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## EFFECT OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON TRUANT BEHAVIOUR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DELTA STATE

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### Abstract

This study looked into how truant behavior among secondary school children was affected by being a single parent. For the study, a random sample of two hundred and forty (240) people was taken. Schools were deliberately chosen to accommodate both boys' and girls' schools. The researchers created a questionnaire to assess the impact of single motherhood on students' absenteeism. Analysis of the hypotheses was done using an independent t-test. The findings showed a significant difference between truant teenage pupils from intact parent households and those from single parent homes. The results of the second and third hypotheses likewise demonstrated a significant difference in the truant behavior of teenage male and female pupils from intact homes versus those from single parent households. Based on the data, inferences were made that there were distinctions between the truant behaviors of children with intact parents and those with single parents, as well as between male and female students from various family types. It was suggested that students who are single parents should receive counseling on self-worth and self-concept. Additionally, it was suggested that parents should resolve marital conflicts amicably rather than obtaining a divorce.

### Keywords

Truancy, Parenthood, Family, Adolescents, Students



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## Introduction

The word "truancy" refers to any deliberate, unapproved absence from required schooling. Usually, when we talk about truancy, we're talking about absences that students choose on their own will; we're not talking about valid excuses, such those resulting from medical illnesses. The word "truancy" describes an absence that is most closely linked to the most egregious cases of student irresponsibility and has the most severe repercussions. It also describes pupils who show up to class but not the classroom. Atkinson et al. (2000) noted variations in the duration of absence, ranging from skipping a single class to missing many weeks.

Truancy is the term used to describe youth delinquent behavior and absences from school as they navigate the shift from childhood to adulthood in a world that is becoming more complicated and confused (Afande & Maina, 2015). Despite the fact that truancy is a long-standing concern, it appears that truancy in the past and now cannot be compared. Antisocial behaviors that are frequently linked to truancy include, but are not limited to, school violence, bullying, cultism, delinquency, rape, drug and alcohol addiction, weapon carrying, and examination malpractice. It goes without saying that the possibility of a better, safer, and wealthier society developing in Nigeria would remain remote until action is taken to stem the truancy epidemic.

Human civilization is based on the family. The most powerful socializing influences in life are families. They instill in kids the values of avoiding inappropriate behavior, postponing satisfaction, and respecting others' rights. On the other hand, aggressive, antisocial, and violent behaviors can be taught to kids by their family (Egbule et al. 2022). Additionally, children who experience parental rejection, grow up in households with a lot of conflict, or have little supervision are the most likely to skip school.

The family is the child's first major social group to which they belong and interact, and they have a significant impact on their moral, intellectual, and physical development, according to education psychology research. Before a kid enters school, the family establishes the basis for their education, and the house and family shape the child's personality in school (Egbule, 2018). Beginning with the family, adolescence is a period of growing potential and vulnerabilities that come with increased social and geographic exposure to life outside of the home and school. The values and ideas that were formerly considered to be the fundamental tenets of our civilization have evolved and been surpassed by modern culture. Truth be told, despite the hatred that moralists and conservatives feel against the swiftly changing belief and cultural systems, what was formerly considered wrong is now quickly and rapidly becoming popular for decades, if not centuries. Single parenting is one of the main topics that worry conservatives.

Truancy has been perceived as a vehicle for the promotion and encouragement of delinquent behavior, juvenile criminality, and several social vices among teenagers. According to Nwosu (2007), truancy accounted for 75% of all convicts in the United States at one point, and the proportion of young criminals who began as truants is rising. Sara et al. (2014) argued that a high truancy rate has detrimental effects on a country's ability to grow its labor force. According to Sara et al. (2016) and Baba et al. (2016), truants' attitude may encourage other, more serious vices including smoking, drug misuse and addiction, petty theft, burglary, adolescent pregnancy, and academic underachievement if they are allowed to continue. According to Musa (2014), adolescent absenteeism has led to subpar exam results and the denial of future high-quality employment opportunities. Afande et al. (2015), however, believed that absenteeism might have a negative impact on youths' ability to make a living.

A student's truancy behavior may be influenced by the sort of household they come from, particularly if their parents are unreliable or unable of providing for their kids. Due to the other partner's absence from the family, there exist single parent families in which only one parent is responsible for raising a kid or children. It has been shown that compared to children from intact households, children from single parent households may have a lower degree of control. Children raised by single parents often have mental, emotional, and psychological effects (Singh & Kiran, 2014). Research suggests that children from single-parent households when there is a breakdown in the marriage due to divorce or separation are more prone than children from two-parent households to exhibit a variety of behavioral issues, including delinquency. According to Claes et al. (2009), there is evidence to suggest that children from households with lower levels of cultural and social capital are more likely to have truant children than children from high status homes. They claimed that socioeconomic problems, abuse, neglect, or a lack of parental participation might all be factors in the high rate of truancy. Egbule and Egbule (2008) noted that students from low-income families or those who don't have time for their kids are linked to having little interest in school activities and engaging in anti-school behaviors like truancy, absence, sexual assault, drug abuse, low academic achievement, rioting, and protesting over even the smallest of school-related issues.

The practice of single parenting is already spreading quickly through society. Single-parenthood is characterized by the absence of one of the two individuals who should be caring for and raising their children, leaving just one person to do tasks that should have been completed by two people (Animasahun & Aremu, 2015). The definition of single-parenting, as stated in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, is when a parent raises their children alone, without the assistance of a partner. A scenario known as "single-parenting"

occurs when one of the two people who participated in the child's conception is the only one accountable for the child's upbringing (Ham, 2004).

When a man or a woman chooses to have and raise a kid or children outside of marriage, single parenting may result (Egbule, 2018). In Nigeria, there was no such thing as single parenthood, and those who did exist were ignored and seen as outliers. But these days, both within and outside of Nigeria, these are the rapidly expanding family arrangements. The distribution and determination of parental duties are influenced by culture among the Nigerian tribes. The functions of the mother are to raise the kid, train the family, and perform complementary roles; the roles of the father are to take care of the family's finances and discipline the children. When both parents provide the care, the child is emotionally stable, ethically pure, and intellectually sound. What constitute a family entails the father, mother and kids, and not father and mother alone.

According to Audu et al. (2017), each parent has a certain role to play in their child's education. The mother is supposed to support her husband's efforts in the classroom, while the father is expected to give all the resources required for the child to succeed academically. However, in the event that the mother is unable to provide for all of the child's basic needs and the father is absent, this will have an impact on the child's educational state or level. The mother will need to check the child's academic records, go over their daily lesson plans and textbooks, and offer counseling support when needed. A child's educational results will also be impacted if they are not given proper care and emotional support (Egbule & Egbule, 2008). If the child were male, there's a good chance that he or she would join a gang and exhibit antisocial behavior. Furthermore, there's a chance that if it were a girl, she would go missing. Research on father-child relationships indicates that having a father in the house has a major impact on a child's development (Egbule, 2018). As a result, being a parent is a duty

that calls for the active participation of both parents in order to guarantee the entire growth of their children.

Children from single-parent households tend to be more aggressive, angry, and hyperactive, according to Egbule et al. (2022). Numerous issues faced by single parents are comparable to those faced by families with two parents, but they appear more challenging to handle or tolerate when there is only one person providing guidance in the house. Truants have typically been associated with families that are less complete, sometimes known as "broken homes" (Gyimah & Yelkper, 2017). Operationally speaking, children living in single-parent families or any other kind of family other than one with both biological parents present are typically considered to be in a "broken home." On the other hand, a "intact family" is typically defined as a nuclear family structure, when the biological parents and their offspring live together in the same home.

According to Mbagwu et al. (2018), intact family arrangements are distinct from other contemporary family arrangements, such as those including a single parent, two parents plus a stepparent, extended family, adoptive or foster family, and single-parent arrangements. A family might be either entire or fractured structurally. A family that is not structurally entire for a variety of reasons - such as parent death, divorce, separation, desertion, or illegitimacy - is considered broken in this context. In the latter situation, the family was never finished (Mbagwu, 2021).

Because single parenthood may be difficult for both the parent and the kid, this examination is required. Reduced financial resources (Onogha, 2020), taking on new tasks and responsibilities, creating new intra-family contact patterns, and rearranging routines and schedules are some of the difficulties these families must deal with (Prabha & Maheswari, 2017). Effective parenting is not possible in these circumstances. This is due to the fact that a

single parent who is overwhelmed with responsibilities and experiencing mental distress as a result of their circumstances frequently exhibits irritability, impatience, and insensitivity to the needs of their children. This broad context led to the conception of this study, which looked at the potential role(s) of family structure in secondary school students' truant behavior in the state.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The primary issue with this study is the widespread dissatisfaction of educators and counselors over students' carefree approach to learning and their lack of attendance. Indicators of truant behavior include reports and observations on students from various family compositions and structures.

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study

- i. There exists no noteworthy dissimilarity between the truant behaviour of learners from single parent home and those from intact parent families.
- ii. There exists no noteworthy dissimilarity between the truant behaviour of male learners from single parent home and male learners from intact parent home.
- iii. There exists no noteworthy dissimilarity between the truant behaviour of female learners from single-parent families and female students from two-parent families.

### **Methodology**

All Delta State senior secondary school learners make up the study's population. In reality, the student records from the school registers were used to create the sample. Six schools -two from each senatorial district of Delta State's coeducational senior secondary schools -were chosen at random. Equal numbers of students - 40 from single-parent families

and 40 from two-parent families - were chosen from the schools. As a result, 240 students in all took part in the study. There were 120 pupils from families with one parent and 120 from families with two parents. The truancy evaluation scale developed by Gesinde (2004) was modified and utilized as the tool to gather pertinent data. Basically, the purpose of this tool was to gather information about the respondents' truancy. The t-test statistical approach was employed to examine the gathered data, and the resulting hypotheses were examined in light of the findings.

## Results

### Hypothesis 1

There is no noteworthy dissimilarity in the truant behaviour of student from single parent home and those intact parent home. Result is presented in Table 1

**Table 1: t-test of difference in the truant behavior of students from single-parent family and those from two-parent family**

Types of home	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
Single parent home	83	48.45	4.74	238	4.58	1.96
Two parents home	157	57.60	5.18			

The information presented in Table 1 suggests that there is a significant difference in the absenteeism patterns of students from single-parent households compared to those from two-parent households. The computed t-value (4.58) at the 0.05 significance level with 238 degrees of freedom is higher than the crucial t-value (1.96). Consequently, the null hypothesis is disproved.

### Hypothesis 2

There exist no noteworthy variance between the truant behaviour of male students from two-parent family and male students from single-parent family. Result is presented in Table 2



**Table 2: Difference between the truant behaviour of male students from two-parent family and male students from single-parent home**

Types of home	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
Two parent home	83	87.85	11.65	238	2.28	1.96
Single parents home	157	82.19	7.03			

Table 2 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between male students from single-parent families and male students from two-parent families in terms of truant behavior. The computed t-value (2.28), with 238 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 significance threshold, is higher than the crucial t-value (1.96). The null hypothesis is thus disproved.

### Hypothesis 3

There exists no noteworthy dissimilarity between the truant behaviour of female students from single-parent family and female students from two-parent family. Result is presented in Table 3

**Table 3: Difference between the truant behavior of female students from single-parent family and female students from two-parent home**

Types of home	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
Two parent home	83	53.17	10.18	238	2.36	1.96
Single parents home	157	74.42	6.80			

Table 3 indicates a significant difference in the truant behavior of female pupils from single-parent families compared to those from two-parent families. With 238 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 threshold of significance, the computed t-value (2.36) is higher than the critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis is thus also disproved.

### Discussion

The study's findings show a substantial difference in the truant behavior of pupils from two-parent families and those from single-parent families. The study also reveals

variations in male students' truant behavior between intact parent homes and single parent homes, as well as between female students from two-parent homes and single parent homes. The results supported the conclusion drawn by Ramberg et al. (2019) that there is a substantial difference in students' attitudes on academic achievement, studies, and examination malpractices between students from single-parent households and those from two-parent families.

This conclusion may be explained by the fact that growing up in a single-parent household may be traumatizing and that children raised in such homes frequently experience emotional issues including lack of warmth and affection and behavioral issues, which can impair their academic performance. However, children reared in two-parent households are often more emotionally stable and experience fewer emotional difficulties, which helps them feel less nervous when pursuing their academic goals. It should be highlighted, nonetheless, that this situation may not always hold true because some kids from single-parent families attend school consistently and outperform kids from two-parent families academically (Aijlia & Olutola, 2007).

Learners from non-intact family structures missed school at a rate that was 78% greater than that of pupils from intact homes, according to Animasahun and Aremu (2015). Nonetheless, there are more elements in the child's nature that might be responsible for this circumstance. Parental separation often has a greater impact on younger children than on the teens in our study, regardless of the outcome. Early childhood issues, however, could have a detrimental effect on development later in life. It should be noted that having additional people in a home with a single parent may have a good impact on the level of stress that children from such backgrounds may experience.

Additionally, single parenthood's detrimental effects are significantly lessened in Africa because to cultural practices that support widows, widowers, and other types of single parents. In a Nigerian household with a single parent, friends, neighbors, and members of the extended family may be able to fill in for some of the missing parent's responsibilities.

## **Conclusion**

From the findings, the paper noted that a child's truant behavior is impacted when a parent is not there. As a result, there is a connection between pupils' truant behavior and the impact of a single parent. According to the research, there is a substantial difference in the truancy behavior of pupils from intact parent households and those from single parent homes. This suggests that there are differences in the truancy patterns of kids from intact parent households and those from single parent homes. It is also possible to say that a student's truancy patterns are significantly influenced by the type of family they live in.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Addressing the barriers preventing kids from receiving an effective education should be a priority for governments, commercial organizations, and people involved in the education sector. This may be accomplished by giving pupils training in accomplishment motivation so they can become more motivated to achieve.
- ii. It is essential to acknowledge the unique characteristics of each learner and tailor instruction appropriately. Counselors should help students from single-parent families overcome their emotional difficulties by offering them the psychological support and guidance they need.

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