families (Davison, 1994).

Feinberg and Hetherington (2001) concluded that; whether one uses children's grades, standardized test scores, or dropout rates; children whose parents divorce generally have poorer scores. These results have been found quite consistently throughout the past three decades. Children's actual performance on tests consistently shows this difference, but results based on teacher or parent reports are less likely to show this difference.

Pocock, 1994) postulate that in some cases, it appears that children's difficulties with school may be caused more by their behavior than their intellectual abilities. The pattern may be somewhat different for boys and girls. Boys are more likely to be aggressive and have problems getting along with their peers and teachers (Neborksy, 1997). These problems may lead them to spend less time in school or on their schoolwork. Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to experience depression, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work. School success has long-term implications for children's success in life, and so it is important to find ways to support children from divorced families.

Cummings and Davis (1994) postulated that each child will react differently to divorce or separation though very little is known about the effects of divorce on children younger than 2 years of age. When the bonds between parent and child are severely disrupted, there may be a problem (Cummings and Davis, 1994). However, very young children do not necessarily suffer just because a divorce has occurred. Both parents can stay actively involved in child rearing, or one parent can maintain a strong, healthy relationship with the child (Patterson and Dishion 1992). Children from 3 to 5 years of age who go through divorce tend to be fearful and resort to immature or aggressive behavior. They might return to security blankets or old toys. Some may have lapses in toilet training. These types of behavior rarely last for more than a few weeks. Most children are confused about what is happening or about why their parents have separated and often deny that anything has changed (Neborksy, 1997).

Although growing up in a single-parent family is frequently viewed as a risk factor for a child, single-parent families are now fairly common. Millar, Jane and Ridge, Tess (2001) postulated that more than 60%. Children born since 1984 will spend an average of 5 years of their childhood in a single-parent family, while Knox, (1996) was of the opinion that 30% of all children in the United States spend their entire lives with single parents. Despite this statistics questions about the influence of single-parent families on a child's academic achievement and the ways single parents can help their children succeed in school remain unanswered.

Children who are raised in single-parent homes are at risk for a number of less desirable outcomes, such as lower academic performance and a higher incidence of behavioral problems. It would be not be prudent to conclude however, that such negative outcomes were the direct consequence of the parents in the home or, as has been suggested on occasion, the absence of a father figure in a child's life (Millar, Jane and Ridge, Tess 2001). Instead, children are adversely affected by circumstances that concur with single-parent family configurations (such as economic disadvantage, residential instability, and interparental conflict) or the consequence of such configurations (such as disrupted parenting). Such circumstances are not uniformly present in the lives of all single-parent families. Consequently, children from different types of single-parent families are at differential risk for adverse outcomes associated with their living arrangements (Neborksy, 1997).

A greater percentage of single-parent families (57.4% in 1999) than two-parent families (6.3%) live below the poverty line. The percentage of single-parent families below the

poverty line is highest for adolescent single mothers and lowest for widowed mothers (Neborksy, 1997). In addition, a higher percentage of single mothers than single fathers lives below the poverty line. Economic disadvantage is linked with lower academic achievement and increased behavioral problems among children. Fewer economic resources are also linked with residential instability, which further contributes to children's academic and behavioral difficulties. Differences in well-being for children from single-parent families versus two-parent families typically disappear when differences in economic circumstances are taken into account (Millar and Ridge, 2001).

Families that attain their single-parent status through marital dissolution are disproportionately more likely to experience both residential instability and higher rates of interparental conflict (both prior and subsequent to marital disruption) due to change in circumstances and relationships. Children who are exposed to interparental conflict are more likely to experience difficulties with regard to psychological and behavioral adjustment and academic achievement. Again, once levels of interparental conflict are taken into account, differences in well-being for children from single-parent families versus two-parent families are reduced (Maurice 2008).

Finally, children from all family types are at risk when they experience parenting that is inadequate in terms of warmth, control, or monitoring. Less than optimal parenting is more likely to be observed in families that are experiencing economic stress and among adolescent mothers (although a large part of this association may be explained by the greater likelihood that adolescent single mothers will experience economic disadvantage).

Psychologist Mavis Hetherington has found that the parenting skills of mothers tend to diminish in the years immediately following divorce, and children who are exposed to such disruptions in parenting experience concurrent psychological, behavioral, and academic difficulties. As mothers adjust to their new single-parent status, however, their parenting improves, as does their children's well-being.

However, some research suggests that the factor that has the greatest impact on student achievement is not family structure but income (Maurice 2008). Studies that consider the influence of both family configuration and income find that there is little difference in the academic performance of children from two-parent and single-parent homes when family income is equal (Maurice 2008).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the last two decades, the number of single parent household has increase considerably. Recent research by social scientists shows that children brought up in single parent households show lower academic achievement and higher incidences of problems with behavior. Besides this, the image of single parents in the eye of public is not so favorable, whereas married couples are looked upon with high esteem and pride

Single parenting is not an easy task as they face many problems their biggest challenge being often related to finances. The financial situation of a family headed by one person is quite precarious as compared to a two-parent family, when both the partners are working money may usually not a big issue. Most single parents are not in a position to provide basic needs to their children.

The other problem that is experienced by single parents is that they have to balance work, household chores, visitation schedule and children's school and extracurricular activities. The stress caused by these situations can cause many physical and psychological problems like tiredness, insomnia, depression and behavioral problems which entail frequent visits to physician and psychologists and regular intake of drugs.

According to Labour Market Review (2006), greater percentage of one parent families live below the poverty line compared to two parent families. Also, it has been seen that children who come single parent homes experience long term psychological problems, higher absenteeism rates at school, lower levels of education, higher dropout rates and more delinquencies such as alcohol and drug addiction. Single parents also have limited social meetings compared to two parents as they have the responsibility of looking after their children. Therefore, it is quite common for a single parent to feel alone and lonely.

At present, there are no definitive answers on the influence of single parenting on academic achievement. In some ways however, children in single-parent families are at greater risk than children in other types of families. Even when they have the same academic abilities, children in single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families (Millar, Jane and Ridge, Tess 2001). Being the primary and frequently sole source of financial support for the family, single parents have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control; all these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement (Callister and Burks, 2006). Among children in single-parent families; those from mother-

absent households earn lower science grades than children from father-absent homes and no matter which parent is missing, children from single-parent families generally find it more difficult to connect with school Sang-Hun, (2009).

1.3. Purpose of the study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance in Kirinyaga district

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives

- i. To determine the influence of Risk and Protective Factors on Pre-School children's academic performance.
- ii. To find out the influence of absent Fathers on Pre-School children's academic performance
- iii. To establish the influence of Mother's Employment on Pre-School children's academic performance

1.5. Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of risk and protective factors on pre-school children's academic performance?
- ii. How does the absent of a fathers impact on pre-school children's academic performance?
- iii. How does mother's employment impact on pre-school children's academic performance?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study might be useful in guiding school managers and other stakeholders in the management on pre-school children's behavior and academic achievement. These study findings may be useful to other researchers planning or carrying out research on pre-school children's behavior and academic achievement. The Ministry of Education should formulate appropriate policies that could guide better management of pre-school children's behavior and academic achievement. Teacher trainers and curriculum developers should also integrate these study findings in the training programs for ECD teacher trainees. Finally, this study will also contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the management of children in pre-schools.

1.7. Scope of the study

The study aimed at investigating influence of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance in Kirinyaga district. The study was based on data collected in the last two years from pre-schools that are registered and have been in operation for the last two years in Mwea Division of Kirinyaga District Central Province which is semi urban.

1.8. Limitation of the Study

The study was confined to schools which are located in a semi rural environment and therefore the findings were only to be generalized to urban pre-schools with caution because the area of study has its own unique characteristics. The accessible population

consisted of 80 pre-schools and it covered the last two years and could not give an exhaustive historical inference.

1.9. Delimitation of the study

The study excluded all pre-schools which were less than one year in operation and all pre-schools which were not registered by the relevant government departments as pre-school institutions. Those which did not meet these two conditions were replaced randomly chosen as sample.

1.10. Basic Assumptions

The study assumed that there could be co-operation from the teachers and parents respondents and that the parent respondents were literate enough to comprehend the study objective and respond appropriately

1.11. Definition of key terms

Per-school: learning institution for children before they join main stream schooling

Standard one

Single parent: A parent living alone for whatever reason with a pre-school child

1.12. Organization of the study

The study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one deals with the general introduction of the research which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study terms and the organization of the study.

Chapter two deals with the related literature beginning with a introduction , theoretical and conceptual framework.

Chapter three consist of the research methodology which is divided into introduction research design, target population, sampling strategy, research instruments, validity and rehabiliatee of the instrument procedure for the data collection and data analysis techniques.

Chapter four consists of presentation, interpretation and discussion of the findings.

Chapter five contains the summary conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the influence of single parenthood, different parenting styles on pre-school children behaviour and academic performance. It also explains the two models, family deficit or risk and protective factor model used to fit single-parenthood.

Single-parent (also lone parent, solo parent and sole parent) is a parent who cares for one or more children without the physical assistance of the other parent in the home. "Single Parenthood" may vary according to the local laws of different nations or regions. Single parenthood may occur for a variety of reasons. A few possible scenarios are by choice, as in divorce, adoption, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, while others are the result of an unforeseeable occurrence, such as a death, child abuse, child neglect, or abandonment by biological parents. The living and parenting arrangements for single parents are diverse; a number live in households with other families, other adults or alone in homes, apartments, or government assisted housing. When parents separate, one party usually the primary parent has the children the majority of the time but secondary parents continue to share some type of parenting time and responsibility, to some extent, with their child. Sang-Hun (2009), It is a term that is mostly used to suggest that one parent has the most of the day to day responsibility in the raising of the child or children. In western society e.g. in UK over 90% of the time the child will end up with the mother as the caregiver. In the UK, and U.S.A for example, it is widely practiced, that it in the 'children's best interests' for the children to have both parents, encourage each parent to respect the

other parents in the children presence and financial help through child support for the parent that carried the most responsibility when parents separate. Any benefits, tax credits and related government-sponsored assistance are given 100% to the primary carer, if the secondary parent does not have the ability to financially care for their child, thus the child falls below the poverty line of society standards, and this can be mother, legal guardian or father.

In 2006, 12.9 million families in the U.S. were headed by a single-parent, 80% of which were headed by a female. Mackay,(2005). Since 1994, the percentage of US households headed by a single parent has remained steady at around nine percent, although it has nearly doubled since 1970. According to Bergman and Mike (2007), 14% of all Australian households were single-parent families. Since 2001, 31% of babies born in Australia were born to unmarried mothers. Callister, Paul and Burks, Stuart (2006), explain that calculated single mothers may not be single, as they may be living with the other biological parent without being formally married.

Sang-Hun (2009) postulate that in the United Kingdom, there are 5.9 million single parents as of 2005, with 3.1 million children., and that about 1 out of 4 families with dependent children are single-parent families, nine percent of which have a male single-parent. According to Mackay and Ross (2005), UK poverty figures show that 47% of single parent families are below the Government-defined poverty line (after housing costs). Bergman and Mike (2007) stated that in South Korea, where societal disapproval of unmarried

mothers is strong, 1.6% of births in 2007 were to unmarried women, and, of those women, 70% are estimated to have opted for adoption Sang-Hun (2009).

Single parent families are at a higher risk of poverty than couple families, and on average single mothers have poorer health than couple mothers. According to Callister and Burks, (2006) single parenting is strongly associated with an increased risk of a number of negative social, behavioral and emotional outcomes for children. However, while the association is strong, on balance the effect, size and the actual numbers affected are modest and most children from single parent families do well. Many factors influence how children develop in single-parent families: the parent's age, education level, and occupation; the family's income and the family's support network of friends and extended family members (including the non-resident parent, if available). Disadvantages in these factors that often accompany single parenting appear to cause most of this association rather than single parenting itself (Mireya and Navarro, 2008).

A variety of viewpoints do exist, with different readings of the research possible. The Institute for the Study of Civil Society reports that children of single parents, after controlling for other variables like family income, are more likely to have problems. Bergman, (2007). There are impacts of sole parenting on children, however the weight of the evidence it is suggested, do not appear to support a view that sole parents are a major cause of societal ills and are doing irreparable damage to their children (McQueen, (1992).

2.2. Theoretical Literature Review

Research on single-parent families has changed over the years. During different periods, research in the area has followed one of the two models: the Family Deficit Model or the Risk and Protective Factor Model.

2.2:1. Family Deficit Model

Dating back to the 1970s, the Family Deficit Model views the nuclear or two-parent family as the ideal family structure. According to this model, single-parent families have a negative impact on children simply because they do not have a nuclear family structure (Mireya and Navarro, 2008). Research using the Family Deficit Model begins with the assumption that single parenting is bad for children, and the results of these studies typically support this assumption. Indeed, some studies using the Family Deficit Model minimize or overlook the influence economics and other background factors have on academic achievement rather than alter this research model (Mireya and Navarro, 2008).

2.2:2. Risk and Protective Factor Model.

Developed in the early 1990s, the Risk and Protective Factor Model does not regard single-parent families as irregular Thiessen, (1997), because the foundation for the model is that all families have both strengths and weaknesses. Sameroff, Arnold, Ronald; Baldwin, Alfred; and Baldwin, Clara (1993), Rather than view single parenting as the cause of negative outcomes for children in these families, the Risk and Protective Factor Model describes family structure as one of many risk factors. Risk factors are either background characteristics or life events that may have a negative impact on child development. Protective factors are characteristics and events that positively influence children and help

limit the impact of risk factors Thiessen, (1997). essentially, risk factors are the weaknesses and protective factors are the strengths of any given family. According to this model, single parenting can be both a risk factor and a protective factor for children in this type of family.

2.3. Baumrind's four general parenting styles

In her research, Diana Baumrind found what she considered to be the four basic elements that could help shape successful parenting: responsiveness vs. unresponsiveness and demanding vs. undemanding. From these, she identified three general parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Alexander (1992 Maccoby and Martin expanded the styles to four: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful. According to Thiessen, (1997), these four styles of parenting involve combinations of acceptance and responsiveness on the one hand and demand and control on the other.

	Demanding	Undemanding
Responsive	Authoritative	Indulgent
Unresponsive	Authoritarian	Neglectful

Baumrind believed that parents should be neither punitive nor aloof. Rather, they should develop rules for their children and be affectionate with them. These parenting styles are meant to describe normal variations in parenting, not deviant parenting, such as might be observed in abusive homes (Milne, Myers, Rosenthal and Ginsburg, (1986). Most parents do not fall neatly in one category, but fall somewhere in the middle, showing characteristics of more than one style.

2.3:1. Authoritative parenting

The parent is demanding and responsive: Authoritative parenting, also called balanced parenting, is characterized by a child-centered approach that holds high expectations of maturity. Authoritative parents can understand their children's feeling and teach them how to regulate them (Zimiles and Lee, (1991). They often help them to find appropriate outlets to solve problems. Authoritative parenting encourages children to be independent but still places limits and controls on their actions (Astone and McLanahan, 1991). Extensive verbal give-and-take is allowed, and parents are warm and nurturing toward the child (Astone, and McLanahan, 1991). Authoritative parents are not usually as controlling, allowing the child to explore more freely, thus having them make their own decisions based upon their own reasoning (Kaplan, Diane ; Liu, Xiaoru; & Kaplan, Howard , 2001)

Authoritative parents set limits and demand maturity, but when punishing a child, the parent will explain his or her motive for their punishment. "Their punishments are measured and consistent in discipline, not harsh or arbitrary. Parents will set clear standards for their children, monitor limits that they set, and also allow children to develop autonomy. They also expect mature, independent, and age-appropriate behavior of children (Astone and McLanahan, (1991)

They are attentive to their children's needs and concerns, and will typically forgive and teach instead of punishing if a child falls short (Milne, Myers, Rosenthal and Ginsburg, (1986). This is supposed to result in children having a higher self esteem and independence because of the democratic give-take nature of the authoritative parenting style. This is the most recommended style of parenting by child-rearing experts.

2.3:2. Authoritarian Parenting

The parent is demanding but not responsive: Authoritarian parenting, also called strict. (Zimiles and Lee, (1991), is characterized by high expectations of conformity and compliance to parental rules and directions, while allowing little open dialogue between parent and child. "Authoritarian parenting is a restrictive, punitive style in which parents exhort the child to follow their directions and to respect their work and effort (Astone and McLanahan, (1991). Authoritarian parents expect much of their child but generally do not explain the reasoning for the rules or boundaries. Kaplan, Liu and Kaplan (2001).

Authoritarian parents are less responsive to their children's needs, and are more likely to spank a child rather than discuss the problem (Milne, Ann M.; Myers, David; Rosenthal, Alvin ; & Ginsburg, Alan, 1986). Children with this type of parenting may have less social competence as the parent generally tells the child what to do instead of allowing the child to choose by him or herself. Zimiles, Herbert and Lee (1991).

Nonetheless, researchers have found that in some cultures and ethnic groups, aspects of authoritarian style may be associated with more positive child outcomes than Baumrind predicts. "Aspects of traditional Asian child-rearing practices are often continued by Asian American families. In some cases, these practices have been described as authoritarian (Astone, and McLanahan (1991).

2.3:3. Indulgent parenting

The parent is responsive but not demanding: Indulgent parenting, also called permissive, nondirective or lenient, Zimiles, Herbert, and Lee, (1991) is characterized as having few

behavioral expectations for the child. "Indulgent parenting is a style of parenting in which parents are very involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them (Astone and McLanahan, (1991). Parents are nurturing and accepting, and are very responsive to the child's needs and wishes. Indulgent parents do not require children to regulate themselves or behave appropriately. This may result in creating spoiled brats or "spoiled sweet" children depending on the behavior of the children.

Children of permissive parents may tend to be more impulsive, and as adolescents, may engage more in misconduct and drug use. "Children never learn to control their own behavior and always expect to get their way (Astone and McLanahan, (1991). But in the better cases they are emotionally secure, independent and are willing to learn and accept defeat. They are able to live life without the help of someone else (Zimiles, Herbert and Lee, (1991).

2.3:4.Neglectful parenting

The parent is neither **demanding** nor **responsive**: Neglectful parenting is also called uninvolved, detached, dismissive or hands-off. (Zimiles, Herbert and Lee, (1991). The parents are low in warmth and control, are generally not involved in their child's life, are disengaged, undemanding, low in responsiveness, and do not set limits. Parents are emotionally unsupportive of their children, but will still provide their basic needs (Kaplan, Liu and Kaplan, (2001).

Children whose parents are neglectful develop the sense that other aspects of the parents' lives are more important than they are. Astone and McLanahan, (1991). Children often

display contradictory behavior, and are emotionally withdrawn from social situations. This disturbed attachment also impacts relationships later on in life. In adolescence, they may show patterns of truancy and delinquency (Astone and McLanahan, (1991).

2.4. Risk and Protective Factors

Personality, availability of social supports, and family cohesion are often identified as categories of factors that can impact a child positively or negatively. Researchers define personality factors as internal characteristics found in every child, including the child's intellectual ability and approach to learning, attitude and disposition, self-esteem, and impulse control. Social support availability factors are whether or not the child has advocates at home, at school, and elsewhere in the community. Family cohesion includes family structure and background characteristics such as the parent's occupation, family income, parent education, parental mental illness, parenting style, race and ethnicity, and family size. Family cohesion factors also include life events such as divorce, remarriage, death, and other changes that can influence child development Kaplan and Liu (2001).

Elements of each of the three categories can serve as either risk or protective factors. For instance, researchers regard family size as a risk factor when there are four or more children, close in age, within the same household, but a protective factor in families with fewer than four children or when children are spaced 3 or more years apart. Furthermore, risk is cumulative (Knox, (1996), meaning that children who have a combination of risk factors such as poverty, many siblings close in age, and a single parent are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child development outcomes than children

from single-parent homes with higher incomes and fewer siblings. The more risk factors children have, the more likely they will experience negative outcomes as a result. Risk factors can lead to negative results, but the presence of risk factors does not guarantee poor outcomes Zimiles and Lee, (1991).

Indeed, protective factors mediate and limit the impact risk factors have on academic achievement and other aspects of child development. According to research in this area, protective factors include high self-esteem, strong social support at home and at school, low rates of criticism from parental figures, positive parent mental health, college-educated parents, high income, and parenting strategies that effectively address high-risk situations. For example, children considered high-risk because of exposure to several risk factors often do well in school when their parents and teachers believe that they have the ability to do so. Similarly, strong parenting is a protective factor, and children who live in impoverished areas can successfully avoid negative outcomes if parents develop higher expectations for their children's school performance Knox, (1996). Essentially the strengths and protection families offer children are more important than the structure of the family unit itself.

Family income also influences parent support and involvement in education - factors related to school achievement. Students who regard their parents as warm, firm, and involved in their education earn better grades than their classmates with uninvolved parents. In these families, parent support acts as a protective factor countering some of the risk factors these children encounter. Although economic pressures often limit or prevent parent involvement in single-parent families, when single parents make the effort to support their children's education, their effort acts as a protective factor.

2.5. The Impact of Absent Fathers

More often than not, single-parent families include a mother and children whose original father no longer lives in the home. Similar to income and parent education, father absence is also a risk factor that makes it more difficult for children to succeed in school. When parents separate or divorce, children often lose both the financial and emotional support of their fathers, which can have a negative impact on academic performance. Although child support does not resolve all of these issues, it does make a significant difference. Children in mother-only families who receive child support tend to do better in school than those who do not receive child support (Zimiles and Lee, (1991).

According to Youth, (1996), for every \$100 of child support mothers receive, their children's standardized test scores increase by 1/8 to 7/10 of a point. In addition, fathers who support their children financially typically have more contact with them, further decreasing the negative emotional impact of marital breakdown (Knox, Virginia, 1996)

Although many single parents remarry, research by Zimiles, Lee, and (1991), Contend that blending families does not eliminate all of the risk factors children experience in single-parent homes. The family income of children in blended families mirrors that of children who live with both of their original parents. However, many children in blended families actually receive less parental support than those with single parents. Remarriage often changes parental behavior as a formerly single parent enters a new relationship. This disruption can be hard on children who may feel that they are losing another parent. The presence of stepsiblings also reduces time with and access to parents, further decreasing the amount of support individual children receive (Zimiles, and Lee, (1991). Although children in blended families still tend to have higher academic achievement than those

living with single parents, some children will replace academic problems with emotional and behavioral difficulties, essentially eliminating many of the positive effects brought on by the increase in family income (Nelson, Clark, and Gregory, (2001).

2.6. The Impact of Mother's Employment

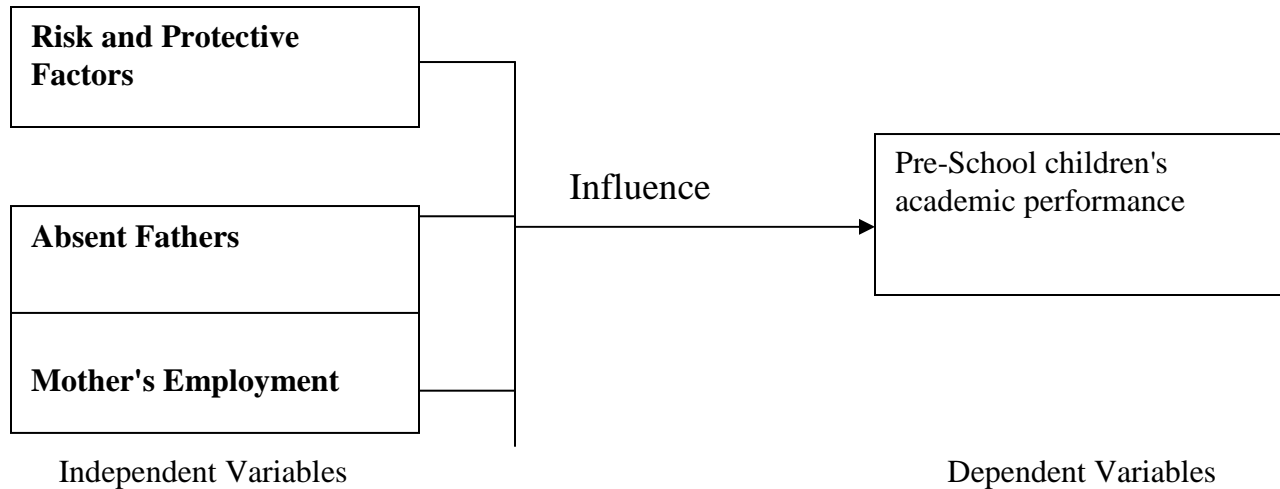
Research on the influence of income and mother's employment suggests that working is not a predictor of negative outcomes and working can have both positive and negative effects on student achievement (Mulkey and Harrington, (1992). Regardless of whether they are single or married, mothers who work full-time often have less time to spend with their children and according to Sameroff, Arnold, Ronald; Baldwin, Alfred; Baldwin, and Clara. (1993), a condition that may lead to lower achievement and increases in behavior problems at school. For many single-parent families, however, children receive more benefits than harm from their mother's work. In addition to the income mothers bring into the family, African American children in elementary school actually do better in school when their mothers work outside of the home (Nelson, Clark and Gregory (2001).

2.6.1 Study gap

There is evidence from the developed world the children from low-income, single-parent families actually earn higher grades than children from two-parent homes with similar income suggests that single parents who work teach their children coping strategies that limit the impact of financial hardship, low parent involvement, and other risk factors (Nelson, Clark and Gregory, (2001). However, similar evidence need to be documented for the developing countries like Kenya. This study therefore intends to fill this gap by investigating influence of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance in Kirinyaga District.

2.7. Conceptual Frame Work

Fig: 2.1. Conceptual Frame Work



Risk and Protective Factors

Personality factors as internal characteristics found in every child, including the child's intellectual ability and approach to learning, attitude and disposition, self-esteem, and impulse control. Social support availability factors are whether or not the child has advocates at home, at school, and elsewhere in the community. Where this factors are positively natured they will have a positive influence on the pre-school child while any neglect or negative approach to handling any of these factors would result in a negative influence on the pre-school child's performance in school.

2.7.2. Absent Fathers

When parents separate or divorce, children often lose both the financial and emotional support of their fathers, which can have a negative impact on the Childs academic performance.

2.7.3. Mother's Employment

A mother's working schedule can have both positive and negative effects on a pre-school child's achievement. Regardless of whether they are single or married, mothers who work full-time often have less time to spend with their children and therefore less time to attend to the children's schooling challenges. However, where a working mother takes time off or adopts a flexi time work schedule to be conveniently near the pre-school child there would be reduced negative effects on the academic performance of the pre-school child.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, study location, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedure and the data analysis plan to be used in this study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design adopted in this research study is descriptive survey research design. Survey design intended to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of phenomena. Descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). It can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). It is for these reasons that this study chose to use the descriptive research design to examine the influence of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance in Kirinyaga District

The design adopted is appropriate and efficient to use in such a study as it is an accurate counter and indicator to measure the influence of single parenthood on children behaviour and academic performance. (Pamela, 2003). The researcher used this research design because the study objective was to collect information from respondents on their experiences, perceptions and opinions in relation to the Impact of Family Conflict on Pre-School Children's Behavior and Academic Achievement in Kirinyaga District and the design makes it possible, to draw valid general conclusions from the facts discovered

(Lokesh, 1984). According to Bell (1993), survey designs also aim at obtaining information which can be analyzed, patterns extracted and comparisons made.

3.3 Study Location

The study was conducted in Kirinyaga District. The location was chosen due to the homogeneous nature of the study population and the well developed infrastructure. Singleton (1993) argues that the ideal setting for any study should be easily accessible to the researcher.

3.4 Target Population

The target population was all the pre-schools in Kirinyaga district while the accessible populations were all the 80 pre-schools with a total of 1,118 children in Mwea Division of Kirinyaga District.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Gay (1992) asserts that for survey design, a sample of at least 30 per cent is justifiable for the study. By use of a multi stage sampling the researcher used simple random sampling of the 80 pre-schools teachers from a register established by the ECD district co-coordinator. The parents were randomly sampled as respondents for the study from the register of parents in each school.

3.5.1 Sample Size

From the 80 registered pre-schools which had been in operation for more than one year in Mwea in division in Kirinyaga District; one teacher and one parent from each school were included giving a total of 160. From the 160 sampled respondents a 30% sample sized (48 respondents) were farther randomly selected as study respondents.

Figure: 3.1 Sample populations

Category	Accessible population	Sample size	Percentage
Teachers	80	24	30%
Parent Family	80	24	30%
Total	160	48	30%

3.6 Data collection Instruments

This study used questionnaires and interview schedule to collect data. Best and Kahn (1992) observe that questionnaires enable the person administering them to explain the purpose of the study by giving meaning of the items that may not be clear. A self administered questionnaire for teachers was employed. The respondents reached were willing to co-operate as they read and wrote independently (Orodho, 2004). The questionnaires contained both open-ended and closed items. An interview guide was used to collect data from the parents/teachers. According to Orodho (2004), an interview guide makes it possible to obtain the data required to meet the specific objectives of the study. It also enables the researcher to obtain in-depth information from the respondents (Kothari, 2007)

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Validity of the Research

In order to ensure both validity and reliability; questionnaires were composed of carefully structured and unstructured questions to avoid ambiguity in all questions.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Research

A pilot study was done with two teacher respondents and one parent respondent from the non sampled population but within the target population. A test and re-test ensured reliability of the data collection instrument.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Permission to carry out the research was obtained from the Ministry of Education. Introductory letters to the schools were personally delivered. The researcher personally made a visit to the 80 sampled schools. During the visit I familiarized myself with the schools and developed a rapport with the principals and teachers, and notified them of the purpose of the study. The researcher administered the instruments personally to respondents, a fact that helped achieve a good return ratio. It also gave the respondents a chance to seek clarification on items that were not clear. The teachers were given questionnaires to fill and the researcher used interview schedule to parents.

3.9 Data Analysis

After collection of the questionnaires, the researcher read through them to ascertain their numbers and to see whether all the items had been responded to. Quantitative data was

analyzed by use of descriptive statistics which employed measures of central tendencies, measures of dispersion and skewness.

To analyze the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software were used to aid data analysis. Qualitative data do not produce discrete numerical data (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003), it is in form of words rather than numbers and therefore inferences were made from the responses of the respondents. Finally, harmonization of the responses given by the various respondents were undertaken, where responses on similar themes or objectives, emanating from different respondents were compared to find if the various responses concurred on various issues and, if not, the possible reasons for the observed discrepancies. The most common response were therefore considered to be the most prevalent in determining the impact of family conflict on pre-school children's behavior and academic achievement in Kirinyaga district. This discussion was guided by the specific objectives of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the analysis obtained from the study. The analysis is related to the research objectives and research questions stated in chapter one of the study. The quantitative analysis is followed by qualitative analysis of the data collected and the figures presented in percentages are rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

4.2. Response as per gender

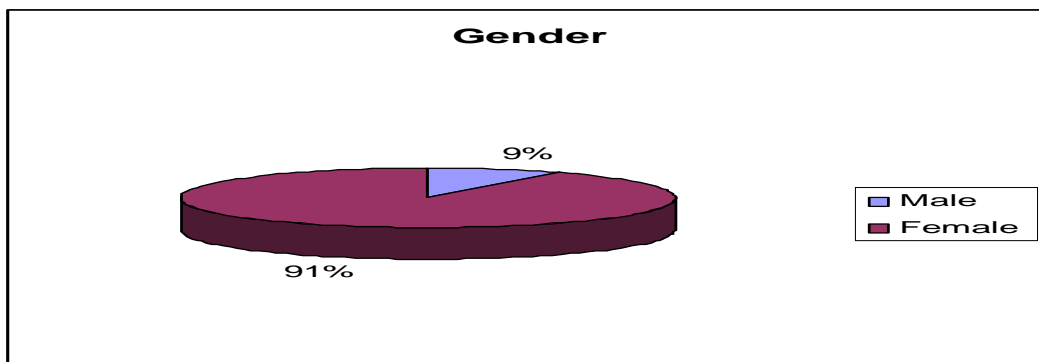
The findings were represented as per gender that is there was difference on responses given by male and female.

4.2.1. Gender

Table 4.2.1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	2	9
Female	20	91
Total	22	100

Figure 4.2.1: Gender of respondents



From table 4.2.1 and figure 4.2.1 above the respondents were 20(99%) female and 2(9%) male. The high ratio of female respondents is indicative of the reality that there are more female pre-school teachers than male as influenced by the nature of the job. The job entails educating and care for very young children, who require constant mothering.

Table 4.2.2: Year as a Pre-School Teacher in the school

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 years	2	9
2-4 years	7	32
4-6 years	9	41
Over 6 years	4	18
Total	22	100

Figure 4.2.2: Year as a Pre-School Teacher in the school

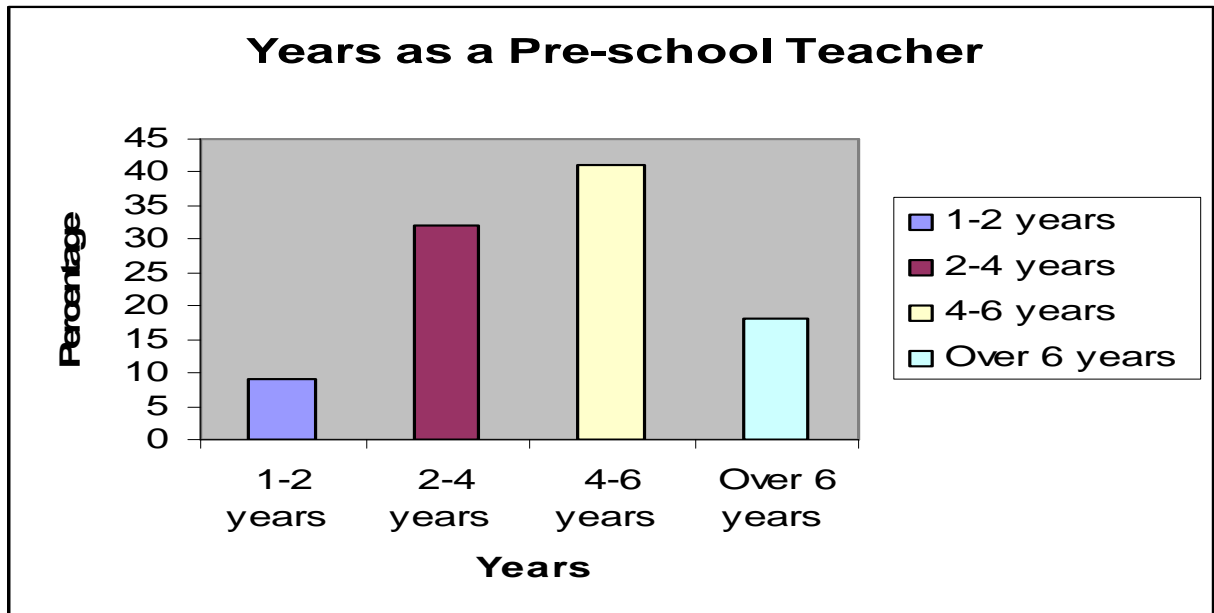


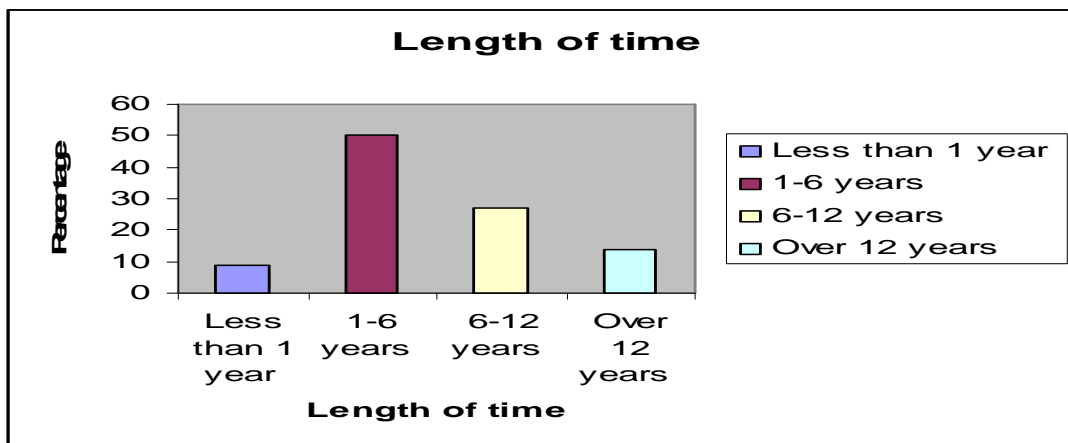
Table 4.2.2 and figure 4.2.2 indicate that the respondents had been in their various schools for varying durations. There were 9(41%) who had been in their schools for between 4-6

years and 7(32%) who had been in their schools for between 2-4 year. There were 4(18%) who have been I their schools for over 6 years. These responses indicate that the respondents are reliable in capturing the children performance and could therefore adequately and competently respond to the study questions.

Table 4.2.3: Length of Time as a Pre School Teacher

Length of Time	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one year	2	9
1-6 years	11	50
6- 12 years	6	27
Over 12 years	3	14
Total	22	100

Figure 4.2.3: Length of Time as a Pre School Teacher



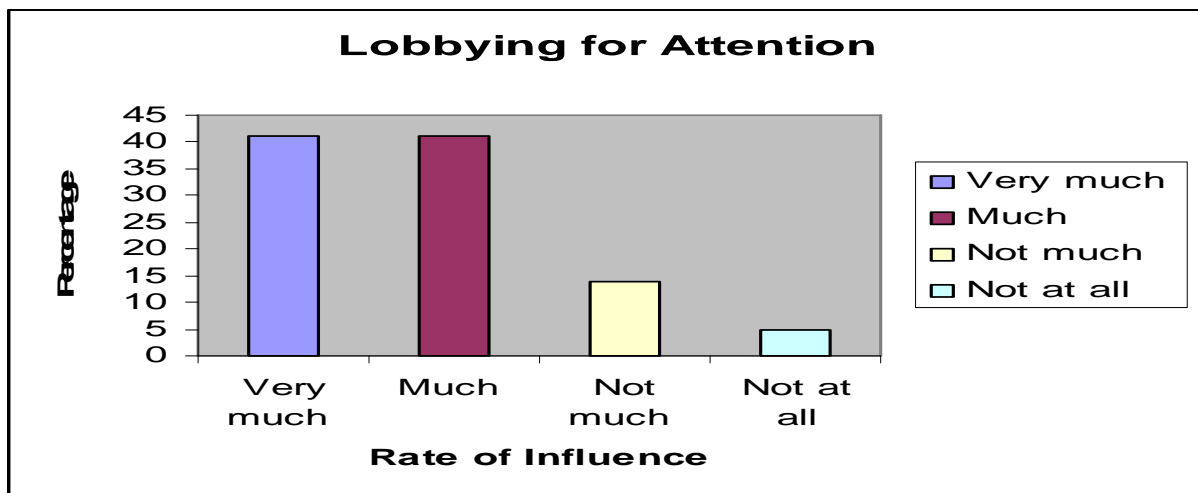
From table 4.2.3 and figure 4.2.3 above the respondents were found to have been in pre-school teaching for long periods as 11(50%) have been pre-school teachers for between 1-6 years and 6(27%) for between 6-12 years with 3(14%) having over 12 years experience. This confirms the opinion that the respondents have competence to adequately answer the research questions passed by the study.

Table 4. 2.4: Influence Of Single Parenthood on Children’s Performance

	Very much	%	Much	%	Not much	%	Not at all	%
lobbying for attention	9	41	9	41	3	14	1	5
Withdrawal from school activities.	6	27	7	32	9	41		
Competitive learning.	7	32	8	36	5	23	2	9
Projection of emotional behaviour.	5	23	7	32	8	36	2	9

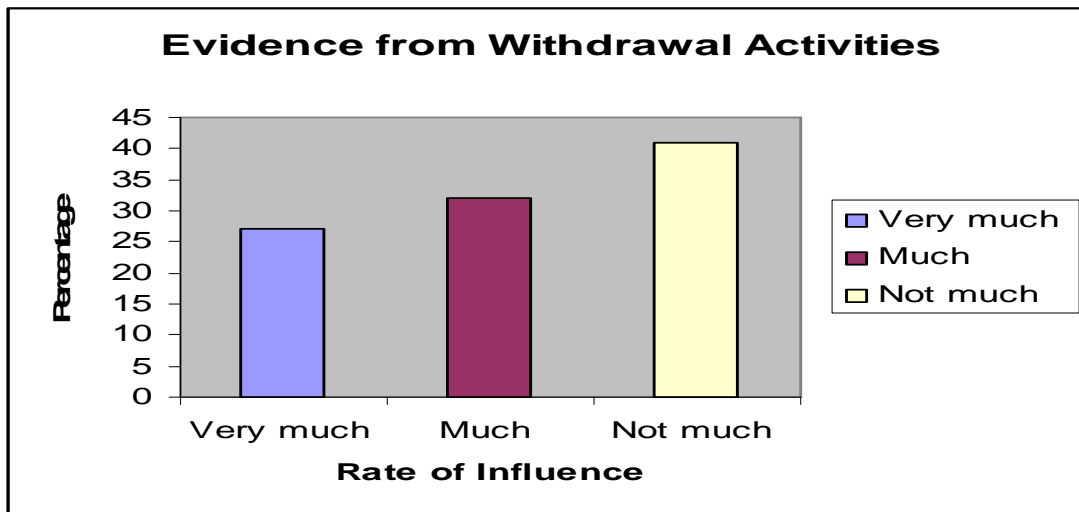
The study sought to establish the teacher’s opinion on the extent of various influences on children performance.

Figure 4.2.4: lobbying for attention



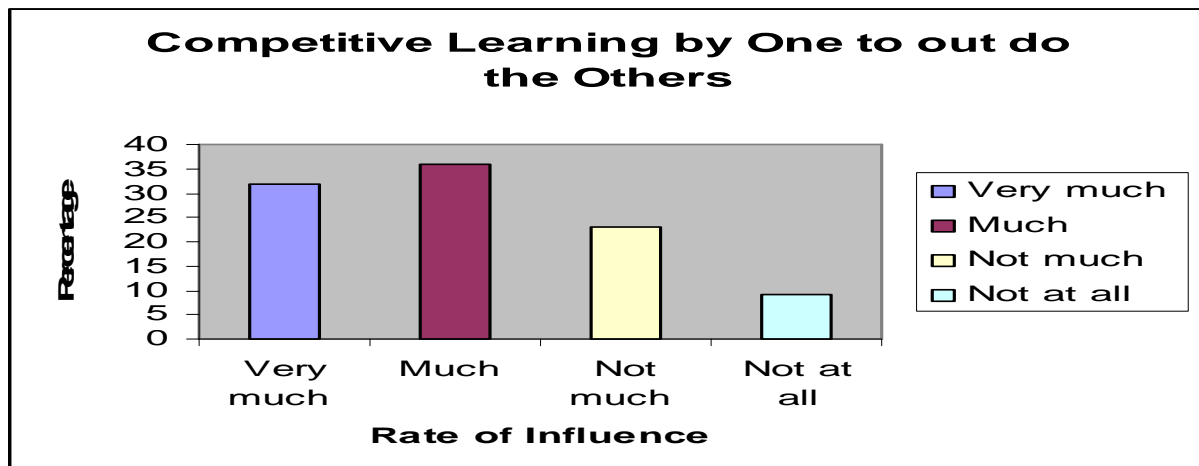
Lobbying for attention in school was as shown on figure 4.2.4 above to much and very much 18(81%) of the despondences which reflects the advocate role that is sought for by pre-school children trust the teacher to protect them and be there for them.

Figure 4.2.5: Withdrawal from school activities



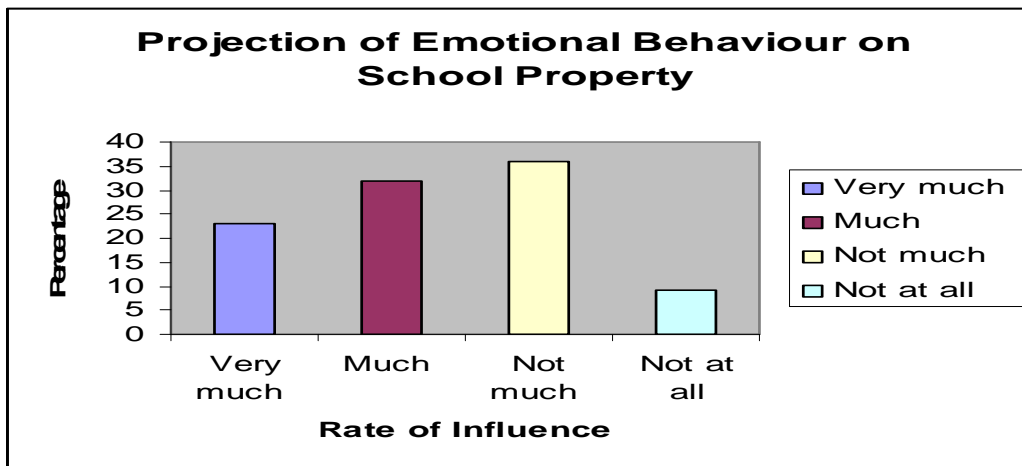
The figure 4.2.5 above show children withdrawal from school activities where attention is not fully given with much and not much are respecting 16(73%). This is a reaction expected where the children feel rejected due to non undivided attention that they need.

Figure 4.2.6: Competitive learning



From figure 4.2.6 above there was evidence that the children are competitive and 15(68%) are reported to have witnessed such competition where the pre-school children compete to out-do each other and only 5(23%) who reported that there was not much competition among the children to out do each other.

Figure 4.2.7: Projection of emotional behaviour

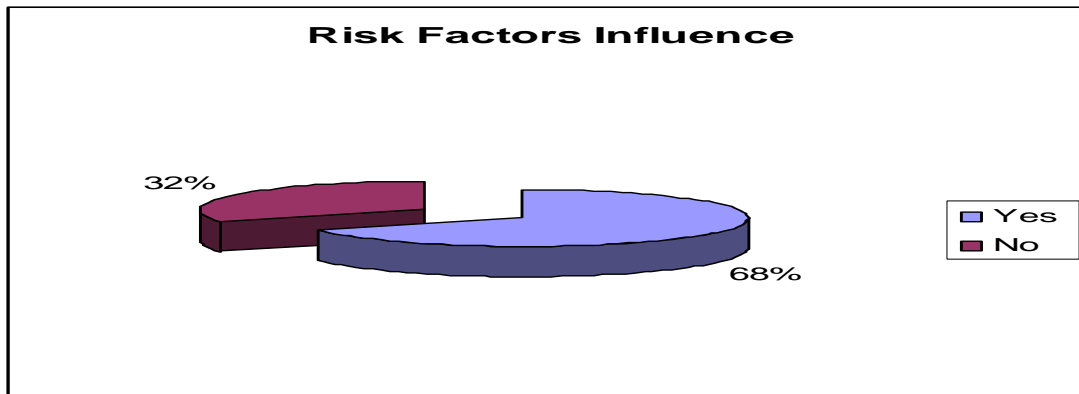


The respondents reported emotional projection behaviour on school property by majority of the children. These however 15(68%) who said it was not as much and much in extent of projection by the pre-school children on school children when they get.

Table 4.2.5: Influence of inherent risk factors on a Childs learning

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	68
No	7	32
Total	22	100

Figure 4.2.8: Influence of inherent risk factors on a Childs learning



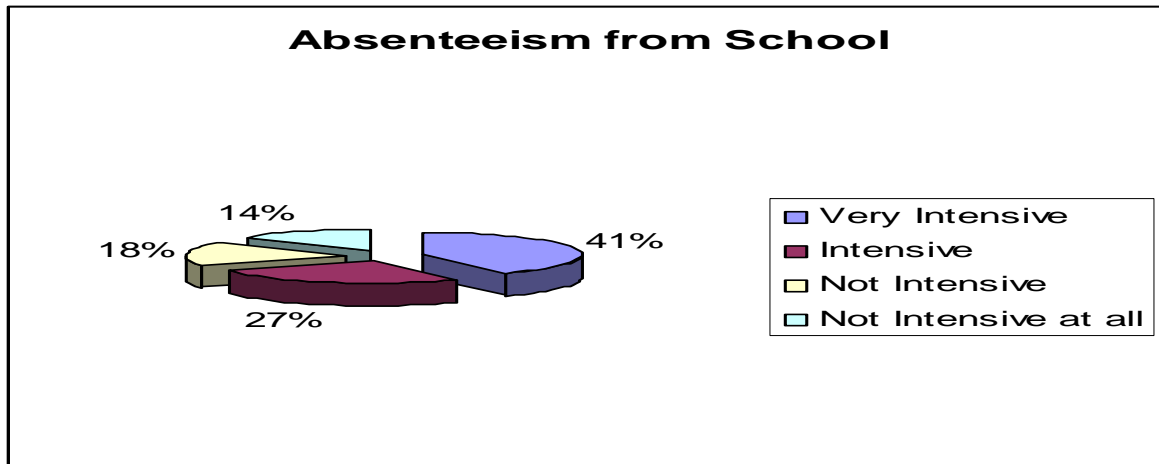
The influence of inherent risk factors on children’s behaviour were reported to be presents and witnessed by 15(68%) of the respondents with 7(32%) however reporting not to have witnessed direct influence of these factors on the children performance. These could be inferred to the challenge of isolating other factors as to be influencing the child’s behaviour apart from the risk factors.

Table 4.2.6. Intensity of impact of Single Parenthood Status on School Children

	Very intensive	%	Intensive	%	Not intensive	%	Not intensive at all	%
Absenteeism from school	9	41	6	27	4	18	3	14
Traumatized by single parent hood	11	50	6	27	5	23		
Lack of finance	10	45	6	27	4	18	2	9
Lack of basic necessities	8	36	7	32	5	23	2	9

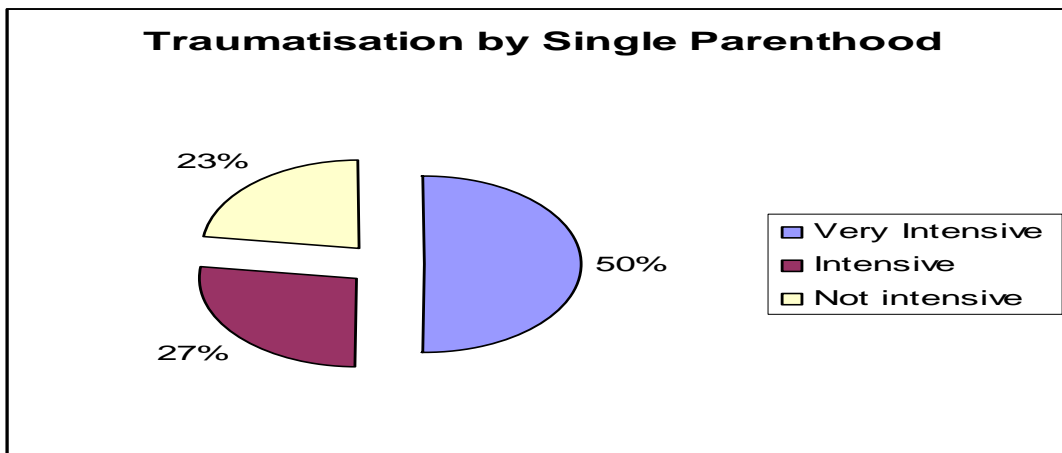
Looked at the intention of the single parenthood status on school children behaviour as indication of risk factors.

Figure 4.2.9: Absenteeism from school



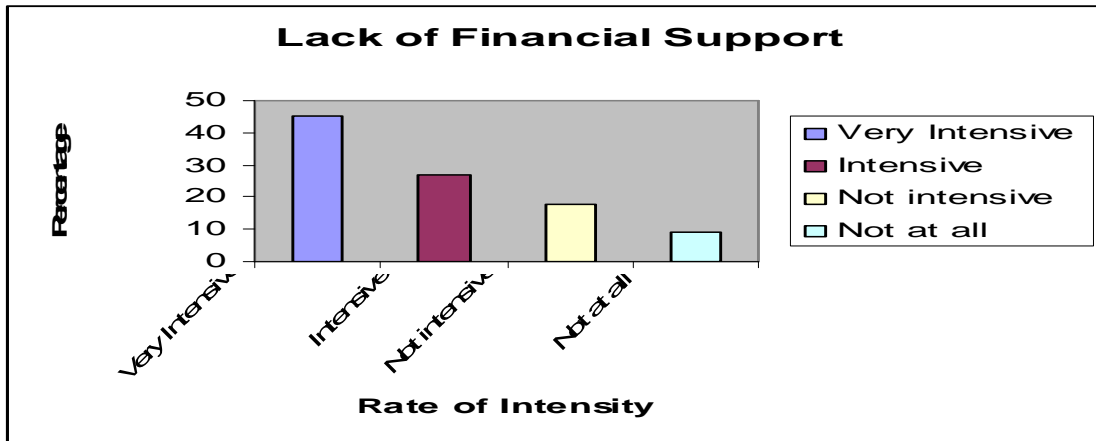
The figure 4.2.9 shows that absenteeism from school was reported as intensive by 9(41%) and 6(27%) as intensive, which indicates 68% intensity and influencing performance of pre-school children.

Figure 4.2.10: Traumatized by single parenthood



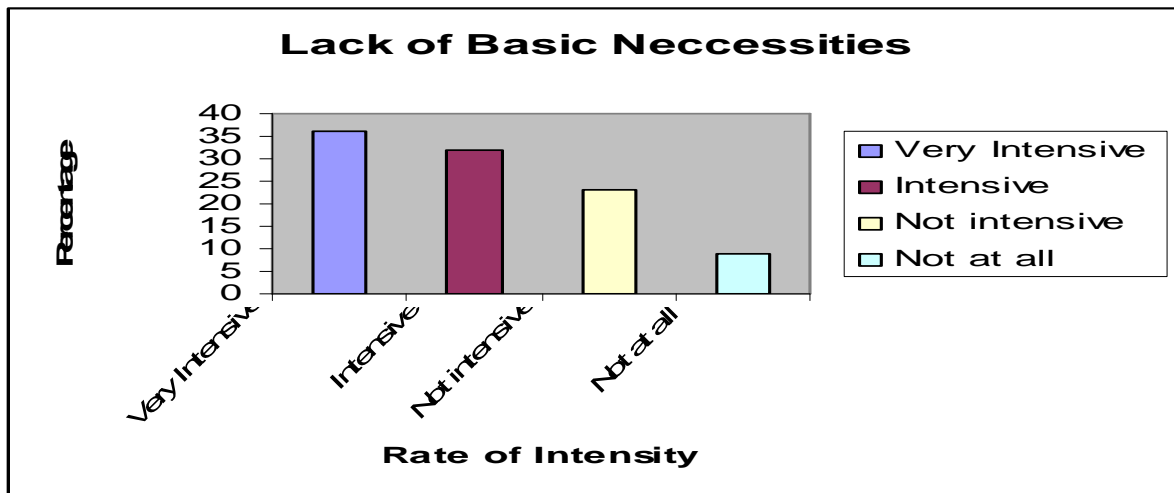
The respondents indicated that 11(77%) of the respondents had been traumatized by any discussion on their home environment as they were reserved on discussing home topics and were not excited to go home after school.

Figure 4.2.11: Lack of finance



There was evidence figure that lack of financial support to children was rated high by 16(72%) of the respondents. This was attributed to the level of fees arrears and defaults rate by the respondents.

Figure 4.2.12: Lack of basic necessities



The figure 4.2.12 indicates that the pre-school children face influence on their performance due to lack of basic necessities at home as indicated by such aspects as lack of food,

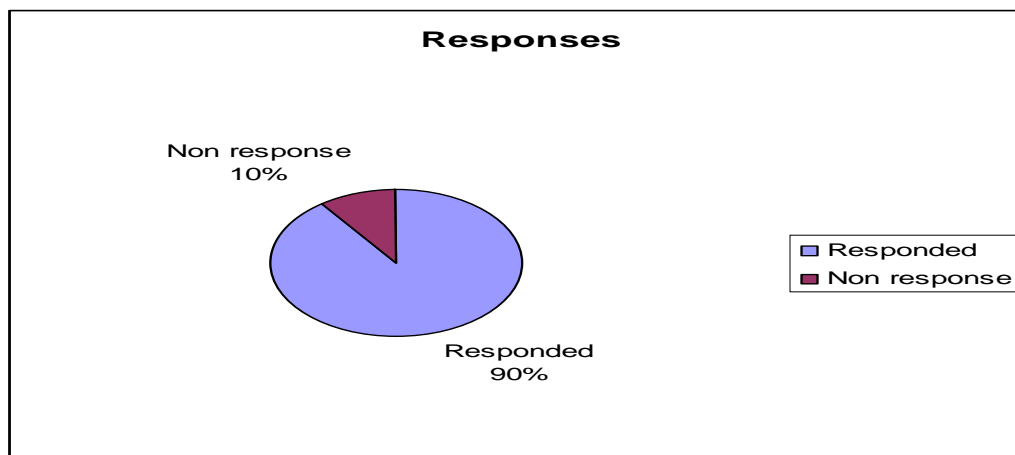
cleanliness and proper school uniforms. The 15(68%) respondents reported such evidence of intensity with only 7(32%) saying it was not intensive and not all intensive. This is explained by the different levels of status of the parents.

Table 4.2.7: Parents response rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Responded	18	90
Non response	2	10
Total	20	100

The face to face interviews of which the parents yielded a high response rate of 90% and this was explained with the attachment that parents had in relation to issues concerning their children.

Figure 4.2.13: Parents response rate

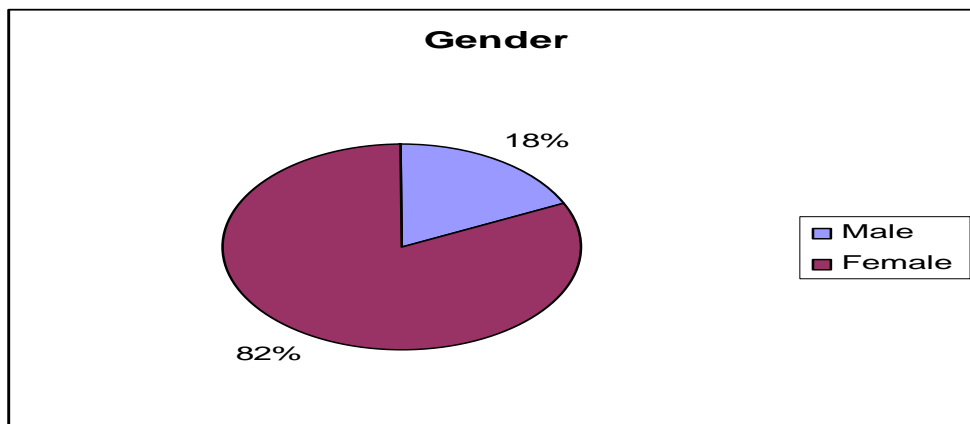


The table 4.2.7 and the figure 4.2.13 indicates that the gender of the parents who were interviewed were 16(82%) female with 4(18%) male. These explain again that majority of the parents who are single are mainly female and rarely men. The other reason is that pre-schooling is more of a mother task in many homes due to the level of mothering care required.

Table 4.2.8: Gender of respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	2	9
Female	20	91
Total	22	100

Figure 4.2.14: Gender of respondent

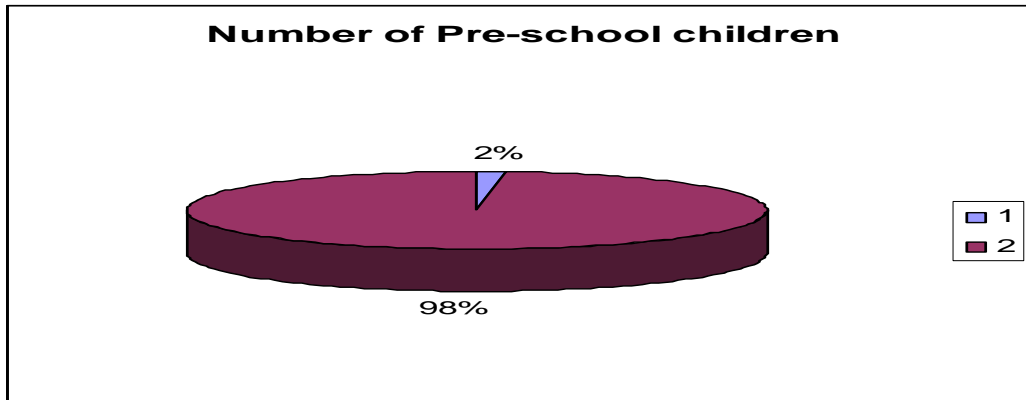


Male respondents were very few comparing to women respondents as indicated on the chart. It is believed that pre-schools are taught by women teachers and mostly men are less concerned with young children behaviour and academic performance.

Table 4.2.9 Number of pre-school children in this school

Number of pre-school children	Frequency	Percentage
1	19	98
2	1	2
Total	20	100

Figure 4.2.15: Number of pre-school children in this school

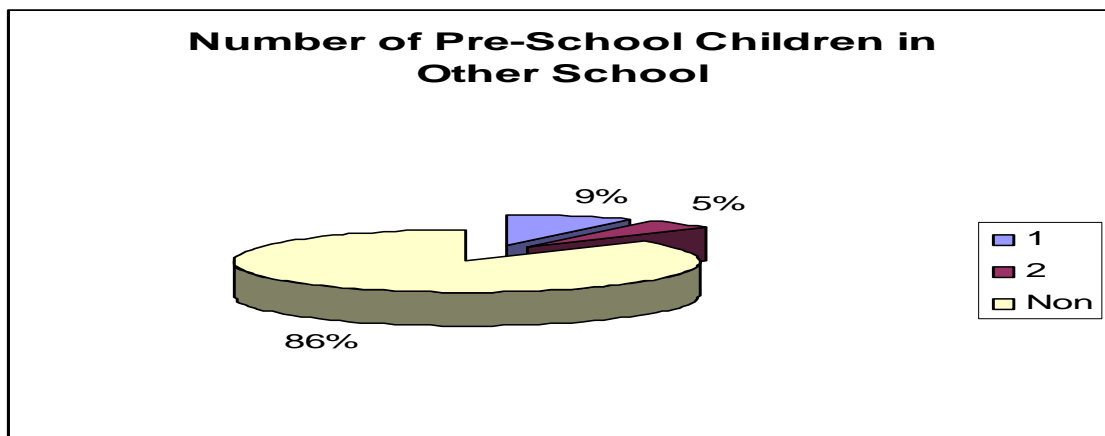


The number of pre-school children the same school showed 19(98%) and this can be attributed to the birth spacing of the parents who say they had only one child of pre-school age.

Table 4.2.10: Number of pre-school children in other schools

Number of pre-school children in other schools	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	9
2	1	5
Non	16	86
Total	20	100

Figure 4.2.16: Number of pre-school children in other schools



The respondents reported 16(86%) as not having any children of pre-school age in other schools and the small in number of those with children in other schools was 14% in total.

The above response corroborates evidence from table 4.2.9 above.

On whether there was active intense lobbying for attention on school work by the pre-school children the respondents were 15(73%) who said there was not with only 5(27%) indicating there was lobbying for attention their school work. The above can reflect the nature of care at home where the parents have other challenges have time to competitive learning as their children look forward to do better than other children at school and were specific that they were defensive where they had not done well.

Figure 4.2.17: Withdrawal from school activities

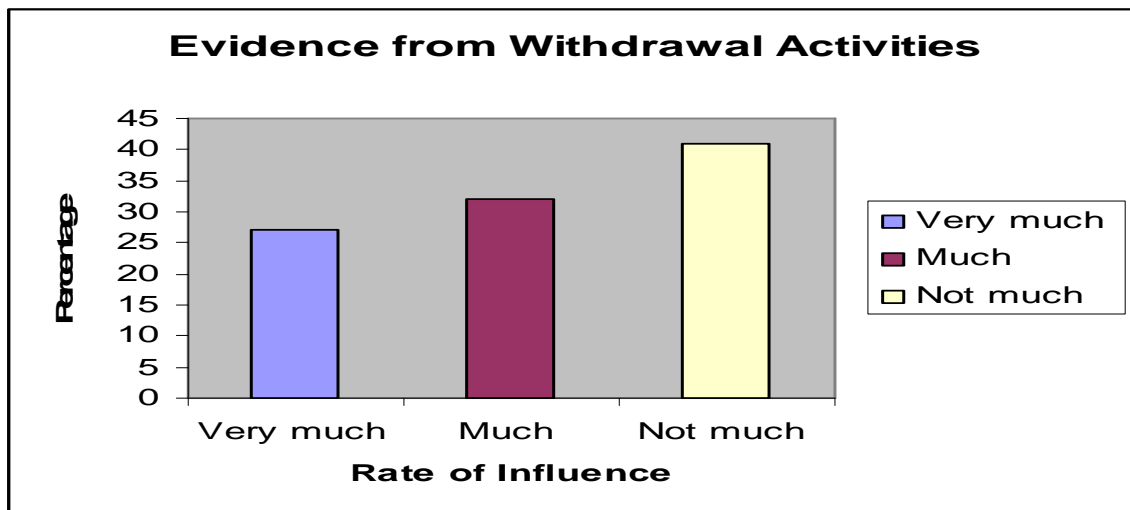
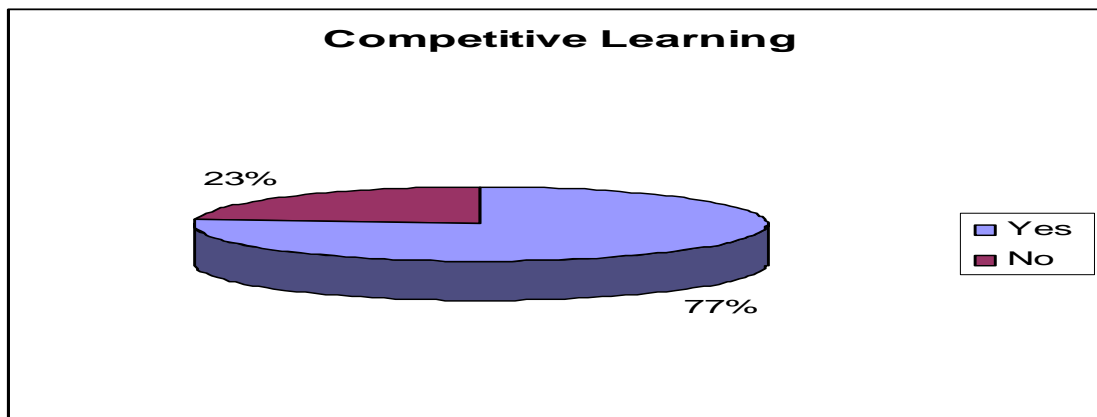


Table 4.2.17 indicates that the children withdrawal from school activities altogether where there are excluded from a single school activity. These was the response by parents who said they 14(59%) witnessed the withdrawal as children opted not to attend school ort school activities immediately after such exclusion incident.

Table 4.2.11: Competitive learning

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	77
No	5	23
Total	20	100

Figure 4.2.18: Competitive learning

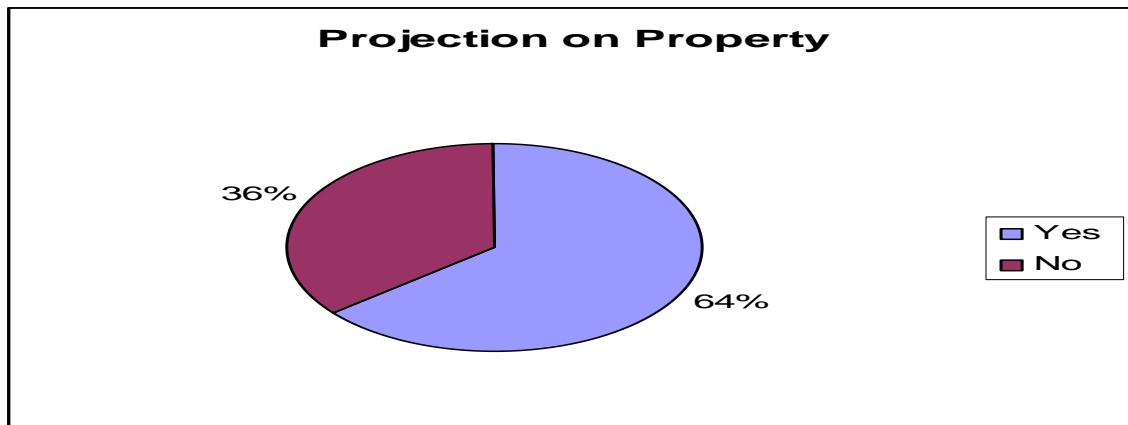


The above can reflect to the nature of care at home where the parents have other challenges have time to competitive learning as their children look forward to do better than other children at school and were specific that they were defensive where they had not done well.

Table 4.2.12: Projection on property at home

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	64
No	7	36
Total	20	100

Figure 4.2.19: Projection on property at home



There was reported by 13(64%) that the children projected on home property where they did not receive preferential treatment at school. The parents explained that the mood of the child at home was related to the nature of treatment at school that day.

4.3. Father figure

The respondents attained the main factors that were the father figure and the school environment being communal where personal preferences were not addressed. The father figure was high as (63%) followed by the school environment as (67%). There was however no statistical significance of the third risk factor that influence performance of the pre-school children.

There was unanimous agreement on the benefits of single parenting on pre-school children in the area as child's educational. The respondents stated that there were negative traits they had observed of the single parenting styles on pre-school child performance. The respondents (72 %) stated that the children were driven to achievement standard far beyond their ability. There was also too much attention on the child at home that the child took

offence if not accorded similar attention at school and most felt rejected. Finally single, parenting has been blamed for the early exposure to life experiences beyond their maturity level. The children decisions as the parent on consultations in school are able to implement all agreed issues. This was reported by (65%) of the teachers/parents.

There was also agreement that single parenting were more interested in the total welfare of the child and were co-operative with the school on matters of the child welfare, this was agreed by (73%) of the teachers/parents. Finally, the financial obligations were honored by single parents as they indicated an understanding of their specific responsibility in the matters of fees. These was witnessed by (74%) of the teachers/parents tend to reason and relate more with adults than peers which leaves them out of most of the learning process.

The teachers/parents were statistically not categorical of what exact impact could be attributed to the single family unit on the children's learning in the school with few (17%) expressing their own opinions and experiences which can not be taken to represent the findings of the study. The parents during the interview a expressed that their single parenting status impacted on lack of time to address the child's learning needs as home (78%) with (56%) indicating that financially they were unable to provide adequately to the Childs school needs.

There were teachers/parents who said that decision making on many aspects of a child, school life were challenging and at time (55 %) said they made wrong decisions and the choice of school was the main to (47%) of the respondents.

On the negative effects of single parenting there were (53 %) who said lack of the father figure was by far the most challenging and the children were always eager to meet their dad so as to be rewarded for good performance at school like other children. The second negative effect of single parenting was the lack of time to earn a living and attend to the child's schooling needs. On the impact that the single parenting has on the child's positive learning, the respondents were not objective enough to statistically report their findings as most (64 %) compared their current status to their previous married status (for the divorced) and the 'if' status (for those who have never been married).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on influence of single parenthood on pre-school children's academic performance. It also presents the answer to research questions in relation to research objectives, conclusions and study recommendations.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The response rate was high for both teachers 92% and parents 90% which indicate a favourable coverage of the study objectives. The respondents had been in the profession for about four to six years on average which indicates that they had the required competence and experience to answer the questions in the research instrument.

The teachers opinions on various factors indicated that children lobbying was agreed at 81% as influencing pre-school children's performance, followed by competitive learning 68% while withdrawal from school activities and projections on school property were both rated as not much influencing as 68% pre-school children's performance. When on the intensity of various single parenting factors:- absenteeism and trauma were recorded as being most intense interference with the learning of the pre-school children at 68% and 77%. While lack of financial support for learning and lack of basic necessities were rated as 72% and 68% respectively which are significant considering the age of the pre-school children.

The parents however indicated that although majority 98% had all their children in the same pre-school. Single parents faced challenges involving decisions making (55 %). Financial responses (56%) were challenges that impact on the pre-school child's learning.

5.3 What is the influence of Risk and Protective Factors on Pre-School children's academic performance?

Lobbying for attention in school was much. Very much of the responses reflect the advocate role that is sought for by pre-school children trust the teacher to protect them and be there for them. The children show tendency to withdraw from school activities where attention is not fully given. This is a reaction expected where the children feels rejected due to non undivided attention that they need. There was evidence that children compete to out-do each other .The respondents reported emotional projection behaviour on school property by majority of the children. Therefore influence of inherent risk factors on children's behaviour were reported to be presents; however it was not possible to conclude that the reported behaviour was influenced by the inherent risk factors. These could be inferred to the challenge of isolating other factors as to be influencing the child's behaviour apart from the risk factors. These findings are similar to Zimiles and Lee (1991) who concluded that; "although many single parents remarry, blending families does not eliminate all of the risk factors children experience in single-parent homes. The family income of children in blended families mirrors that of children who live with both of their original parents. Although children in blended families still tend to have higher academic achievement than those living with single parents, some children will replace academic problems with emotional and behavioral difficulties, essentially eliminating many of the positive effects brought on by the increase in family income (Nelson, Sandi; Clark, Rebecca; and Gregory, 2001).

5.3.1. How does the absent of a Fathers Impact on Pre-School children's academic performance?

The study unveiled that the children had been traumatized by any discussion on their home environment as they were reserved on discussing home topics and were not excited to go home after school. There was evidence that lack of financial support to children was rated high by the respondents. This was attributed to the level of fees arrears and defaults rate by the parent respondents. The pre-school children face influence on their performance due to lack of basic necessities at home as indicated by such aspects as lack of food, cleanliness and proper school uniforms. The main challenges faced by the pre-school children were the father figure and the school environment, being communal where personal preferences were not addressed. As the father figure was seen in the study to be influencing the study corroborate the findings by Zimiles and Lee, (1991) who postulate that the disruption can be hard on children who may feel that they are losing another parent. The presence of stepsiblings also reduces time with and access to parents, further decreasing the amount of support individual children receive.

5.3.2. How does Mother's Employment Impact on Pre-School children's academic performance

The gender of the parents who were interviewed was 82% female with 18% male. This explains that majority of the parents who are single are mainly female and few men. The other reason is that pre-schooling is more of a mother task in many homes due to the level of mothering care required. On whether there was active intense lobbying for attention on school work by the pre-school children the respondents who said there 'was not' with indicating there they was lobbying for attention in their school work. The above can reflect

the nature of care at home where the parents have other challenges to have enough time to competitive learning as their children look forward to do better than other children at school and were specific that they were defensive where they had not done well. These findings are corroborated by others who said that “although child support does not resolve all of these issues, it does make a significant difference. Children in mother-only families who receive child support tend to do better in school than those who do not receive child support (Zimiles and Lee, (1991). The parents explained that the mood of the child at home was related to the nature of treatment at school that day. Single parenting status impacted on lack of time to address the child’s learning needs at home and financially they were unable to provide adequately to the child’s school needs. There were those who said that decision making on many aspects of a child, school life were challenging and at time they made wrong decisions on the child’s learning and performance.

5.4 Conclusion

The study makes the conclusion that Influence of Risk and Protective are a major threat to pre-school as suggested by Knox, (1996), who said furthermore, risk is cumulative; meaning that children who have a combination of risk factors such as poverty, many siblings close in age, and a single parent are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child development outcomes than children from single-parent homes with higher incomes and fewer siblings. However this study could not establish at what point to isolate other factors like religion and culture and modern life styles e.g. the single parent by choice status as contributing to risk and protective factors. However the study agrees; the more risk factors children have, the more likely they will experience negative

out comes as a result. Risk factors can lead to negative results, but the presence of risk factors does not guarantee poor outcomes (Zimiles, Herbert, & Lee, Valerie, 1991).

Absent of a fathers was seen to be a factor that influenced the child's performance as the children were young and identity was a major primary need. The children role play parenting roles and the teachers' constant reminder 'tell dad' has been cited as provoking single parented children to enquire of their identity. Mother's employment while agrees with research on the influence of income that working is not a predictor of negative outcomes and working can have both positive and negative effects on student achievement (Mulkey and Harrington, (1992). Regardless of whether they are single or married, mothers who work full-time often have less time to spend with their children and according to Sameroff, Ronald; Alfred; and Clara. (1993), this is a condition that may lead to lower achievement and increase in behavior problems at school.

5.5 Recommendation of the Study

There is need for pre-school managers and teachers to be aware and vigilant to mitigate the Influence of Risk and Protective factors of their pupils and this could be done through a suitable sound child background inventory that is up-dated as a routine function. Secondly it is here recommended that the involvement of many group discussions between the child and the parent and teacher be engaged to create a protective environment where the child feels as belonging while at home and at school on matters of learning so as to encourage parents to engage as teachers at home and teachers to learn the individual needs of the pupils from the parents. These interactions will mitigate on absence of one parent and the challenges of working mother or single parent decision making

5.6 Recommendation for further study

The study was able to cover the scope of the objectives as outlined and there are new areas that would need further investigation to shed more light on pre-school children's performance.

- i. A study on the challenges faced by single parents in child management perception of pre-school teachers.
- ii. The influence of school environment on the management of cultural diversity of the pre-school children.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER

This questionnaire is aimed at eliciting information (data) that will be useful in the above mentioned research as part of the requirement of my ECD studies at University of Nairobi. All your responses will be treated with confidentiality. Do not write your names.

Section A

i). Gender

Male

Female

ii). Years as a pre-school teacher in this school

1 – 2

2 – 4

4 – 6

Over 6 years

iii). Length of time as a pre-school teacher

Less than one year

1 – 6 years

6 – 12 years

Over 12 years

Section B

Q1) Do you know of any pre-school children with single parent in the school?

Yes

No

Q2). If your answer in Q1 above is yes, rate the influence of single parent hood on the Children's Performance.

	Very much	Much	Not much	Not at all
There is intense lobbying for attention				
There is evidence of withdrawal from school activities.				
There is competitive learning by one to out do the others.				
There is projection of emotional behaviour on school property.				

Q3),). If your answer in Q1 above is No; briefly explain what two factors on learning you have observed on single parent children elsewhere.

Q.4a). As a pre-school teacher do you have instances where inherent risk factors influence the learning environment of the children?

Yes

No

Q.4b). If your answer in Q4a above is yes, state three influence that such inherent risk factors have on the pre-school children

1. _____

2.

3.

Q5). As a pre-school teacher, kindly rate the intensity of the following impacts of single parenthood on the behaviour of pre-school children

	Very intensive	Intensive	Not intensive	Not intensive at all
Absenteeism from school				

Traumatized by single parenthood (reserved on discussing 'home' topics and not excited to go home after school)				
Lack of financial support to sustain learning of the child				
Lack of basic necessities (food, cleanliness and proper uniforms)				

Q.6a). State three positive ways single parenting styles has had on pre-school children learning

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

Q7) Explain two negative effects of single parenting styles that you have observed on pre-school children's' learning.

i) _____

ii) _____

Q8. In your opinion briefly explain the impact of single family t on pre-school children's learning in your school?

Thank you for your time and co-operation in responding to this questionnaire

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRE-SCHOOL PARENTS

This interview schedule is aimed at eliciting information (data) that will be useful in the above mentioned research as part of the requirement of my ECD studies at University of Nairobi. All your responses will be treated confidentially. Please do not write your name

i). Gender

Male Female

ii). Number of pre-school children in this school?

1

2

3

Over 3 years

iii). Number of pre-school children in other schools?

1

2

3

Q2.i). Is there intense lobbying for attention on school work by your pre-school children?

ii) Does one child withdrawal from school activities when the other child is not included in school activities?

iii) Do you witness competitive learning by one child to out do the others?

iv). Do the children project on property at home where one in not favoured in school work attention by the parent?

Q3. In your opinion what is the impact of single parent hood on pre-school children's

Learning in school?

Q4). Explain two negative effects of single parenting styles that you have observed on Your pre-school children's' learning.

Q.5). State three ways of single parenting styles that has had positive Impact on your Pre-school children learning.