#### PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SINGLE-MOTHER PARENTING ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS IN FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA

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#### Abstract

This study investigated perceived effects of single mother parenting on students' academic performance in selected high schoots in Mangaung, Bloemfontein, South Africa. The study is informed by Bandura social learning and Symbolic Interactionism theories. The Mixed Method approach as well as convergent parallel design was employed in this study. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to obtain data from the respondents. A sample size of 176 respondents was selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and thematic analysis respectively. Results revealed that there is significant relationship between single mother parenting and students' academic performance. Furthermore, most single mothers interviewed were highly involved in their children's education. It is therefore, recommended that, government should set up an agency that will ensure that single mothers who are financially handicapped are empowered with different jobs and fully established in order to ensure a better socio-economic status to eradicate the stereotype belief of poverty in single mother homes. In addition, government should set up an organization to train and motivate young single mothers about the basic principles of parenting and importance of parenting to ensure that their children realize their potential.

Keywords: Single mothers, parenting, academic performance, high school students.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Parenting plays a significant role in the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, financial and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood [1]; [2]; [3]. Parenting role in enhancing children academic performance involves assisting a child with their schoolwork, providing learning supplies for the child, corresponding with the school, using some patterns in guiding the child, participating in school activities that are related to school performance, paying tuition, and nursing expectations for the child to progress into higher education studies [4]. Single parenting is a universal cause for alarm which denies numerous school-going children the opportunity to achieve academic distinction in their existence and an exceptional labour qualities for national productivities and development [5]; [6]; [7]; [8]. In the same vein, single mother parenting is a global concern which exposes many children to a high incidence of behavioural problems and lower academic performance [9]; [10]

The family unit in South Africa is heterogeneous but most children are raised by single mothers [11]; [12]. More than half of children below eighteen years have a tendency of spending some time under the care of single mother due to a remarkable increase in divorce rates, high male mortality rate, owing to HIV/AIDS [13]; [14] and late marriages, increasing the chances of single mother by choice [15]. [16], stated that 71% of students that had already dropped out in South Africa emanate from home of single mother headed households. It is thus, disheartening that fifty out of one hundred students that start school in South Africa get into the 12th grade and forty of them excel in matric exams with twelve qualifying for university education [17]. It is in the light of the above problems, that the researcher investigates the anticipated effect of single mother parenting on students' academic performance in selected high schools in Free State, South Africa.

#### 2 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted mixed method approach; therefore, the study was guided by pragmatism paradigm because paradigm is considered the best philosophical foundation for justifying the combination of different methods in a study [18]. Convergent parallel design was employed. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to obtain data from the respondents. A sample size of 176

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