



Socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

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Thesis accepted for the degree [Doctor of Philosophy in Social Sciences with Sociology](#) at the North-West University

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Graduation: July 2023

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Declaration

I, Temitope Joshua Owolabi, student number 37216287, thus certify that the contents of this thesis are entirely original and have not been previously submitted in whole or in part to any other institution for any degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Dedication

This work has been dedicated to Almighty God, who has been and continues to be my life, daily sustainer, source of my very breath, and my strength despite my many weaknesses. Without God, there isn't anything I can accomplish or would have done. Second, my darling kids, Elijah and Elizabeth Owolabi, to whom this work is also dedicated, I adore you both.

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not be complete without acknowledging the contributions and support of some individuals. You all have been amazing; I am really grateful.

First, I thank God, the Almighty, for guiding me through this quest. He provided me with the grace, kindness, favor, wisdom, knowledge, and insight. This endeavor would not have been an accomplishment without the Most High.

Special thanks to the two beautiful souls (Dr. Kiran and Dr. Garutsa) I was opportune to meet in the course of my Ph.D. journey. You both did not just serve as my supervisors, but you were, and will still be, my mentors. You groomed me and made me a better person after completing my study at Northwest University. Indeed, you were God-sent. I owe Dr. Kiran Odhav a huge debt of gratitude for his wise counsel and unwavering support during my Ph.D. studies. You have continuously inspired me in my academic research with your vast knowledge and wealth of research expertise. Out of your busy schedules, you still had the time to read through my work thoroughly. Also, I appreciate your technical support, and this has made my study at Northwest University a wonderful time; thank you so much sir. To my Co-supervisor, Dr. Tendayi Garutsa, you have been wonderful and amazing. I thank and appreciate you for all your help and advice; for your treasured support, which was really influential in shaping my experience at Northwest University as well. You are selfless, and your invaluable patience and feedback have not been taken for granted. Despite so many tasks before you, you read through my work without leaving any lines out. Thank you so much.

I would also like to acknowledge Prof. Victor Ojakorotu, Dr. Tola Odubajo, and Dr. Alabi Bamidele, who facilitated my enrolment at Northwest University. You were all God sent, and I pray that the Good Lord will bring helpers your way. Special shout out to Ziphorah, my true friend and sister. You have been supportive; thanks for all your assistance.

I want to acknowledge my lecturers from my undergraduate years in the Department of Sociology, the University of Lagos who laid the foundation for my academic and research endeavor - Prof. A. Ninalowo, Prof. Lai Olurode, Prof. F. Oyekanmi, Prof. Soyombo, Prof. N. Nwabueze, Prof. F. Bammeke, Prof. J. Oyefara, Prof. B. Amaike, Prof. F. Attoh, Prof. M. Kunnuji, Dr. I. Eshiet, Dr. P. Adejoh, Dr. A. Agugua, Dr. O. Temilola, Dr. W. Adisa, Dr. D. Akeju, Dr. K. Eborka, Mr. O.

Oyakhire, and Mr. Okonji. Ithonor rare honour to be under your tutelage and I pray that God will bless you all.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my beautiful and loving mother, Mrs. Christiana Owolabi; part of what I am today is because of the teachings you gave me in childhood. As a teacher yourself, you wanted this for me, and here I am today. I love you mum. To my sisters (Taiye & Kehinde Owolabi), who have been my inspiration, strength, motivation, spiritual pillars, and the best family in the world. I am highly grateful for your presence and guidance in my life. I pray God will continually bless you abundantly.

My gratitude also goes to my wife, Yinka Owolabi, for allowing me to embark on this Ph.D. journey. You were not in support of this, and you vowed to divorce me if I went for this Ph.D. At last, this is completed and thank goodness I followed my heart, and this achievement is the best gift I could ever give to myself.

Lastly, at this point, I would like to acknowledge my late father, who died shortly after my proposal defense with the Ethics Committee. You wanted this for me as well, and I have so far achieved it. Thank you for your encouragements and prayers, even while of your dieing bed. May your gentle and sweet soul rest in peace.

Abstract

The adoption of single-parent households, when compared to the traditional nuclear family, has increased over the years. Despite the fact that single parenting is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria, little is known and recorded about single women who were never married. Therefore, this study focuses on, and investigates single, unmarried mothers, analyzing their experiences with particular regard to why they chose not to get married despite having children. In order to better understand how single parenting affects unmarried mothers in Nigeria, socio-economic aspects must be examined. The study also aims to investigate how single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria is influenced by factors like as age, education, family history, and perceived economic benefits.

The theoretical framework was drawn largely from some micro sociological theories which explain the actions of individuals within their social space. The study drew on the symbolic interactionism theory, theories of social exchange, economic hardship, and intersectional feminism. By using the descriptive meanings that individuals have ascribed to things, happenings, and actions, symbolic interactionists examine society. The study utilized a non-experimental mixed research method in investigating the role of socio-economic factors on single parenting in Nigeria. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used. Facebook was the tool used to reach out to gather quantitative data from 450 respondents. Skype and WhatsApp calls were also used to gather qualitative data among 30 single mothers who served as participants.

Findings showed that certain unmarried single mothers opted not to remain with a partner due to their experiences as children and the fact that they were at some time mistreated and molested by males. Secondly, one significant factor in why women refuse marriage is the globalization of women's economic empowerment. Economic freedom and opportunity lessen women's interest in marriage for financial gain, particularly if women have a reliable and steady source of income. Some women were pregnant while still dating their partners, and the man virtually always rejected the pregnancy. Due to such circumstances, some women had to take care for their children on their own, with some of them receiving minimal assistance from some of their significant others. It was also shown that women did, in fact, want to remain as single mothers and to avoid getting married. The major argument was that they were unable to withstand the suffering and sorrow that other women experienced under the authority of their men, particularly those who abused and molested their wives. Because women did not want to be under men's abusive rule of thumb or

have to cope with any emotional problems, several participants indicated they appreciated single parenting and the freedom that comes along with it.

Therefore, the study suggests that interventions should emphasize encouraging contraceptive usage to prevent undesired pregnancies, as they have been linked to teen and adolescent premarital childbirth, which often results in single parenting. Because girls are the ones most negatively impacted by single parenting, every female child has to be encouraged to pursue an education, get credentials and develop skills that will improve their life as adults. Finally, the study suggests the need to create awareness programs on the value of marriage as a social institution, which is gravely undervalued among many young adult women and single moms in Nigeria.

Keywords: Age, Economic Benefits, Education, Family Background, Nigeria, Single Parenting

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

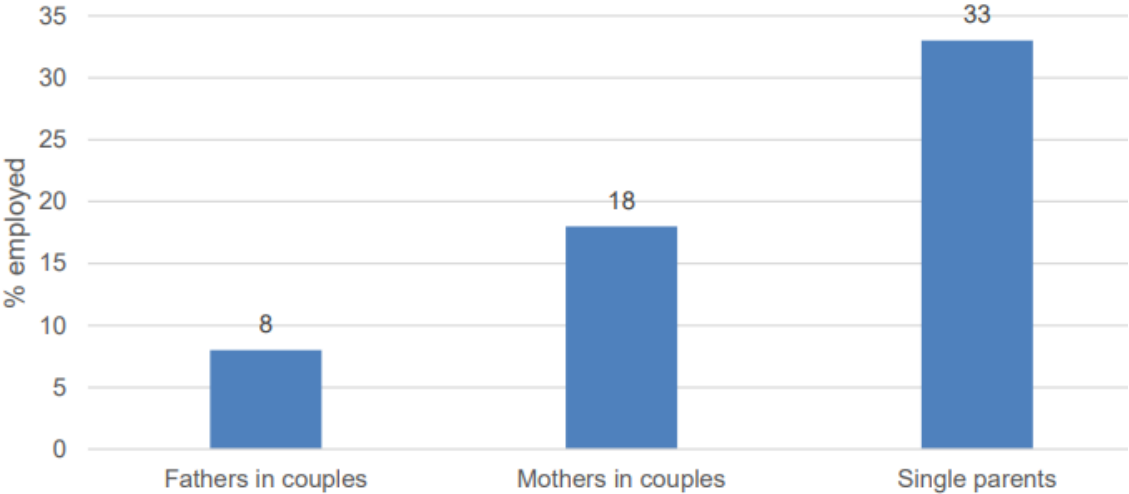
1.1 Introduction and Background of the study

In recent years, there has been a spike in the adoption of single-parent families compared to the typical nuclear family, which comprises of a father, mother, and children. (Lorretta and Ntoimo, 2019). Single-parent or single-parent households are a type of family system where either the father or mother takes charge of the children's socio-economic demands singularly. Society is gradually embracing this system and forgoing the roles and functions of a two-parent family in socialization (Barber, 2012). In a sociological context, the family is seen as the fundamental building block of society, but due to recent considerable and quick changes, the conventional nuclear family is in decline. As a result, single-parent or single-parent households have become increasingly visible and recognized as a kind of family (Cotton, 2019; Issa, 2018).

Demographic evidence from UNICEF (2010) and more recently in Crabtree and Kluch (2020) show that an overwhelming majority (80% plus) of single parents are women. This is due to the combined effect of an increase in separation and divorce, and a declining rate of remarriage after having marital issues with their spouses. Similarly, in Africa, Baley, Sweeney and Wondra (2015) and Elo (2019) argued that the proportion of births outside marriage often to mothers who have not been married is increasing. This is due to high cases of unprotected sex, education, as well as increased social and economic independence. The attainment of social and economic independence by young, urban, educated middle class women is has made marriage less important for survival. However, some studies suggest that the prevalence of single parenting among women is linked to increased chances of poverty, the replication of poverty, and other negative outcomes that have a negative impact on single women's ability to support themselves. As a result, there is growing concern about this trend around the world (Burge, 2017; Crabtree and Kluch, 2020). An outstanding example of this is how the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic affects families with just one parent.

A tri-partite crisis—health, economy, and society—is referred to as COVID-19 (Nur, 2021; Fisher et al., 2020). In addition to harming people's health, the global COVID -19 pandemic has sparked a major global economic crisis that has increased unemployment and disrupted various economic sectors the manufacturing, retail, food and beverage, transportation, and other service sectors (Pak et al., 2020). On the verge of the crisis, single parents were still significantly likely to find work for low-paying professions, according to data by Gingerbread (2020). Married women made approximately twice as much per week as single mothers before the financial crisis. The prevalence of single parents in part-time jobs contributes to this in part. 50.4 percent of single parents who were working in 2019 worked part-time, compared to four out of ten (43%) mothers in collaborations and one out of ten (11%) dads in pairs (ONS 2019). In addition to having a higher possibility of doing so, single parents were far more likely to work in low-paying occupations prior to the COVID-19 crisis. A study conducted by Gingerbread and the Learning and Work Institute for the ONS Labour Force Survey found that one in three (33%) single parents were trapped in low pay, receiving less than the voluntary living wage (2020a). As shown in Figure 1.1. below, one in five (18%) couples and one in twelve (8%) couples respectively had a mother. Accordingly, dads are four times more likely to be in this circumstance than mothers, and single moms are eighty percent more likely to be working at low earnings than mothers in marriages (Gingerbread 2019).

Figure 1.1. Percentage of parents with low earnings as of 2019 by family type



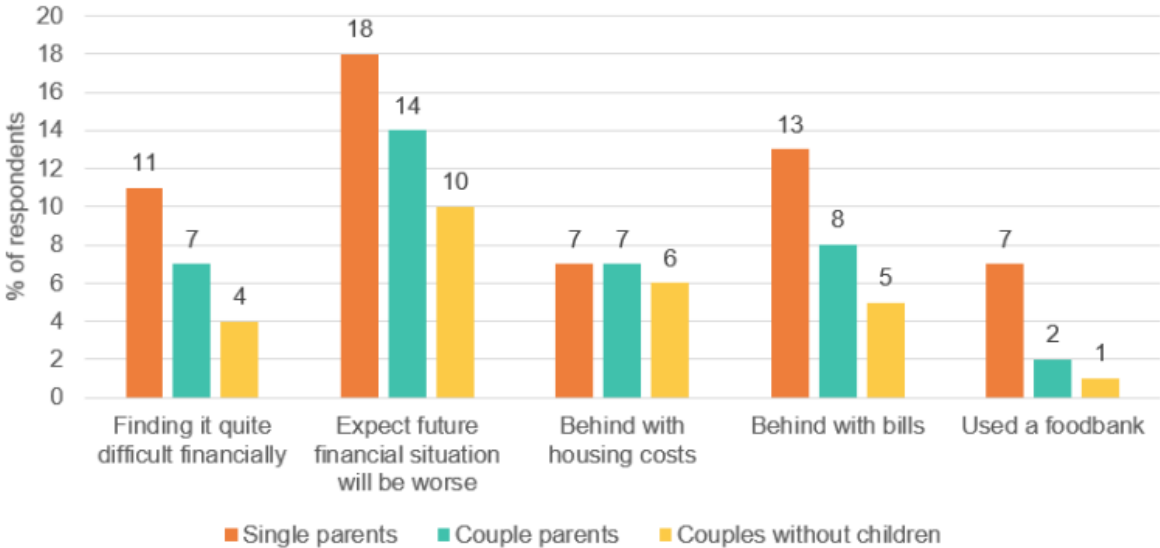
Source: Gingerbread 2019

Additionally, single parents were more likely to be jobless, have low incomes, and live in poverty prior to the crisis, and the pandemic had an impact on their employment possibilities, hours, and pay, according to Van Gasse and Mortelmans (2020). This explains why it makes sense that single parents appear to have had a greater impact on their family's spending plan (Nieuwenhuis, 2020).

Based on Dromey et al (2020) study of the Understanding Society survey as depicted in Figure 1.2 below shows the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on several areas of family budgets between February and June 2020. It demonstrates that one in ten homes headed by a single parent (11%) encountered financial hardships during the pandemic, which is approximately three times higher than the percentage of couples without children (3%), and about twice as high as the number of couples with children (7%). (4 percent). Single parents were noticeably more likely to report falling behind on their bills (13%) and to have used a food bank (7%), compared to couples with kids.

Single parents are dispondents concerning their future financial condition and more likely to experience the pandemic's effects. Comparatively to couples with children, where one in seven (14%) and couples without children, where one in ten (10%) believed that their financial condition will get worse in the future, practically one in five (18%) felt the same way.

Figure 1.2. Family financial and bill changes from February to June 2020



Source: Learning and Work Institute analysis of Understanding Society data

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (2020), single parents have also been more negatively affected by the crisis' interruption of childcare and education. The COVID 19 epidemic caused significant staff and resource reductions in the childcare industry. With a partially reopening in June and a complete reopening in September 2020, the preponderance of the United Kingdom (UK) schools remained suspended to the vast majority of pupils beginning in March 2020. During the shutdown, 67 percent of daycare facilities closed their doors. The outbreak also disrupted informal childcare support from friends, family, and grandparents, which was essential for many single-parent families to balance daycare and jobs. This caused a great deal of upheaval for the parents, and it is understandable that single parents in particular found it difficult to split up the care duties and manage work and life. According to Gingerbread's findings, single parents were more likely to have missed work to watch their children during the COVID-19 lockdown (Gingerbread 2020). The coronavirus pandemic worsened the already-existing disparities and driving additional single parents and children into hardship due to its increased impact on employment and earnings for a population that was already significantly disadvantaged.

Data on the prevalence of single parenting in Sub-Saharan Africa is not available. However, data from the National Population Commission (2019) in Africa showed the prevalence, determinants, and consequences of single parenting. According to these statistics, well over 22% of African women between the ages of 20 and 49 who gave birth in 2018 were unmarried mothers. The place of residence, levels of education, income, age, the mother of the respondent having experienced intimate partner violence, employment, and access to media were all shown to be important variables affecting unmarried parenting among women in the area.

Nigeria Data Portal (2018) shows that Nigeria's population by marital status is 50.01%, unmarried is 46.44%, widowed is 1.97%, divorced is 0.72% and separated is 0.86%. Among the multidimensional deprived population, the unmarried were still the most vulnerable to a higher risk of poverty, poor health and some negative emotional and social outcomes for children (Adejoh et al., 2019). Although there are several studies that demonstrate the effects of the sexual and reproductive behaviors of unmarried teens in Africa, little is known about or investigated unmarried single mothers (Miller and Ridge, 2001; Whiteman et al., 2001). Consequently, there

are an increasing number of studies on women that are not technically married but are pregnant or have recently given birth.

Findings from Adewoyin et al. (2021) further show that single mothers in Nigeria constitute 9.5% of the global population, making Nigeria currently one of the nations with the highest prevalence of single mothers in Africa, and this cuts across its varied ethnic configuration. For instance, Akinyemi and Wandera (2020) had earlier reported the prevalence of single mothers at the national level, with 2.9% in the Northern region and 2.3% in the Southern region. This prevalence has led to children developing poor emotional states such as low self esteem (Adebowale, 2019) and also, facing experiences of bullying and stigmatisation from members of the society (Alaba, Olubusoye and Olaomi, 2017). This makes being a child from this type of home challenging and very tough, hence, leading to the adoption of different coping strategies to cushion these effects; like absconding from school (Adewoyin, Chukwu and Sanni, 2018), exhibiting behaviours that are violent in nature (Haruna-Ogun, 2018) as well as showing some personality disorders among others.

Similarly, the lack of parental guidance and control has been identified by Adewoyin et al. (2021) as another effect of the prevalence of single parenting; most especially from mothers. As a result of this, children exhibit traits that are injurious to themselves and the society as a whole: This is through the involvement in social vices like cultism (Hank and Steinbach, 2018) thuggery (Islam et al, 2017) and criminal tendencies (Mo, 2017). These occur because of the deficiency of this type of family system in inculcating the right values into children.

The notion of single parenting is also known as the 'lone parent' who gives care to a child or children without the help of the other parental support in terms of physical, psychological and sometimes financial aspects (Whitman et al., 2001). One of the most cherished institutions in Africa is marriage and Nigeria is no exception to this. Recent studies have shown that in Africa, women crave the experience of motherhood (Igbo, 2018; Hanson, 2019; Lorretta and Ntoimo, 2019) because of the recognition they get from it. In this regard, Adejoh et al. (2019) identified securing socio-economic status as a significant factor that motivate women to get married, while McLanahan (2019) identified access to benefits like housing, capital and land. Beyond this,

marriage is seen as a source of attracting prestige and respect in society, and enhancing their social identity (McLanahan and Percheski, 2018). This is why young women are often under pressure to get married (Clark and Brauner-Otto, 2015). However, it remains unknown why some women decide to break the ceiling; hence, neglecting marriage but manage to raise their children. There is therefore a need to investigate single parenting among unmarried mothers, putting into cognisance specific variables derived from literature, that is, family background, age and education among others.

The following section presents the problem statement for this study.

1.2. Problem Statement

Although, the practice of single parenting is not new in Nigeria, little is recorded regarding single mothers who have never been married or who neglect marriage but manage to raise their children . This study examines mothers individually, thus, exploring their experiences with specific reference to why they decided not to get married, yet, they became mothers.

The question that emerges is, why do women opt for childbearing without getting married despite the enormous benefits accrued to it, and the negative implications of childbearing out of wedlock on the children, the family and the society at large. This provides the basis for this study, to explore the underlying reasons for giving birth and living as single mothers. Significantly, if the underlying reasons for such a trend are unearthed, it may help to prevent this practice and other social problems that would emanate from single parenting. Otherwise, it would engender certain problems at the individual, family and societal levels.

With specific reference to the individual level, it should be noted that children represent the major and prominent concerns attached to the phenomenon of parenting. However, a distortion in this through single mothers heading their families may be the catalyst that reveals underlying economic vulnerability that perpetuates the latter. Due to little or no institutional support, single mothers are economically disadvantaged (Oyefara, 2011); with meagre earnings that limit their ability to meet certain obligations at the home front. The inadequacy of financial resources can take a toll on these single mothers (Clark and Brauner-Otto, 2015).

At the family level, single parenting distorts the existence of a family structure that should promote socialisation (Lorretta and Ntoimo, 2019; Olurounbi, 2018). When socializing the children rests in mothers' hands solely, it could affect the children's upbringing due to adjusting to the new status of being the child of a single parent. The feeling of being unloved or abandoned often gives room for rebellion (McLanahan, 2019), and the exhibition of aggressive behaviour among children (Nock, 2018).

In developed countries like Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Spain among others, single mothers enjoy generous benefits from both private and public sectors. Woessmann (2020) identified benefits like subsidised childcare, while Amato, Peterson and Beatle (2015) noted how financial gifts and rewards are being awarded to single mothers in some countries in Europe. In Nigeria, however, the situation is different since there are no administrative structures in place to address the rising needs of single moms. In situations where single mothers are to fend for themselves and their families, it becomes a huge problem (McLanahan, 2010). This makes their children look for illegitimate strategies to survive, leading to problems at the societal level. This was further exacerbated when COVID threatened and compounded Nigeria's poverty level. Prior to the COVID era, around 4 in 10 Nigerians lived in extreme poverty and multidimensional poverty was even more widespread (NBS, 2020). The COVID-19 era left households continually poor and even households that were not monetarily poor were incapable of sending their children to school.

Other important functions of marriage is socialization and procreation (reproduction). Simultaneously, the former inculcates societal values, and the latter produces children that unify members, from the point of view of enabling a man and a woman to share common values. This is generally what the African community preaches and embraces. However, the increasing rate of single parenting is still a concern today. It is against the backdrop that the study examines the drivers of single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

1.3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

Considering the research issue, the study's main aim is to examine the socio-economic factors that influence single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

Objectives

Specifically, the study attempts to:

1. Examine the role of family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
2. Find out the influence of age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
3. Determine the role of education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
4. Identify the influence of perceived economic benefits on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
5. Determine methodological approaches or paradigms used to explain single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

1.4. Research Questions

Main research questions

What are the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?

The study aims at supplying answers to the following questions.

1. How is family background relevant to the adoption of single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?
2. What role does age play on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?
3. What role does education play on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?
4. How does perceived economic or other benefits contribute to single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?
5. What are the methodological approaches or paradigms used to explain single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?

1.5. Scope and Significance of the Study

Works of literature have over the years identified and documented issues of single parenting from the point of view of divorce, separation and spousal's death; but tend to neglect single mothers who are not married, but have children. This neglect leads this research to focus on women who

are unmarried but have given birth to at least one child, or several children. They also represent women who do not stay with their children's fathers as a result of social factors (such as family background, age and education) as well as economic factors (perceived economic benefits) on their choice of family structure.

This study has practical, theoretical, and methodological significance. Firstly, due to the increasing level of single-parent families, studies have shown its impacts, leading to negative outcomes in children and has implications for poverty (Issa, 2018; Madukwe, 2018; McLanahan, 2019). Nigeria is a good example, because of its current economic crisis which has led to high inflation, a persistent rise in food prices of food and poor living conditions. With its practical significance, understanding this issue would provide insights into developing programs, plans, and interventions to address the challenges faced by single mothers. The study could also lead to information on how women can be financially independent and how to improve their financial capabilities. To marriage counselors, the study provides an understanding of the intricacies in marriage and how to overcome the identified challenges.

Secondly, going by the theoretical significance, this research advances scholarship and the body of existing knowledge towards understanding single parenting among unmarried mothers. To researchers and academicians, it is hoped that the study can be utilized as a source of reference for those who seek to carry out similar studies.

Lastly, as a result of the deficiency and gap identified in previous studies, research on unmarried single mothers with children in Nigeria has not been fully explored. Hence, this study sheds some light into a subject matter that has been neglected by other studies. Furthermore, employing bivariate analyses to explore single parenting among unmarried mothers in an African society allowed the researcher to gain substantial empirical insights into factors that affect single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

The following section unpacks the preliminary literature review and theoretical framework anchoring this study.

1.6. Preliminary Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Several factors and its attendant effects on single parenting have stirred different opinions. Numerous research projects have been done on single parenting (Zafer and Thomas, 2021; Nahikari and Annika, 2021; Galland, 2020; Ayako et al., 2020; Tafere et al., 2020; Edema and

Lynn, 2020; Morgan 2019; Nasaba, Risper and Kasiera, 2018; Nock, 2018; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2018; Okeke, 2017; Odimegwu et al., 2017; Bergman, 2017; Oneke, 2014; Clark and Hamplova, 2013; Melgosa and Melgosa Shirley, 2011); and they have established the fact that the number of single parent families have increased globally, and more specifically, in sub-Saharan Africa. While some works of literature attributed the spike in the cases of single parenting to increased divorce and separation among couples (Wondra, 2015; Elo, 2019), others argued that it is being facilitated by the number of births recorded outside marriage, unprotected sex and education (Burge, 2017; Crabtree and Klutch, 2020). In general, there is a dearth of literature on the causes of the rising proportion of single parenting among women who are not married. In order to better understand the rising prevalence of single parenting among many unmarried mothers, this study aims to specifically examine variables like age, family background, education and perceived economic influence (independent variables) and their influence or impact on single parenting (dependent variable).

Previous findings have explored the concept of single parenting from the point of view of adoption or fostering, surrogate motherhood, divorce, and separation (Oyefara, 2011; Shirley, 2011). To some, it is seen from the perspective of unplanned and unforeseen circumstances like death, child neglect or parental abandonment, early pregnancy, and having a child or children out of a legally established relationship (Miller et al., 2010). Apart from this, studies also attribute the occurrence of single parenting to family breakdown or divorce (Moyo & Kawewe, 2009), or even migration and marital choice (Dintwat, 2010), or due to death of a spouse (Clark and Hamplova, 2013). Single parenting has been documented to face some negative consequences. For instance, Bergman (2007) linked such parenting to having an increased risk of poverty when compared to families with both parents. Besides this, single parenting is connected with a high risk of children with adverse outcomes (Shirley, 2011). The latter are expressed in social and emotional components, as in their attitude (Nock, 2018) or in their disposition, character and relationship with their male counterparts (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2018).

The wide values conferred on the conventional nuclear family unit, which consists of a man, woman, and children, are quickly eroding as a result of the growth of single parenting. As a result, alternative forms of a family system, such as single parenting, have been emerging. (Okeke, 2017).

Wallerstein and Blakeslee (2016) identified the reasons for a single parenting family system as it varies, looking at it from a global perspective. Reasons range from personal choice to circumstances beyond the control of such women (involuntary circumstances). Odumosu (2017) identified the role and impact of family upbringing and unplanned pregnancies. Heyman (2011) further identified the role of spousal death, pregnancy out-of-wedlock resulting from a premarital sex, and a broken relationship, among others. For Hardy (2018) the impact of divorce of parents is also significant, as it may close the door to marriage. After experiencing the heartache and misery of premarital relationships, many marriageable women choose to become single mothers. (Hamburg, 2014).

1.6.1. Family Background on Single Parenting.

Woodward (2014) identified family background surrounded by regular matrimonial violence by the father on the mother as a factor that can contribute to the likelihood for single parenting when the girls come of age. While the impressions of ill-treatment by fathers on some mothers tend to grow in the subconscious of young girls, they tend to develop problems with establishing relationships, later being labelled as “anti-men” or “anti-marriage or possessed by a “spiritual husband.”. These experiences make these young girls see the male gender in the society as monsters or killers, portraying an attitude that is not palatable (Cummings and Davies, 2014; Roosa, 2017; Obasi, 2018). This feeling influences their relationship with the opposite sex, and while they manage to be in any relationship, it is encumbered with hate and distrust (Ross and Roberts, 2012; Amato, 2014; Lorretta and Ntoimo, 2019). Furthermore, women's growing independence has proven to make them less reliant on males (Rodgers and Pryor, 2018). The transition from the collective nuclear family set-up informed by the African philosophy of “Ubuntu” to the more individualistic single parenthood has often drawn interpretations of such occurrences as being the result of Western influences on young people. Africa operates on a patriarchal system, making the entire family rely on the males. However, as more women are entering the labour market, their financial capacity is strengthened which aids them to be single mothers (Macionis, 2016). Roosa et al. (2017) argued that self-reliance among women makes them see marriage as unnecessary since they can cater for their children's needs.

1.6.2. Age on Single Parenting.

Previous findings have been able to identify single parenting from the point of view of being overaged due to lack of conception at the expected time (Okeke, 2017; Odumosu, 2017; Offner, 2011; Nock, 2018). Across other studies, single parenting has been identified as a result of being under-aged, that is, in the case of premature conception (Ross and Roberts, 2012; Woodward, 2014; Clark and Brauner-Otto, 2015). Odumosu (2017) stated that naturally, women have age limits for childbearing, despite scientific discoveries. It is believed that from age 18 to 35, a woman's fertility system is active (Olaleye and Oladeji, 2010). Hence, when the shades of fertility begin to stretch, single parenting may be a close option to adopt. Nock (2018) identified the role of educational attainment in prolonging the age of entering marriage. It is believed that age significantly goes with educational attainment, that is, the older a woman is, there is the likelihood of her being educated; hence, securing a job, however, there is an inverse relation between this and securing a suitable husband (Odumosu, 2017).

On the other hand, with respect to the underaged, in Nigeria, teenage single mothers' rate is more than twice what other African countries have (Odumosu, 2017). Studies have shown that teenage girls are sexually active and have a greater risk of teenage pregnancy (Woodward, 2014). The fathers are typically less educated and more likely to be unemployed or working low-paying jobs than fathers who have children after getting married (Hardy et al., 2018). Teenage mothers are left to take care for their children alone and as a result, making it difficult for them to support themselves and their dependent children. These women are more likely to cohabit rather than subsequently get married, either due to the selection process or being single mothers. Even those who finally get married typically have worse financial circumstances than other women who start having children after marriage (Nock, 2018). Based on the above, this study therefore seeks to examine how age influences single parenting amongst mothers who have never been married in Nigeria.

1.6.3. Education on Single Parenting

Education has been found to impact humans' ways of life; hence, determining their thought patterns and behaviour. Findings in much of the literature have not been consistent in identifying

the relationship between education and single parenting among unmarried women. For example, women who lack a college degree or who struggle with literacy are more likely to be single mothers. (Amato, 2014; Issa, 2018). By implication, educational level informs decisions relating to unprotected sex, which could lead to unwanted pregnancy. The result is, single parent mothers emerging on the demographic horizon.

Additional findings discovered that women who have more education are less inclined to be single parents. (Obasi, 2018; Elo, 2019) because of their knowledge of contraceptive use, and thus they avoid early child birth or unplanned pregnancies (Oyefara, 2011). In contrast, Roosa (2017) and Smith (2013) argued that higher educational attainment engenders single parenting because the increased empowerment of women builds an ideology of independence, making them get married late, hence forcing them into single parenting. This growing debate has necessitated the need for the study to identify and unravel the form of education (formal or informal) amongst single mothers who have never been married that significantly influences single parenting which previous studies did not examine.

1.6.4. Perceived Economic on Single Parenthood.

According to Odumosu (2017), around 40% of single-mother families in Africa were living in poverty in 2016. This finding raises the possibility that the percentage of low-income single-mother homes will continue to increase. Single-parent parents are more likely than other families to have consistently low incomes, and their periods of hardship are among the longest, according to a longitudinal investigation by Otite and Ogionwo (2010).

With specific reference to Nigeria, the single parents' population is vast and rapidly increasing (Olurounbi, 2018). This has attracted widespread concerns and attention from development experts and critical stakeholders in the country because of the disadvantaged position that single mothers are placed in, especially from an economic point of view. In Africa, divorce rates and the expansion of single-mother households are comparable to those in other western nations. Since divorce rules were loosened in 1965, especially in the western world, divorce rates have been gradually increasing (Macionis, 2006). Economic hardships have thus made these trends worse since women

have extremely low remarriage rates (Woodward, 2004), even if they have lately been growing (Smith, 2013), and non-marital births has been rising quickly (Otite and Oigionwo, 2010).

In recent times, the entire workspace has accommodated more women into paid employment. For example, Lorretta and Ntoimo (2019) discovered that around 70% of women of working age are employed. This is also associated with the fact that women had higher levels of education than males. These were made possible because of the state's policies, especially in guaranteeing equality of females with other males and ensuring the independence and rights of women. A notable example of the latter is the legalizing of abortion. Aside from this, reforms that carved a comprehensive program for the vulnerable in the society were instituted, including those targeting single mothers and their children in social welfare programs.

Thus, the trend is changing single mothers participating in the job market at a higher rate than married women. According to data, married women with children have a lower participation rate in the workforce than single moms do (Odumosu, 2017). This demonstrates that, compared to 71% of moms in nuclear families, 80% of single mothers who are raising children are actively employed. Therefore, single mothers may devote more time to working. Because of this, they devote more time to their jobs, increasing their earnings and returns (McLanahan, 2019).

1.6.5 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on four sociological theories which explained the relationship between socio-economic factors and single parenting. These theories complement each other in explaining the concept of single parenting. They are symbolic interactionism, economic hardship theory, social exchange theory and intersectional feminism theory.

Symbolic interactionism is a significant perspective in sociology derived from the work of George Herbert Mead (Wallace and Wolf, 2006). He argued that the self is a social product that is purposive and creative. Blumer (1969), who was a student of Mead, was able to coin the term the method by which individuals engage with items in society is known as 'Symbolic Interactionism,' and it is predicated on the meaning that those 'things' (formed through social interaction and changed through interpretation) have for them. Blumer (1969) identified three premises by which

the theory is built. Firstly, in society, humans act toward objects due to the meaning attached to them. These objects involve what humans may note in the world they operate, such as actions and physical objects. For example, as girls are being socialised in the family, they see and observe how their fathers treat their mothers unfairly. They attached meanings to these acts and live to grow up with them, hence, disliking men as partners that they were supposed to get smarrred to. Secondly, the meaning of such things arises from the social interaction that human beings have with one another in society. To Mead, as people interact in society, rather than reacting to the other's actions, they tend to define or interpret them. Lastly, through an interpretive method that the individual employs while interacting with the items he or she meets, these meanings are kept intact.

In a similar dimension where symbolic interactionism explains individuals and their interpretations of objects and events in their environment, single parenting is not left out. Just as Blumer affirms that people act based on the meanings that they attach to things around them, it depicts that single parenting is also a preferred form of family structure by some women. The understanding people have about specific events that have been identified in the literature predisposes them to single parenting. This is engendered by their belief that single parenting arises from social interaction with others and their society. Single mothers tend to conceive single parenting because of their experiences as it reflects from their family background. It could also result from what they experience, which they react to after they get older, such as mothers' maltreatment by fathers.

The symbolic interactionism theory also shares a boundary with the “Looking-glass self” of Cooley (1902). He identified how individuals grow in the society as a result of interactions with other members. In this, members of the society are shaped by the perception that others have towards them. Aiken (2016) identified three steps in exploring the tenets of “the looking glass self”; firstly, how individuals think of how they look to others; secondly, how individuals think about how others judge them based on how one perceives that they view them and thirdly, how individuals think of how a person view them as a result of past judgements. In a nutshell, the theory attempts to express the predisposition for a person to comprehend oneself through the perception others have about them. Significantly within the family, the interactions a child has with the parent would to a greater extent form a self-concept, which Mead (1934) identified as the “Social Self” or “Me”. They are relevant, making it have predictive capacity for the future development of the

child. Traditionally, in Africa, role identities are the self-meanings which are attached to positions and their corresponding roles (Unoka and Vizin, 2017). For example, the identity of a mother and the reaction of others to her performance may become conspicuous after exhibiting singlehood.

The second theory that was used for this study is the economic hardship theory, which examines the behavioural deficiencies in children which can be traced to the economic hardship that their mothers had faced. The theory makes some assumptions regarding the life chances of children to engage in a partnered relationship or as single parent mothers. Firstly, children from two parent families are better off as compared to single parenthood, because couples can pool resources together to run the affairs of the home (Amoateng, et al. (2007). When men are employed, they often provide more of the family income, and this also has implications for their children's cognitive and social development (Richter, 2007). On the other hand, families with a single mother have limited networks because of insufficient funds to run the household. They are more likely to drop out of school as compared to those with sufficient funds. This reduces the opportunities available to get better jobs, which also translates to living better lives, and also tends to lead to intergenerational poverty (Panday, et al, 2009).

The economic hardship theory further states that children from single parent families undergo some financial and economic challenges (Posel, et al. (2006). By implication, they may indulge in risky sexual behaviour (Hawkins, 2007) because of the need to survive. This leads them to premarital sex, hence, unwanted pregnancies or the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases. This could also be as a result of these children assuming adult responsibilities at an early age. They are most likely not attending schools because their mothers do not have the necessary resources. It has been found that enrolment in school prevents early pregnancy among adolescents because this will make young women less sexually active. As a result, they are less likely to start bearing children early (Hill et al, 2011), and they also would make use of contraceptives more often (Ellis, et al. 2013) as compared to those who are not in school (Grant and Hallman, 2008).

In a bid to escape from this perspective, the rational adaptation theory which complements the economic hardship theory argued that sexuality and pregnancy are used as strategies by young females to achieve financial stability. For example, Amoateng et al. (2007) noted that transactional

sex is used with older males to cope with poverty. Some adopt this rational adaptation by either engaging in sexual activity without the desire of getting pregnant, this is solely aimed at paying their bills and school fees (Ellis, et al. 2013), while others utilize childbearing as a logical adaptation method in and of itself. This will help them to increase their chances of getting married (Richter, 2007). Recent research has revealed that these females can get married because of pregnancy, despite studies showing that the likelihood of getting married might be decreased as a result of giving birth outside of marriage (Grant, 2018; Bumpass et al, 2019).

Thirdly, the Social Exchange Theory holds that social conduct results from an exchange connection. The initial social exchange theory's applicability in family science was inspired by sociological publications (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), which focused on the rational evaluation of self-interest in human social relationships. The concept of the theory may well be viewed as a basic economic paradigm for social interactions. The primary principle of the theory is that people behave in social circumstances in a way that increases their likelihood of succeeding in their objectives. A connection between social exchange theory and single parenting demonstrates that, depending on the adult's social standing, being a single parent may have both higher costs and higher levels of rewards as compared to those who do not. By subgroups of marital status and gender, single parents have different costs and benefits. Findings show that having children is not only related to improved mental health in terms of depression for married women but it is also connected with increased expenses in terms of more housework and arguments with husbands.

Lastly, Intersectional Feminism, as propounded by an American scholar – Kimberley Crenshaw (1989) saw the way different aspects of the social world collectively operate to explain female roles in the society. It began by explaining how women are subjugated and oppressed in the society. However, in recent times, it has been amplified to consist of several aspects of social identities like sexuality, race, religion and gender among others (Fixmer-Oraiz, 2015; Walker, 2017). These identities and aspects according to Crenshaw combine to create variety of privileges (advantages) or discriminations (disadvantages). This was supported by Walker (2017) who borrowed from the concept of intersectionality to explain the advantages or disadvantages that are experienced by females as a result of the combination of these factors.

With respect to the significance of intersectional feminism on single parenting, despite the fact that feminism advocates for the rights and equality of women (Collins, 2015), intersectional feminism attempts to understand how women's overlapping identities have significant impact on the way they are seen in society (Brah, 2004; Crenshaw, 1989; Mann, 2005), particularly from the perspective of the family and how they express their roles. The theory, however, shows how single parenting is not influenced by a single factor or variable, but by intersecting and overlapping variables which play out in explaining why they practice such family system. This study therefore shows how a combination of family background, age, education, economic and other benefits can all influence single parenting.

In the African context, women are exposed to several socio-cultural and economic contexts that set the rules of engagement for them (McCall, 2005; Moeno, 2006). One of these is family background, that is, the kind of socialisation received by children at the home front largely determines what they become as adults (Roosa, 2017; Obasi, 2018). Hence, the reason some women settle as single parents, having seen their mothers settled for it. Apart from this, age is another significant factor, since single parents could result from being under aged (Nock, 2018) or over aged (Odumosu, 2017). Education factors also lead to single parenting since studies (Okeke, 2017; Obasi, 2018; Elo, 2019) have shown that the less educated are more likely not to use contraceptives, leading to unwanted pregnancies; and then settling as single mothers. In contrast, educated women with greater incomes are more inclined to get a divorce and raise their children by themselves (Issa, 2018). Perceived economic benefits also affect single parenting because, as earnings for women are low, some identify the importance of having several men, which would lead to getting several allowances from them, hence, leading to the accumulation of economic gains (Odumosu, 2017; Olurounbi, 2018). Such occurrences then also justify this study in terms of its aim to find out why, in view of this option of multiple partners, single mothers choose to remain single.

It is therefore hypothesized that socio-economic factors (family background, age, education and perceived economic benefits) directly influence single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Hence, the hypotheses to be tested are:

Hypothesis 1.

H₀: There is no relationship between family background and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between family background and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Hypothesis 2.

H₀: There is no relationship between age and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between age and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Hypothesis 3.

H₀: There is no relationship between education and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between education and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Hypothesis 4.

H₀: There is no relationship between perceived economic benefits and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between perceived economic benefits and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

1.7. Operational Definition of Key Concepts

1. Single Parenting: According to this study, single parenting is a type of family where a child or children live with a single parent. In single parenting, a spouse or partner is missing, for a variety of reasons, including divorce, death, or abandonment.

2. Age: Age is a social concept which deals with the number of years an individual has lived or existed. For the purpose of this study, single mothers between age 18 and 65 were examined.

3. Education: This deals with the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes which makes members of a society relevant. It is one of the most effective tools people require in order to live in society. Hence, this study captured both educated and uneducated single mother and how they impact on single parenting.

4. Perceived Economic Benefits: This is a perception of the positive implications, caused by a specific action. Oftentimes, it is used to explain the motive behind the performance of a behaviour.

1.8. Methodology

1.8.1. Study Design

A non-experimental mixed research method was used, that is, a blend of quantitative, as well as qualitative methods. The essence of the triangulation of methods was for validation and to capture areas that the quantitative method was not be able to (Creswell and Plano, 2011). Apart from this, it enabled the researcher to dig deep into the lives and experiences of unmarried mothers. Questionnaire was utilized for the collection of quantitative or statistical data, while the Key Informant Interviews (KII) were used to collect and qualitatively explore the views, beliefs and experiences of the respondents on the subject of the research.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, an online survey was used for both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Apart from the reduction of risk through physical contacts that the researcher would be exposed to, it eased data gathering and it automates data collection, input and handling (Mae-Sincero, 2008). Findings from other studies have also shown that surveys increase the overall response rates since it connects the researcher to a wide range of respondents (DeFranzo, 2010; Wright, 2017).

As a result of these, FACEBOOK was selected for the study, because it is a platform that drives engagement and where wider respondents can be reached. It also allows a researcher to capture a specific target audience regardless of age, gender and socio-economic class among others (Yuval, 2020).

The researcher identified a group of women on Facebook called Nigerian Single Parent Lounge (NSPL). It is a community of single mothers alone with over ten thousand active members. It is made up of divorcees, mothers of babies not married to their child's father and widows. They discuss issues regarding women folk in the social world, and how well they can be protected and their rights safeguarded. The specific characteristics that the researcher was looking for are single mothers (18 years above), who are never married but have at least one child. After contacting the group administrator about the objectives and scope of the study, the researcher was granted the permission to conduct the study, with the approval of the group members (single mothers) on Facebook. A gatekeeper Approval letter was issued to this effect. This was structured in such a way that; the gatekeeper added the researcher to the Facebook group where he had direct access to members. In essence, the investigator was responsible for choosing and recruiting the participants for the study using Facebook.

Participants were required to take part in the study for the duration of the data collection process, just in case they needed to provide additional information regarding their experiences. They could also be requested to consider to provide follow-up information

1.8.2. Study Settings

The study location for this research was Nigeria, which is a federal republic with a population of about 210 million people (Worldometer, 2021). The female population stands at 101 million, making a substantial growth and an annual rate of 2.56% (World Data Atlas, 2021). The selection of Nigeria as the study setting was anchored on the increase in single parenting among women and the choice of never to get married in that particular country.

Administratively, Nigeria comprises 36 states and a Federal Territory which is its capital. In addition to the division by states, it is further divided into 774 local government areas for administrative ease. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa (World Population Review, 2021) and the seventh in the world (Bloomberg, 2019; United Nation, 2019), and it has been estimated to reach the 400 million population mark by year 2050 (Bloomberg, 2019).

It is a multicultural entity made up of more than 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages. (Worldometer, 2021). From these, the Yoruba from the western region, the Hausa and Igbo from

the northern and eastern regions respectively form the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. With a Muslim and Christian population of 53.5% and 45.9% respectively (World Data Atlas, 2021), Nigeria is seen as a religiously diverse entity. With respect to its economy, it operates a mixed economic system (Bloomberg, 2019), and according to the World Bank (2020), it is abundant in natural resources and has a well-developed financial system. It is therefore the largest economy in Africa and is 21st in the world by GDP rankings.

The study population for this research involved women who have given birth to children but were never married: this forms the inclusion criteria. It excluded single mothers due to divorce or spousal death but targets women with at least one child as a dependent. United Nations (2012) defines a dependent child as one who lives with the parent and below 18 years of age. In this study only women who are above 18 years will participate, because according to the Child Right Act of 2003, 18 is the legal age for marriage and childbirth in Nigeria (Girls Not Brides, 2013).

With Nigeria's population at 210 million (Worldometer, 2021), the Internet World Statistics (2021) reports that there are about 31,860,000 active Facebook users from the 154,301,195 internet users. Despite this increasing number, a share of Nigeria's population still lacks access to internet supply, most especially in the rural areas. According to Statista (2021), the share of urban population to the overall population is 51.16%, making a large part of the population in the rural areas lag behind in the use of the internet. This means that this would be one of the limitations of the study because it cannot capture those without internet or Facebook in the rural areas, making it selective in nature. To this end, the results of this study were not a true representation of Nigeria because only those who have access to Facebook participated in the study.

1.8.3. Data Source

1.8.3.1. Sampling

For quantitative research, probability sampling was used, whereas non-probability sampling was used for the qualitative investigation. For the former, a multi stage approach was adopted. This began with getting the population of members of Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge Facebook; which is 10,000. The next step entailed calculating the sample size objectively by using the Raosoft

sample size calculator. 370 was obtained with a 5% error margin and a 95% confidence level. Raosoft is scientific in character since, in addition to other methods for calculating sample size, it contains options for calculating margin error and level of confidence (Crilly et al, 2017). Although the Raosoft sample size calculator suggested 370 samples; in order to make provisions for non-respondents, as well as poorly completed questionnaires, the sample size was increased to 450, and this was selected across Nigeria using an online survey.

An advert was placed on the Facebook group, and members were allowed to voluntarily signify interest directly to the researcher's contact as provided in the participants recruitment advert. This recruitment exercise was carried out to identify potential participants who met the following eligibility criterion: They were to be unmarried mothers with at least one child; They should reside in Nigeria and; They should be more than 18 years.

The 450 respondents were further chosen using the simple random sample approach from the entire number of members who willingly expressed interest in taking part in the study. In doing this, potential participants were assigned numbers with the aid of the "**random number generator**". Based on the specifications of the study, it generated a random number table which showed the respondents that have been selected for the study.

On the other hand, for the qualitative study, the convenience sampling was employed. The first 30 respondents among those who participated in the quantitative study, and who showed interest for further interviews, were selected. The researcher asked additional questions using a specially produced informed consent pamphlet at the conclusion of the questionnaire: to ask if they were willing to be interviewed, and their contact details such as Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom were requested. The participants most preferred channel for interviews was sought.

1.8.3.2. Instruments

For this study, the questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data. The questionnaire was a mixture of open and closed-ended questions that covered every area of interest in the study. Since Facebook was utilised to recruit the respondents, the responses were automatically captured on google drive where the researcher easily retrieved the data. The respondents were interviewed

using a Key Informant interview guide to get qualitative information. It was semi-structured because of the need to allow further probing of questions from the respondents. The interviews was done through the aid of Skype, WhatsApp or Zoom, depending on the preference of the respondents.

1.8.3.4. Data Analysis

To analyze quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed. – version 27; the Univariate and Bivariate analysis were utilised as methods of analysis. The Univariate analysis was conducted with the use of frequency tables and charts to analyse variables like ages, educational level and number of children ever had among others.

Regression analysis was employed in the bivariate study to understand and deduce the association between the dependent variable (single parenting) and the independent variables (socio-economic factors). For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used to analyse the responses. The framework for this was based on narrowing down each objective in relation to various themes that have been identified from the field. The data was transcribed, read through, and responses coded in line with the research objectives were discussed. The objectives were structured in themes and analysed alongside the quantitative data.

1.9. Ethical Considerations

Certain ethical considerations must be achieved in gathering research information and evidence. Principally, the researcher made efforts to gather data voluntarily from respondents among members of the Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge. Efforts were also made to carry out the research in the best of academic traditions, specifically, considering North West University's (NWU) research guide and permission from the ethics committee of NWU was sought.

No personal information of the respondent was disclosed whether deliberately or accidentally, thus, ensuring that *anonymity* of response is guaranteed. To achieve this, each questionnaire was labelled and coded as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc. This is to ensure that respondents' identities are not revealed or made public. The information provided by the respondents were kept *confidential* and no third party had access to their responses. Before the commencement of the

interviews, the researcher assigned pseudonyms, and these were used to capture the names and identities of respondents.

With regards to the *security and storage of data*, the researcher made sure that the information in both physical (printed) and soft copy devices were securely locked up and password-protected in order to avoid a third party from accessing the file because the security and preservation of data are crucial in ethical concerns. Just the investigator and the supervisors had access to the initial data, which will be deleted five years after the study is finished.

1.10. Structure of the Thesis

There were eight sections in the thesis. The context of the research, the research issues, the aims (both particular and general), as well as the scope and importance of the investigation, are covered in chapter one. The second and third chapters reviewed literature and relevant works that addressed issues on single parenting, most especially, from the point of view of family background and age for the second, as well as educational level and perceived economic benefits for the third. Chapter four presented the theoretical framework on which this study was built; with four theories being discussed, viz., Symbolic Interactionism, Economic Hardship theory, Social Exchange theory and intersectional feminist theory.

Chapter five discussed the methodology, specifically, the study design and setting, data sources, data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter six and seven discussed the data presentation and analysis, and chapter eight focused on the conclusion, summary, policy implications and suggestions for further studies.

1.11. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the background to the study on socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. The problem statement, research objective and questions that were central to the study were presented. In addition, the significance, scope and preliminary review of literature were briefly discussed. Inclusive of these is the theoretical

framework of Symbolic Interactionism, Economic Hardship, Social Exchange and Intersectional Feminism. The next chapter focuses on the review of literature on single parenting.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND AND AGE ON SINGLE PARENTING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The question of what comprises a family has often been the subject of debates, not only in a discourse on sociology of the family, but also in other disciplines such as in religious, demographic and political debate. Social conservatives regard the family as having a nuclear structure composed of the father, mother, and children who each have certain duties and obligations within the nuclear family. Similar to this, Galland (2020), Edema and Lynn (2020), and Lynn and Galland (2020) argued that the family is founded on how individuals interact to one another rather than on the strict distribution of status positions as per popular convention. One sociological definition notes that a family is a social group made up of individuals who are related by marriage, adoption, or blood. Families foster emotional bonds among their members and are also an important part of society's economy (Parul, 2015). Although households with one parent may not meet the traditional definition of a family, they are a common family structure in practically all countries, both urban and rural.

The institution of the family is one of the most significant and fundamental aspects of society. Any human association's stability and security are supported by it, and as Nasaba, Risper and Kasiera (2018) argued, it is the most primitive social organization based on the collection of corporate descent units; and as a result, it lacks a strong centralized institution. To the structural functionalists who took their analytical framework from the works of Durkheim, any society's foundation is the family. The Durkheimian approach on the discourse of the family was concerned with the maintenance of internal stability and survival overtime. This can only be achieved through the infusion of an organic paradigm, that is, how the family operates as a part of the whole (society) in order to sustain and maintain the society. Within this context, the family facilitates the integration of members with societal norms, values and principles in a bid to make the society survive. This is enabled through socialization and sensitization. This is in line with Harkonen's (2017) theory of the family as a unit that facilitates social replacement by generating offspring for its aging members. According to Garriga and Cortina (2017), the family provides people with the

ability to own property and maintain a kinship hierarchy. In the work of Bryant 2016); Hong and Zhu (2017) and (Crouch et al. (2019), families provide individuals with material requirements, care, and support in addition to providing emotional stability.

The idea, purpose, and structure of the family, however, has been evolving as a result of the accompanying socio-economic and cultural developments in modern society. Since the ancient times, the family unit has experienced several transformations (Murdock 1967; Engels 1972; Morgan 2019). Morgan has shown how, from early civilization to what we have now as the nuclear family in modern countries, the family as an entity has experienced modifications from "consanguine" to "punaluan," and then to "polygamous" and "monogamous" (Morgan 2019). The family and marriage are inextricably intertwined, but the connection is not easy or simple; rather, it creates a complicated web of relationships. Recent research has revealed shifts in preferences and marital types. The family's structure and forms have also changed recently. The traditional classification of the family as a combined and nuclear family is not the only type of family that exists today. The nuclear family has been under strain as a result of modernization, urbanization, and industrialization; and as a result, it frequently takes on several shapes, for example, co-habitation, divorce and single parenting which this study is anchored on. We frequently observe alterations to the socially recognized form and organization of the family. Examples of this include same-sex couples without children or single-parent households.

To this end, this chapter examined and reviewed works of literature on the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to explore the following research objectives:

1. To explore the role of family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
2. To examine the influence of age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

2.2. Conceptualizing Family

Family is a basic and universal concept and scholars across different fields have provided a host of formal descriptions of it. They include sociologists, demographers, and decision-makers who

have various perspectives on the family and what are known as the essential components of a family, including such child raising and close family ties (Hereyah and Purwanti, 2021). In certain circles, the idea of family comprises of established definitions that are frequently used to count populations or their subsets (Muhle, 2020; Jackson, Choi and Preston, 2019). However, there is still much debate about what a family means, most especially from the cultural viewpoints of different societies.

The idea of family has been linked in western society to formal systems like marriage (Asah, 2021). The conventional family structure in western nations has been the "nuclear family," which is typically characterized as a two-parent household with kids living in the same home (Manning, Brown, & Stykes, 2014). A critical look at other claims on the other hand, show a variety of family systems and structures that are common, socially accepted and operational. For instance, polygamous marriages or the contentious and forbidden unions such as same-sex marriages in Canada are also prevalent in other nations like Malawi as well as South Africa (Limaye, Bablola, Keneddy, & Kerrigan, 2013; Nyathikazi, 2013).

Having reviewed the literature to examine and interrogate the philosophies by which family are conceptualized by various researchers, regulatory agencies of the government, community organizations as well as individuals, one can discern three (3) broad approaches that have been developed to conceptualize the family as one relevant social institution of society. These are the demographic, genealogical and the social approaches.

From a *demographic perspective*, the family is mainly acknowledged as a component of a web of extended kinship that connects a person's ancestors and descendants. In this approach, the most documented statistics on the family are in line with household survey questions and feedbacks (Fields and Lynne, 2011). In developed nations and much of the rest of the globe, "family" is defined according to census and survey data, i.e., as two or more people who are related through marriage, adoption, or blood and who dwell in the same home (Fields and Casper, 2011).

In addition, Smith (2017) defined a family as a social unit, made up of adults (man and woman) and his or her descendants. This is synonymous with the nuclear family system in the work of

Scott (2014), who sees it comprising of a father, mother and children; and is seen as the oldest of the diverse types of families that are operational in society. Sometimes the family is not only made up of parents with their unmarried children inhabiting the same home, but also, their married children, in addition to their spouses, and their offspring, and possibly elderly dependents as well. Such an arrangement is one form of the extended family (Murphy, 2013).

The *Geneological approach* examines the family through the systematic study of a family's structure history through a genealogical method; which is based mostly on demographic sources of information, such as death and birth records, records from immigration, censuses, and government data, among others. The main goal is to create a family tree of significant person's ancestors and descendants (Smith, Garaldine and Mineau 2013). The tree's expansion can be restricted to those who are only distantly connected, such as cousins. Basically, the goal is to encourage related kin inclusion. From this approach, "Family History" is often used and appreciated by genealogists because it speaks of genetic connection that may not be factual, due to issues and concerns about paternity (Alhussain et al., 2019) and the case of adoption (Smith, 2017). Considering the genealogical method from Lander, Howsare, and Byrne's (2013), family trees can include a lot of information. The nature of connections, however, is independent of a person's residence. According to Glick (2017), each member of the family tree may have a domicile as well as certain other pieces of information, such as the location and dates of each person's birth and death as well as their employment.

Typically, family trees differentiate between the dead and the living within a family, in order to apply several definitions of the family to only members that are living (Roffee, 2016). As a result, the genealogical approach looks at the structure of the family from broader perspective compared to the demographic approach. To this end, if one could identify a spouse and their offspring, whether they live together or not, a multi-generational family, whether they live together or not, as well as distant family groups, it could be determined precisely. Therefore, the point of convergence from prior research on family defines a family as a collection of people connected via blood, marriage, or adoption who live together as a single household and interact with one another based on their respective social roles (Daly, 2011; Manning et al., 2014; McGoldrick et al., 2015; Bryant, 2016).

The *social-economic approach*, at its best, emphasizes the role of the family in performing valuable functions for its members. Most importantly, it offers support for psychological and emotional security, being facilitated through companionship and love (Scott, 2014). Murphy (2013) also identified the social dimension of conceptualizing family from the point of view of providing valuable social functions like ensuring reproduction and the provision of guidelines for the sexual conduct. Baude et al. (2016) termed the family, a social unit that provides social benefits which ranges from socialization of members into the expectations of the society, caring for members along humanitarian activities, most especially when they are indisposed or disabled (Roffee, 2016; Glick, 2017; Alhussain et al. 2019). This approach is the level at which single parent family sets it, and it relates to a family system of one parent with children (Bryant, 2016). The “one parent” in this context could be as a result of where the parent did not remarry as a result of divorce, or was widowed, or never got married. According to Gulick (2017), the parent in a household with just one parent has full custody of the kids, while Dickerson and Popli (2016) stated that the separated parents could have made arrangements to divide the time spent with their children

Polygyny has cultural and religious intonations (Bryant, 2016) because it is permitted and associated with Islam, as operational in Africa and the Middle Eastern regions. However, as stated in the holy book, there are several requirements that must be satisfied before this type of family may be established. Roffee (2015) explains the conceptualization of polyandry, which is operational among women. It is a type of marriage in which a woman cohabitates with one or even more men at once. Alhussain et al. (2019) added that two brothers may be married to the same woman in a brotherly household, a typical type of polyandry that is practiced, among others, in China, India, and Nepal. Basically, it is recommended in communities with high mortalities or in situations where men would have to spend a large amount of time apart from other family members.

2.3. The Concept of Single Parenting

Earlier studies have explored the concept of single parenting from the point of view of adoption or fostering, surrogate motherhood, divorce and separation (Oyefara, 2011; Shirley, 2011). Some

people see it from the standpoint of unanticipated events, such as death, parental neglect or abandonment of a kid, an early pregnancy, or the birth of a child or children without any legally recognized marriage (Miller and Ridge, 2010). In addition, research have documented causes for single parenting such as family dissolution or separation (Moyo & Kawewe, 2009), migration, marital choice, or the loss of a spouse (Dintwat, 2010; Clark and Hamplova, 2013). It has been shown that being a single parent might have certain drawbacks. Bergman (2007), for instance, connected it to a greater likelihood of poverty compared to households with both parents. In addition, single parenting is linked to a significant risk of negative consequences for children (Shirley, 2011). These results are reflected in their social and emotional aspects, as well as in their attitude, temperament, character, and interaction with men (Nock, 2018; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2018).

Nevertheless, single parenting is a societal phenomenon that predates humankind itself. According to Oneke (2014), it is a type of family structure in which a child or children live with just one parent. Achakpa (2019) argued that it is the process of taking up the family's responsibilities without the contributions of either the father or mother, and this responsibility also involves caring for the children. In recent times, the numbers of single-parent families have increased, resulting in social change, and has gained attention globally. According to Melgosa and Melgosa (2012), these forces of change have also had an influence on Nigerian society, where single parenting appears to be the norm rather than the exception. Regardless if the father was there following the pregnancy or not, children born within these households are legitimate (Okeke, 2017).

The wide values given on the conventional nuclear family unit, which consists of a man, woman, and children, have started to wane as single parenting has become more common. As a result, alternative forms of family systems, such as single parenting have been emerging. (Okeke, 2017). Wallerstein and Blakeslee (2016). Looking at it from a more global perspective, Wallersteing and Blakelee (2016) identified the reasons for the variety of a single parenting family system. Reasons range from personal choice to circumstances beyond the control of such women (involuntary circumstances). Odumosu (2017) also identified the role and impact of family upbringing and unplanned pregnancies. Heyman (2011) also pointed out the importance of spousal death and unplanned pregnancies that are brought about by extramarital relationships, and damaged

relationships, among other things. For Hardy (2018) the impact of divorce of parents is also significant, as it may close the door to marriage. Many eligible young women choose to become single mothers deliberately after recovering from the wounds of their previous relationships (Hamburg, 2014).

2.4. Family Background on Single Parenting.

A family is a social unit in the society that aids socialization and the inculcation of societal values into members. Findings from Ayako et al., (2020); Tafere et al., (2020); Zafer and Thomas, (2021); Nahikari and Annika (2021) have identified how the marriages of significant others (for instance, parents or relatives) serve as a major element of family background and how it engenders single parenting. This has generated much concern about the behaviour and development of children in families today (Center for Longitudinal Studies, 2019), and on their outlook on single parenting. Parenting is a social act, a responsibility, a process and a role that is essential for society to ensure social stability, harmony and progress. It is an act that demands a high degree of commitment, sacrifice, perseverance, attitude, knowledge, tolerance and determination etc. Among other aspects, it is a function institutionalized by the family system in society.

2.4.1. Child Socialization regarding parenting

Sociologically, the family is the first temporal unit where socialization takes place (Amato et al., 2015); and not only is it responsible for this, it is functional in the development of individual members. This makes parents epitomize the most powerful influence in the lives of children (Fernandez-Garcia et al, 2017; Mendo-Lazaro et al, 2019). Garcia and Serra (2019) further added that, this influence is not just a one-off experience, since it continues and follows these children throughout their entire lives. For instance, in that crucial transition from adolescence to the complex phases of adulthood in their life cycle (Livesey and Rostain, 2017). This is why Masten, (2018); Lyons et al., (2020); Hembacher and Michael, (2020) argue that childhood is perceived as the most critical and significant stage of an individual's life, and child development theories have also shown this (Rand et al., 1992; Conger et al., 2002; Sareen et al., 2011).

Works of literature have identified both psychological and sociological aspects of child socialization regarding parenting. The former is evident in Sigmund Freud's analysis, which was part of what was documented on childhood and its implication on developmental stages (Eva, 2020). The theory notes that the libido is the powerful force for all human behavior, which also informs the psychosexual theory of human development (Ewa, 2020; Omnia, 2017). There are a five-stage developmental stages experienced by children, with some form of relationship with sexual satisfaction through a specific part of the body. The cognitive psychologists, Piaget, suggested that children's learning process is actively facilitated through play; hence, the need for adult's role in aiding and assisting them to learn by providing the appropriate materials for the child to interact and construct (Headman, 2017; Germeroth et al, 2019; Ina and Giuletta, 2020).

Child socialization from the sociological perspective sees socialization as the process by which children are equipped to become effective members of society (Garrett, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). This process involves learning of skills and the required values needed to effectively functioning in the society that child grows up into. Danja, Dalibi and Safarov (2017) provide a broader perspective, by way of stating that it entails a lifelong learning process of receiving and spreading societal norms, values and ideologies, with the aim of providing members with the skills and capabilities necessary for participating in society. There are various forms of socialization, but Abdul-Rahim, 2019; Ben-Willie et al., 2019; Michal et al, (2021) all noted that primary and secondary socialization are predominantly vital for children. Ben-Willie et al. (2019) gives a sociological explanation of primary socialization as the process of acquiring the values and principles which sets the foundation and groundwork for subsequent socialization. In other words, it enables a child to learn the actions and values relevant and appropriate for individuals as members of a particular social unit. As Abdul-Rahim (2019) argued, it is influenced primarily by members of one's immediate family and friends. For instance, a girl child, seeing her mother solely responsible and in charge of her upbringing may think that it is an acceptable norm embraced by the society. This perception could continue into adulthood, because socialization is a function of inculcating norms, whether by expressed or implied means.

On the other hand, Michal et al. (2021) stated that secondary socialization operates by learning the behaviour, values and norms of a smaller group that exists within a larger society. Warunee (2002) believed that it is the pattern of behaviour which is being reinforced by some agents of socialization

in society. Primary socialization that takes place at home, while secondary socialization takes place outside the home through agents such as teachers, friends and the media (Warunee, 2002). In addition, just as primary socialization enables members to acquire norms that are acceptable to the society, secondary socialization enables individuals to learn how to behave and act in manners suitable for different situations in the society. For instance, the school as an agent of socialization expects the exhibition of different behaviour from home.

As soon as a child is born, a process of development and growth begins in the family, and this is facilitated through learning the norms and principles, value systems, habits and language codes that makes the child unique and peculiar. Consequently, the home environment has a big impact on how kids and teenagers develop their personalities (Harkness, 2016). In other words, parenting and family interactions and learning lead to a child's psychological and social development. This significantly prepares and grooms them for the realities in the outside world (Mariani, Ozcan and Goisis, 2017). According to Jackson, Choi, and Preston (2019), children engage in both active and passive roles in the process of development. This emphasizes the value of the relationship that is established in the family between the parents and their children, which helps to foster qualitative changes. Additionally, Trent, Dooley, and Douge (2019) pointed out that environmental or personal circumstances like single parenting might encourage abrupt qualitative changes.

This is analogous to the concept of ecological systems in that it describes the various facets of the overall environment that have an effect on the children's development. Crouch, Radcliff, Brown, and Hung (2019) identified four components that elucidate how these modifications are enabled. First, there is the micro-system, which includes all of the activities and interactions that take place in a person's local surroundings. This system gets more complicated when children engage in different settings, such as the school, of which they are constantly a part. The third is the exo-system, which defined the frameworks that children and adolescents are not a part of but still have an influence on their development. Crouch (et al., 2019) also emphasized the importance of the meso-system, which involves in the interconnection between micro-systems (for instance, educational system and peers). Last but not least, the macrosystem, the macroenvironment, and the cultural context based on which the micro, meso, and exo systems are built. These

circumstances differ between cultures and have an impact on the kinds of experiences kids have at home and at school.

2.4.2. Interrelations among micro-systems affecting children's views on parenting

The Bronfenbrenner (1994) ecological systems theory, which claims that a child's development is best explained by evaluating the setting of the child's environmental influences, might be used to explain that the microsystem is a child's social surroundings. The immediate surroundings of a kid, including family and classmates, have a direct impact on that child's development. Similar to how toddlers learn to act by seeing and mimicking the behavior of people they are related to; Bandura's (1971) social learning theory also comes into play in this situation. Inferentially, children connect with their parents in order to develop their inner models (in this context, their mothers). These inner models—which stand for the self, the people or things to which they are related, and the connections—have been described as cognitive-affective filters which have an impact on how children interact with others and see themselves in social contexts. This was supported by related research on how living with others affects the children's cognitive abilities by Ameerah and Fiona (2021): it was demonstrated that it has a significant impact on later life outcomes, such as marriage decisions, and career choices, and occupational accomplishments, among other things.

The crux of the matter of this study is single parenting, and studies have shown the relationship between single parenting and family background. For instance, Oluwaseyi et al. (2019) addressed how single parenting may have a direct or indirect impact on children's cognitive results. They also pointed out that the family system, where the lack of the father molds a particular mentality about parenting, is what causes this direct effect. The experiences of children raised by a single mother, according to Getachew (et al., 2018), likewise demonstrate a strong link between family system and emotional consequences.

2.4.3. Personality traits from single parenting

Personality represents the uniqueness of a person and the possession of traits that distinguish people from others. In essence, they are the motivations for people's ideas and feelings rather than the actual thoughts or emotions themselves (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2012). Similarly, Owoseni (2011) added that personality has predictive capabilities, that is, how an individual act or reacts

under different situations. This includes, as shown by Mount and Barrick (2002), openness, neuroticism, perceptual, extraversion and impulsiveness.

The personality development of the children was the focus of earlier studies on single parenting by Amato and Cheadle (2005), Manning & Lamb (2003), Ayodele (2003), McLanahan and Sandefur (1994), and others. Children who are raised by single parents have a higher likelihood to have personality disorders, which translates to developing antisocial behavioral tendencies. Children who did not stay alongside both of their biological parents were almost twice as likely to be disadvantaged as those who did, according to Amato and Cheadle's (2005) study. Also, it was demonstrated that they are prone to have children outside of marriage, which would largely result in behavioral and psychiatric issues (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Park (2007) also pointed out that single mothers are more likely to engage in harmful behaviors when they are unable to make time for their children or participate in daily routines. Additionally, research by Biblarz and Gottainer (2000) also demonstrates that children who witness domestic violence and family instability are more likely to struggle emotionally and socially, which is manifested in behavior problems.

In their endeavor to understand how single parents decide to rearrange their life, Van Gasse and Mortelmans (2020) discovered that the likelihood of becoming a single mother is increased by the impact of single parenting on the outcomes of children. For instance, it was discovered that parenting and child achievement are influenced by the same personality factors that increase the chance of single parenting (Young, and Schieman, 2018). As a result, one of the highly contentious topics has been the connection between parenting and personality development. It has been argued that behavioral inclinations that are represented in personality traits affect specific behaviors that can have an impact on individual performance, particularly academic success, in a study conducted by Ghapanchi, Khajavy, Asadpour (2011). In a separate investigation, O'Connor and Paunonen (2007) found that personality factors may account for greater variation in academic success than cognitive ability. Therefore, single parenting is likely to have an effect on a child's personality traits related to their interpersonal relationships. According to Skiffington (2003) and Ayodele (2013), effective interpersonal skills are developed at home, especially involving children and their parents, and they are the foundation of good, healthy interpersonal interactions. The findings of

this study clearly demonstrated that personality characteristics can predict how children raised in single-parent households are likely to behave in social situations.

Results of a multiple regression study conducted by Sorkkila and Aunola (2020) to examine the association between single parenting and personal traits revealed that these traits are strong predictors of interpersonal interactions in children raised in single-parent households (either by father or mother). Women reared by single moms and dads had predictions with magnitudes of 18.2% and 25.1%, respectively. This finding has the implication that although a child may be expected to complete a straightforward assignment for academic credit, at some point, he is also required to demonstrate greater resourcefulness, creativity, and inspiration in order to complete a research project effectively. The study also discovered that extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and conscientiousness are strong personality traits that might predict the development of interpersonal relationships. Finding conscientiousness as the most effective predictor among the predictor factors is not unexpected.

According to Barrick and Mount (1991), the Big Five are highly predictive of a variety of behaviors. Likewise, a neurotic individual is more likely to feel negative emotions including anger, anxiety, despair, vulnerability, aggressiveness, and impulsivity more frequently (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2012; Rashedi & Abolmaali 2014). Children from single-parent households had more internalized issues than those from two-parent families, according to Satourian, Tahmassian, and Ahmadi's (2014) research; these issues included social disengagement, deterrence, anxiety, and depression. Various studies have shown that a percentage of kids are susceptible to psychosis. According to Adler (1979), children who grow up in single-parent households are more prone than other kids to be selfish and, like children, still need attention as adults. They are therefore more susceptible to suffering from serious psychological traumas. Single children have allegedly been shown to exhibit negative qualities such as immature, greedy, maladaptive, pampered, and stubbornness. Early 1980s studies revealed that single Chinese children were egocentric, antisocial, maladaptive, haughty, and shy (Zhang, Kohnstamm, Cheung, Lau, 2001). Similarly, according to Satourian, et al (2014) children of single parents were more likely than their classmates from two-parent families to exhibit extrinsic issues such as antisocial conduct, hostility, and violence.

In contrast, children from single parent families exhibit disorderly behavior far less frequently than their classmates (Sardarpour Goodarzi, Derakhshanpour, Sadr, and Yasemi, 2003). These children are also much less likely to have obsessive-compulsive disorder, hyperactivity disorder, and other behavioral problems. Wilkinson and Rawlia (1997) in Bayati (2004) concluded that children raised raised by a single parent were more desired than children raised by two parents in terms of IQ, productivity, and adaptability.

2.4.4. Siblings differences and single parenthood

Studies on single parenting, being engendered from family background have utilized sibling differences, fixed effect, or instrumental variables (Holmes, 2018; Lovejoy and Stone, 2019; Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel, 2020; Manzo and Minello, 2020). While sometimes reducing generalizability, the identification assumptions used in such research tend to emphasize the internal validity of findings. For instance, single-parent homes with only one child were not included in the sibling research by Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel (2020), but a study employing fixed effects by Manzo and Minello (2020) required that cognitive results have been examined prior to parental separation. For children whose parents divorce before cognitive results are initially assessed, they are of minimal consequence. Therefore, it is difficult for traditional approaches to compensate for selection bias to address selection difficulties for a sizable portion of children whose parents are unmarried (Lovejoy and Stone, 2019).

At this point, the question of whether their upbringing in a one-parent home (as opposed to a two-parent family home) contributed in any way to their conflicts with one another should be raised. This question has been raised in a number of studies that have been conducted. Were the kids close before growing farther apart? Or did their constant arguing and whining cause their family to fall apart, only for them to reunite later? How do the variations that siblings display in their social environments directly connect to family dynamics?

Perry (2021) discovered that the differences displayed by sibling relationships in a "intact home" (typically one mother and one father) depend on the children's ages and genders as well, despite the fact that many of the differentiations with both sibling differences in single and two-parent households were not demonstrated in earlier or more recent works of literature. There is no perfect

scenario for how siblings are likely to interact with one another, but there are several combinations that hold true in the majority of households. For instance, siblings who are conceived more than three years apart are likely to get along well because of the age difference (Robert, Seung-Hwan, and Scott, 2019). Typically, the older kid takes on the role of a mini-caregiver for the younger child, attending to their demands, reading them tales, defending them in school, and other things of the sort. This is partially because most families introduce a new baby to an older sibling in the hopes that the older sibling would "be such a nice older sister or brother" or that the younger sibling will "be so blessed to have you help take care of him or her." Parents heavily influence how their children interact with one another, whether they realize it or not.

If the children are of the same sex and their ages are close together, there may be a conflict since the older kid frequently feels cheated out of time spent alone with their moms (Hamwey, Rolan, and Jensen, 2018). According to a research by Kirsten (2006), the envy factor contributes to some degree of fighting, whether it be because an older sibling passes down toys and clothing or because a younger sibling sees his/her older sibling go out more and be given more freedom. The kids appear to get along more than they would in a whole family. This may be because the kids naturally pick up responsibility for one another and pitch in around the house or with each other since the single parent is overwhelmed and worn out. In addition, because a single parent frequently works outside the home, the children are frequently responsible for getting themselves prepared for school, at least in part, for traveling home by themselves, and for taking care of their own schoolwork. Marcia et al. (2008) found that sibling connections may tighten up at difficult periods as children band together for support throughout the trying time of the transition. Children may doubt their parents' capacity to provide stability and support, particularly in a divorce situation when the crisis was initiated by adults, and may instead turn to one another for solace (Marcia et al, 2008). On the other hand, Robert et al. (2019) pointed out how a sibling in a similar circumstance would strive for limited resources in an effort to deal with the restructuring of the family dynamic, leading to competition and hostility.

East (1989) used self-reported data to evaluate sibling disparities in single-parent homes. It was discovered that natural siblings in conventional or reconstituted households received higher scores for their sibling relationships than children in single-parent families. In a similar vein, Anderson

and North (1988) showed that, compared to children from other family types, children from single-parent families demonstrated greater animosity, were less aggressive, less pro-social, and were more manipulative toward their siblings. Moreover, when evaluation occurred at a later period, these disparities were still present. Older male children in single-parent households had connections with their siblings that were less positive, more resistive, and more compliant (MacKinnon, 1989). In single-parent and divorced households, there is a high incidence of sibling conflict, according to Polit (1984), who hypothesized that this is because siblings vie for the affection of the primary caregiver.

These results imply that there can be issues with sibling relationships in single-parent households. However, the veracity of the conclusions reached is somewhat disputed due to methodological flaws in the majority of investigations. As a result, the studies by Polit (1984) and East (1989) focus on self-report measures, verifying families' impressions that sibling differences suffer in single-parent settings but offering little insight into the precise ways in which sibling relationship is impacted. According to McKeever (1983), siblingship is such an emotionally charged circumstance that researchers ought to use more than simple questions and arbitrary measures. In an effort to address this issue, Anderson and North's (1988) study makes use of observational methods, but the study's poor description makes it difficult to make claims about its quality. For instance, discussions of important issues like the sample's characteristics, the interval between assessments, the validity of the observational coding system, and the definitions of variables coded are absent. MacKinnon's (1989) study is the only one in this field that could be deemed methodologically sound. Her findings confirmed the notion that the effectiveness of sibling relationships was connected to the whole family functioning. Her study involved 15 minutes of observations of sibling dyadic relationships playing a board game.

It is regrettable that there is so little information available to support our understanding of this crucial topic. There is a need for research in this field as a result of the dearth of studies on sibling relationships in single-parent homes and methodological issues with the few studies that do exist. To enable direct comparisons of interactions, an observational research design would be ideal for this investigation. According to Grave (1976), approaches to assess the siblings' own answers would directly address the amount of psychological disturbance of unusual groups and make a

substantial contribution to the research. Through observational research and assessments of family functioning, this project aims to examine sibling relationships in typical, non-divorced homes versus single-parent households.

However, not all research concentrated on the unfavorable aspect of sibling differences. For instance, Halligan et al. (2014) described how sibling rivalry may teach kids how to cooperate and compromise, which is a benefit of single parenting. According to several researchers, the sibling connection has a significant role in promoting beneficial developmental outcomes by fostering prosocial conduct (Bouchey, Shoulberg, Jodl, & Eccles, 2010), intellectual engagement, and empathy (Tucker & Kazura, 2013). (Whiteman, McHale, & Crouter, 2017). Melanie (et al., 2015) also noted the association between a healthy sibling relationship and advantageous social, mental, and emotional abilities. In a good relationship, siblings encourage one another and exhibit more independence, social awareness, and self-control (Edward, 2013). When comparing sibling relationships in childhood to sibling relationships in maturity, the study of sibling differences is important.

Violence and sibling strife have been linked to marital strife and poor parent-child relationships (Lam, Solmeyer, & McHale, 2012). While exposed to the same cause of inter-parental conflict, siblings' perceptions, responses, and adaptations may differ greatly. They therefore also cause various degrees of worry and distress (Iturralde et al., 2013). Kelly and Megan (2020) pointed out how the sibling relationship itself suffers as a result of single parenting. According to some studies, kids with single mothers exhibited greater negative behaviors toward their sisters while maintaining the same amount of good behaviors (Clements et al., 2014). Stressful life events, including marital strife, divorce, and maternal sickness, have a substantial influence on a child's ability to adjust, leading to emotional and behavioral problems (Lam et al., 2012). Positive sibling connections provide children with crucial assistance during difficult life situations. A child's ability to adjust to life's circumstances is frequently prevented by high levels of familiar assistance and persistent parental punishment.

2.4.5. Parental separation impacting attitudes of children towards marriage

In Holmes's (2018) study, children who suffer early parental separation make up more than half of all cohorts with parents who had split by age 11. However, further research (Weinraub and Kaufman, 2019; Dugan and Barnes-Farrell, 2020) reveals that these kids have extremely poor achievement levels, which has otherwise raised a lot of alarm. Furthermore, Woodward (2014) noted that a familial background marked by frequent father-on-mother domestic violence may increase the chance of single parenting when these females reach adulthood.

According to Kulka and Weingarten (1979), adult women from divided families of origin valued the marital role less than those from intact households. Women who reported that the position of mother was more essential than the function of wife, for instance, were more likely to do so than other women. For males, there was no discernible difference. However, married men whose families had split up were more likely than other men to concur that divorce is frequently the best way to resolve marital issues. Greenberg and Nay (1982) observed that college students from divided families had more positive attitudes on separation than students from intact families. On opinions concerning romantic love or marriage, there were no evident differences. According to a study by Booth et al (1984), students in colleges, who come from divorced families expressed less worry about connecting with the other gender, less desire to get married or engaged before they graduated.

When considered collectively, these results imply that adult (and teenage) offspring of divorce have more positive attitudes regarding divorce and may have less devotion to marriage as an institution. Even if the occurrence of this pattern is intriguing in and of itself, it could also have wider ramifications. In studies conducted by Glenn and Shelton (1983); Kulka and Weingarten (1979), individuals who were raised in divorced homes are more likely to get divorced as adults than people who grew up in households that were always together. For instance, Ashley (2021) discovered that children reared in divorced households had a propensity to view divorce more favorably than marriage.

Reduced commitment to intimate relationships as a result of this unfavorable attitude toward marriage is linked to worse marital satisfaction (Ming and Frank, 2010). Children's sexual conduct may be impacted by parental divorce, endangering their emotional and relationship stability (Senehi et al, 2021). According to Sharon (2020), it was demonstrated how one generation transfers their marital instability to the following one since such children have a higher propensity to forego marriage. Furthermore, Alice, Berkay, and Philippe (2019) suggested that parental divorce increases the chance of divorce in the children. By implication, compared to children from intact homes, children who have encountered parental conflict and divorce are two-fold likely to experience it again. In a similar vein, Smock and Schwartz (2020), after adjusting for schooling, discovered that children from split homes are 39 percent more inclined to marry other offspring of divorce. Nearly twice as many couples with one spouse from a divorced household end up divorcing as couples with both spouses from intact homes. Even worse, it was shown that couples, where both spouses come from divorced families, had a divorce rate that is nearly three times higher than couples where both spouses come from intact families.

2.4.6. Relationship between prior family violence and attitudes towards single parenting

Young girls often become "anti-men" or "anti-marriage" as a result of their subconscious perceptions of the father's maltreatment of the mother. These experiences make these young girls see the male gender in society as monsters or killers, portraying an attitude that is not palatable (Cummings and Davies, 2014; Roosa, 2017; Obasi, 2018). This feeling influences their relationship with the opposite sex, and while they manage to be in any relationship, it is encumbered with hate and distrust (Ross and Roberts, 2012; Amato, 2014; Lorretta and Ntoimo, 2019).

Similar results from Iweagu (et al., 2015) and Boca (et al., 2020) confirm that single parenting may be fueled by a person's familial background and experience with domestic abuse. The fact that some women still encounter violence and disputes, regardless of the sort of family environment in which they were raised, has been noted. This has an influence on how they view and perceive the traditional ideal family, which consists of a father, mother, and children who live together and look out for one another. Some people have decided to live alone, free from the

influence of any men, as a result of these experiences. This is consistent with the claim made by Nicola (et al., 2021) that individuals who can recollect having a lot of conflict with their parents as children prefer to choose solitary parenting in order to prevent having a lot of psychological and marital issues in their own life.

The following findings were obtained from a Nicholas (2015) survey on parents that included 95,677 children who were under the age of 17. When questioned if their children had ever seen or learned of "any parents, caregivers, or any other individuals in the household slap, strike, kick, punch, or beat one other up," they responded that they had never witnessed such actions. For every 1,000 children in stable homes, 19 had seen one or more violent fights involving parents or other family members, which is a relatively low occurrence for children with both biological parents who are married. Comparatively, the percentage of children who witnessed domestic violence was seven times higher among those who lived with a mother who was divorced or separated: 144 children out of every 1,000 reported witnessing at least one such incident. One may assume that women who had never been married would be less prone than separated or divorced moms to engage in violent fights with the fathers of their children. However, there was also a higher incidence of domestic violence witnessed by children of never-married mothers. It was 116 per 1,000, or six times the incidence for children in homes with intact relationships. Instead of the child's father, several of these confrontations featured the mother's later companions or boyfriends. Children who lived with both of their biological parents in a cohabitation rather than a marriage had a risk of exposure to domestic violence that was more than twice as high: 45 out of 1,000 of these kids had seen family arguments become violent. It was also found that a child's family structure, rather than her parents' schooling, family wealth, economic status, or color, was a stronger indicator of whether or not she will witness family violence.

617 women were interviewed by Henning, Leitenberg, Coffey, Turner, and Bennett (1996) on their experiences seeing parental abuse committed by children under the age of 16. 123 of the 617 women reported seeing their parents engage in physical violence toward one another. Additionally, the individuals were given tests that evaluated their social and psychological integration. The findings showed that women who said they had seen their parents physically fight had less psychological and social adjustment than women who said they had never seen their parents fight,

and this had a big influence on how they felt about their male counterparts in terms of marrying them. This was supported by the United Nations (2011), who made the argument that while women value social interaction, the psychological and emotional stress caused by parental abuse would prevent them from getting married.

Researchers have also studied the connection between observing parental conflict, a child's ability to cope, and that child's ability to adjust. Children in 83 homes who reported on the frequency and severity of conflict they saw, their coping mechanisms, and signs of mental health issues were used in O'Brien, Margolin, and John's (1995) investigation on these factors. The parents provided information on the antagonism, internalizing, and externalizing behaviors of their children. The findings showed that children who engaged in behaviors that put them in the middle of parental conflict had greater levels of despair, anxiety, anger, and low self-esteem, which had a big influence on how they chose to get married and form families. Children who utilized coping mechanisms that allowed them to be independent of parental conflict, on the other hand, had lower levels of anxiety. The mother reported that a youngster exhibited fewer internalizing habits when they sought help from sources outside than their family.

According to Kozuch and Cooney (1995), a person's thoughts toward marriage might change based on their parents' marital status and the degree of domestic strife. In contrast to individuals whose parents were not from single parent households, Kozuch and Cooney discovered that children from single parent families who experienced considerable conflict were more likely to feel it is appropriate to cohabitate before marriage. In comparison to individuals from intact households, individuals from single-parent homes similarly felt that it was less significant to be raised by two parents. People from intact households with high conflict levels concurred less on the assertion that marriage was a lifelong commitment than people from non-intact homes with low conflict levels. Compared to participants from intact families, participants from the divorced group expressed a greater acceptance of the idea of lifelong singlehood. Participants from this group also did not feel marriage had to be a lifelong commitment. In comparison to individuals who reported significant family conflict, those who reported little family conflict were less receptive to divorce. These findings indicate some particular ways in which parental divorce and/or family dynamics may influence marriage attitudes.

2.4.7. Women growing independence and single parenting

Furthermore, women's growing independence has proven to make them less reliant on males (Rodgers and Pryor, 2018). Africa operates on a patriarchal system, making the entire family rely on males. But as more women enter the workforce, their financial standing improves, enabling them to become single moms (Macionis, 2016). According to Roosa et al. (2017), independent women view marriage as unnecessary because they are capable of taking care of their children's requirements.

2.5. Influence of age on Single Parenting.

One of the important characteristics of population dynamics is the age of females at first marriage (Oyefara, 2009). In terms of fertility, age at marriage is an important element of the susceptibility to childbearing, even though a vital number of females now have their kids before their first marriage or attaining the minimum marriage age (Oluwaseyi and Thupayagale, 2019). A major issue that affects women's behavior and reproductive health is marriage before the age of 18. Women who marry before the age of 18 are more likely to encounter recurrent unintended pregnancies, obstetric fistula, intimate partner abuse, and HIV, among other things, compared to those who marry at age 18 or later (Santhya, 2010; Oyefara, 2009; Erulkar, 2013; United Nations, 2015).

According to Simona (2021), women who wed at a younger age had a larger mean spousal age difference than women who wed as adults or in their later years in Africa and Latin America. These age gaps may limit women's ability to negotiate with males and may also make it more difficult for them to control their own reproductive health (Muhle, 2020). To put it in another perspective, child marriage brings "another layer of vulnerability" on top of the variables related to teen pregnancy and reproductive health difficulties. For this reason, the majority of African countries have established the minimum marital age at 18 years (Saldana and Omasta, 2016; Radey et al., 2016; Pruett, 2017)

2.5.1. Minimum Age at Marriage in Africa: A Comparative Analysis

The African Child Policy Forum (2015), **Article 21** of The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990, articulated the principles and laws for protecting women from any form of injurious practices (socially and culturally).

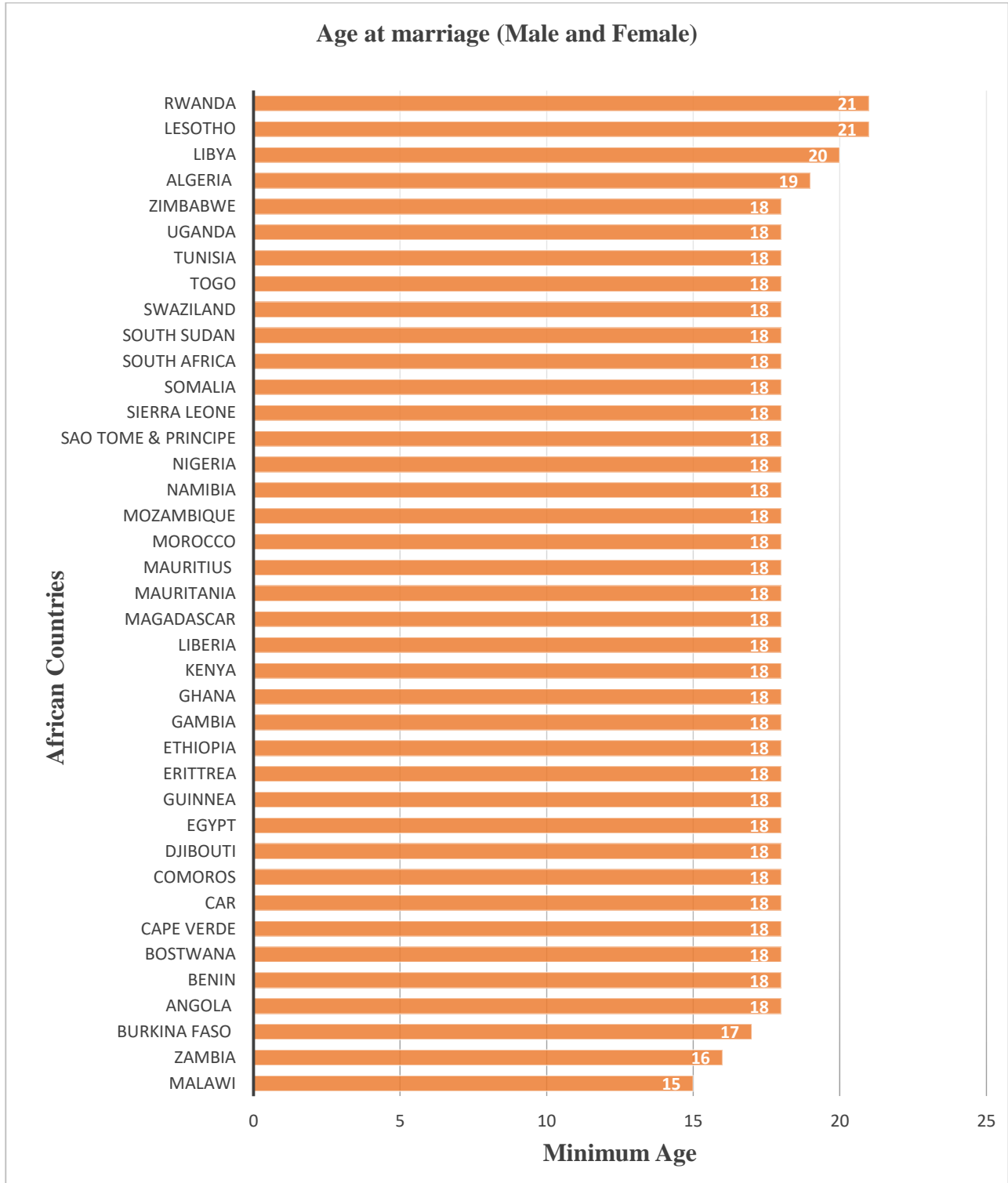
In furtherance of this, **Article 6a**, states that “*states parties shall ensure that women and men enjoy equal rights and are regarded as equal partners in marriage. They shall enact appropriate national legislative measures to guarantee that; a) no marriage shall take place without the free and full consent of both parties; b) the minimum age of marriage for women shall be 18 years*”.

Article 20 (2) states: “*Child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years and make registration of all marriages in an official registry compulsory*”.

Article 2 further states: “*With a view to bringing to an end the institutions and practices mentioned in article 1(c) of this Convention, the States Parties undertake to prescribe, where appropriate, suitable minimum ages of marriage, to encourage the use of facilities whereby the consent of both parties to a marriage may be freely expressed in the presence of a competent civil or religious authority, and to encourage the registration of marriages*”

These articles are the guidelines set up for Africa, through its 2015 African Child Policy Forum. The majority of African nations followed the tradition that a person must be 18 years old to be married, however, others set the limit at 15 or 16. This is applicable to both males and females as shown in figure 2.1. below:

Figure 2.1. Uniform age at marriage for African countries for both male and female

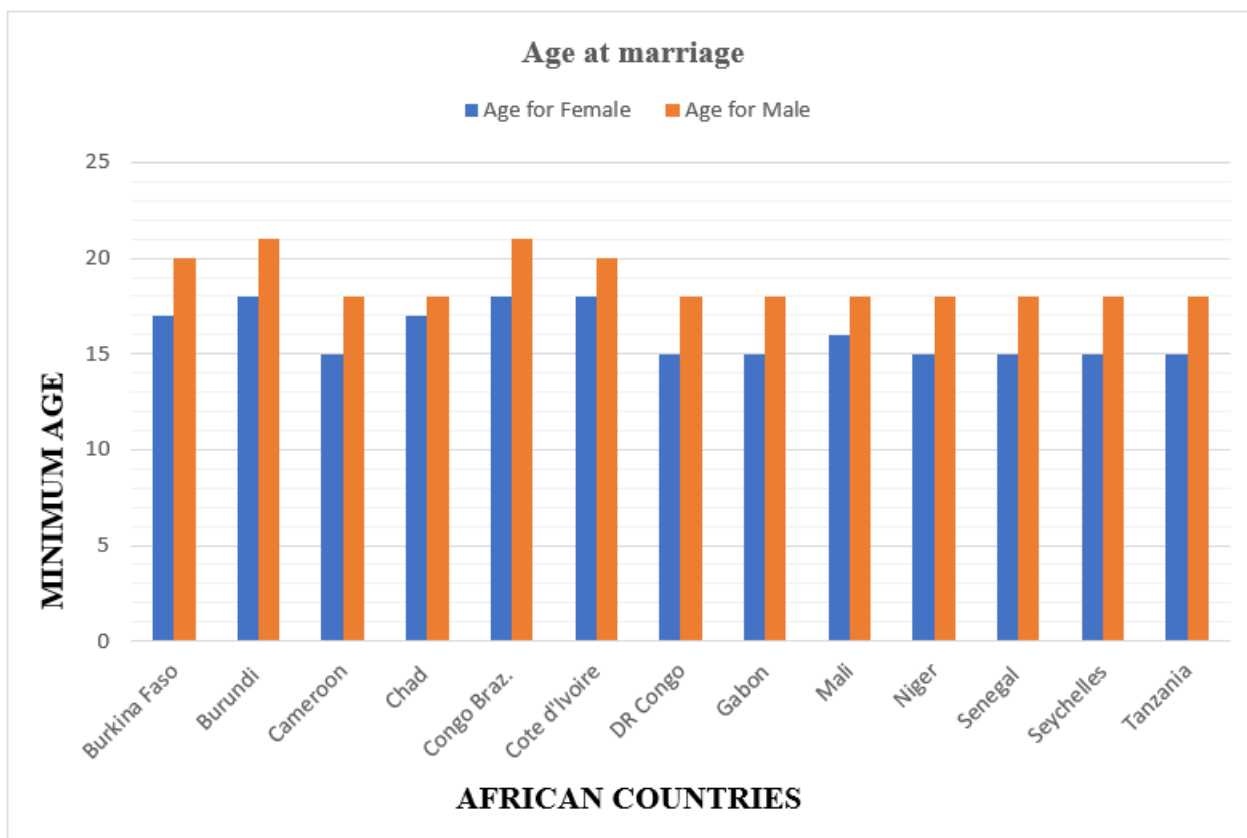


Source: African Child Policy Forum (2015)

As shown in the chart above, there are variations in the age at first marriage among African countries. While countries like Rwanda and Lesotho have 21 years as the legal age by which individuals can marry, in Libya it is fixed at 20 years, and up north in Africa, specifically, and Algeria has it at 19 years. However, a large majority of African nations implemented the African Policy by mandating that the first marriage age be set at 18 years old. The legal age for first marriages in nations like Malawi and Zambia is 15 and 16 years old, respectively.

While these African countries maintained a uniform minimum age at marriage policy of the African Child Policy (2015) for males and females inclusive, some nations applied diverse ages for both male and female as shown in figure 2.2. below. Among these countries, the highest age is 21 years for boys, as in the case Burkina Faso and Congo Brazzaville, while the lowest is 18 years, as in the case of Cameroun, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Niger Republic, Senegal, Seychelles and Tanzania. For girls, the highest age at first marriage is 18 years, as in the case of Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire and DR Congo, while the lowest for these countries is 15 years, as in the case of Cameroun, Gabon, Niger, Seychelles and Tanzania. Evidence from this African Child Policy Forum (2015) statistics show that males have higher age at first marriage when compared to their female counterpart. The reason for this is cited by Oyefara (2009) as being identified with the age with the onset of puberty, which is relative across regions. Oluseyi and Thupayagale (2019) singled out the influence of urbanization, female labour force participation and formal education.

Figure 2.2. Age at marriage for male and female in some selected African countries



Source: African Child Policy Forum (2015)

Essentially, the legal age requirement for marriage in each of these countries reflects the understanding that minors lack the capacity to agree to marriage. By implication, they are being protected from any form of abuse and violence that they would experience while married. More specifically, child marriage exposes immature children to the risk of being exploited under the guise of marriage. Darroch et al., (2016) and UNFPA, (2015) also identified the fact that they risk the consequences of body injuries during delivery and sometimes, death. Hence, the advocacy presented by African Child Policy (2015) specifies the legal minimum age by which consent can be given for marriage.

While examining the relationship between age and single parenting, the point of convergence across literature can be identified from two perspectives. These are under-age and over-age. These related to when a woman is over-aged or does not conceive at the expected time (Okeke, 2017; Odumosu, 2017; Offner, 2011; Nock, 2018) or when a female is underaged, that is, in the case of premature conception (Ross and Roberts, 2012; Woodward, 2014; Clark and Brauner-Otto, 2015).

2.5.2. Age, fertility and childbearing

Single parenting has a stern natural underpinning (Oneke, 2014). When a woman gets the intrinsic yearning to be a mother and the marriage is not coming through, she may decide to have a child without getting married (Okeke, 2017). Only a lady who has actually felt it can truly define the only need that is so thrilling and leaves a woman with a burning feeling (Peterson, 2012). Odumosu (2017) stated that naturally, women have age limits for childbearing, despite scientific discoveries. It is believed that from the age 18 to 35, a woman's fertility system is active (Olaleye and Oladeji, 2010). Hence, single parenting could be a viable alternative to consider as the fertility shadows start to grow.

Being overaged without marriage attracts social pressure, which Boustani et al. (2015) identified to be expressed or otherwise. In their study on single parenthood, they documented that aged women face strong pressure which pushes them to seek for the alternative to marriage impregnation, in order to save her face from shame. This is facilitated by the perception that, with advancement in age fertility is reduced, hence, showing an inverse relationship between age and fertility. This was corroborated in the study conducted by Rezeenah, Daleen and Jacobus (2021) on single parenting and raising children. It was discovered that the anxiety of not getting married in due time also drives single parenting: the study revealed that women go the extra mile of giving their bodies to any man in a bid to have a child at all costs. This shows the value attached to child bearing most especially in Africa. For Ray (et al., 2021), questions are being asked in African communities when an aged woman of marriageable age does not present either a husband or at least a child.

This, in the work of Asah (2021) distorts the mental health of these women, making them desperate for child bearing without getting married, in order to win the applaud and embrace of their family and the entire community. Similarly, a study conducted by Schelbe and Geiger (2017) on parenting under pressure discovered that being overaged can prompt a woman into single parenting because of depression and loneliness. This makes them take irrational decisions. Likewise, it was shown that most older women would rather have children than get married. It was said in the research by Pruett et al. (2017) on boosting paternal participation in a co-parenting paradigm that women go over and beyond to disregard traditional rites and rituals of marriage since doing so would result in despair and anxiety.

Graham, Schellinger and Vaughn (2015) noted the role of being engrossed with one's career as a factor that leads to being over aged. Hence, the neglect of the role that marriage plays in the society. Holmes (2018) study, "The Solo Mum", also noted that the preference for career development and advancement makes women give little attention to marital unions. This preference is facilitated by the opportunities given to women in modern society today. This was why studies like Dugan and Barnes-Farrell (2020); Briggs (2018); Herb (2018) and Hertz et al. (2016) documented the impact of urbanization, industrialization and increased educational attainment on marital preference and choice. Nock (2018) identified the role of educational attainment in prolonging age at marriage. It is thought that women find it harder to locate a good spouse when she gets older, the more education she has, and the better her career.

In accordance with the argument put forward by Hartley (2017), being unmarried is a function of events and circumstances that surround women; and this could be either unintended or thoughtful. The study identified how women that start being selective of the choice of a marriage partner are left behind when they find themselves too old for other men. Hence, while increasing their age for marriage, and because of the associated and increased risk of child delivery at an older age, they decide to have children for whoever is available. This is another factor leads to single parenting.

2.5.3. Relationship between age of marriage and intimate partner violence

A happy marriage and good spousal relationships are the consequence of several variables. One important aspect that is typically overlooked is the age gap between the spouses (Adebowale, 2018). The phrase "spousal age difference" describes the age gap between a wife and a man (Sven, 2010; Kolk, 2015; Lee and McKinnish, 2018). In Nigeria, where men often marry women who are younger than they are, the practice of male domination in marriage is still prominent (National Population Commission, 2013). This may be one strategy for giving males a means to assert their authority as the leader of the household. The postponing of marriage among males has increased as a result of Nigeria's persistently bad economic situation (National Population Commission, 2013). If a husband is significantly older than his wife, for example, there may be variations in maturity and opinions; if this is the case, the partners' sexual life may be impacted later. If the husband is significantly older, early planning for children may be necessary; and, finally, early aging and widowhood are other issues posed by a significant age difference between the spouses (Kim, Eun-Cheol and Sang, 2015). It is always feasible for a couple to encourage one another to take up new activities, although this might be hampered by an age difference. Moreover, an age gap in marriage is linked to shorter lifespans, especially for women (Max-Planck, 2010, Sven, 2010), since more intimate partner violence (IPV) may occur when women in such relationships decline or negotiate sex (Volpe et al., 2013). In another sense, if the younger woman declines to engage in sexual activity with the older guy, she is more likely to suffer physical harm that might shorten her life.

To support this, Davey and Evershed (2015) showed that the most common types of IPV were emotional violence, physical violence, and sexual abuse, in that order. They also found that nearly one in four women had encountered intimate partner violence. The findings of earlier research carried out in Nigeria and other regions of Africa are echoed by this variance pattern in the incidence of intimate relationship violence and its dimensions (Kapiga et al., 2017; Wagman et al., 2016; Sigbeku et al., 2015; Onigbogi et al., 2015). Women who had been the victims of sexual assault tended to have fewer serious injuries. In cases of physical abuse, nearly half of the victims have very few serious wounds, whereas 1 in 3 women who claimed emotional abuse had less serious wounds. Furthermore, 1 in 5 female victims of physical abuse claimed to have bruises.

Only a very small number of people suffered from wounds, broken bones, cracked teeth, or other types of injuries, while many others suffered from eye injuries, sprains, or dislocations. The injuries stated by persons who had been subjected to violence in this study have already been documented in the literature, and the patterns they displayed were comparable to those observed in past investigations (Kapiga et al., 2017; Tanimu et al., 2016).

According to a study by Bright et al. (2021), forced marriage is linked to a greater risk of suffering violence from a romantic partner. While the majority of this research essentially concur with the idea that child marriage is linked to intimate partner violence, it is important to note the variability of the effect across the Sub-Saharan areas. The findings showed that women who got married before turning 18 were more likely to experience violence from their partners with Rwanda and Mozambique showing the largest impact sizes. In eight of these 14 nations, the impact magnitude was not statistically significant.

This overall conclusion also reflects the region's unique cultural environment, indicating that other factors may be more crucial in understanding violence between intimate partners in nations whose research did not provide statistically significant findings. Due to Nigerian culture's belief in male child supremacy and the consequent societal framing of a girl child as inferior and inevitably obedient, child marriage and intimate partner abuse thrive there (Parsons et al., 2015). Intimate partner violence and child marriage both thrive in societies where male dominance is justified, accepted, and supported (Sunmola et al., 2018). The cultural differences across Sub-Saharan nations must be highlighted at this point, with some being more accepting of child marriage and violence in intimate relationships than others.

The different links connecting girl child marriage and violence in romantic relationships might perhaps be explained by the cultural differences in Sub-Saharan Africa. Child marriage is common in cultures where domestic violence is accepted. Child marriage is less common in nations where intimate partner abuse is less tolerated. Both child marriage, as well as intimate partner violence, as well as intimate partner abuse, must be eliminated, and this struggle must be waged against the permissive societal standards that render males irresponsible. The substantial correlation between intimate partner violence and child marriage can be explained by a number of reasonable theories.

First off, some young women who marry young find it difficult or impossible to pursue their educational ambitions (Sirmin et al, 2016; World Bank, 2017). It implies that it restricts their ability to find better career prospects, leaving them economically dependent on their relationships. According to earlier research, women with higher levels of education and those who originate from wealthier families are less likely to experience intimate partner violence than women who come from poorer families (Tenkorang, 2019). Women are empowered by education, which raises their self-esteem and increases their capacity to claim their agency and independence (Shanika, 2015; OECD, 2012). It shows effectiveness in reducing intimate partner violence in various Sub-Saharan African nations when combined with the implementation of conditional cash transfer initiative, which is used to empower women (Kilburn et al., 2018).

Women who get into marriages as minors have less decision-making independence and self-sufficiency in the home than women who marry as adults, and as a result, they are unable to make decisions that affect their life (Tenkorang, 2019). Unlike people who are married as adults, this includes the ability to decide to leave abusive relationships. Additionally, prior research demonstrates that without independence, women are powerless to negotiate safer sex or question patriarchal values (Vogelstein, 2013, Jesmin and Cready, 2016; Abdul-Aziz, 2021). Also, because of the age gaps involving child brides and their husbands, there is an imbalance of power between them. In Nigeria, it is customary for younger people to respect elder people, and partnerships are no exception (Tenkorang, 2019). Intimate partner violence may stem from a lack of respect or subservience. Sex between an adult and a child is essentially violent, except for the importance of respect. Therefore, child marriage is a tactic for normalizing child abuse. According to one research, women who married as youngsters are more likely to view their partner's violence as normal (Santhya et al., 2010). They may believe they are fulfilling a marital duty if they have endured intimate partner abuse even as adults.

2.5.4. Influence of age on unwanted pregnancies

The world's population is 7.753 billion, with more than 1.8 billion of them being under the age of 24. (UNFPA, 2021). Out of this, 90% live in underdeveloped nations, including Sub-Saharan Africa, with some of them at risk of teenage and adolescent pregnancies (Oluwaseyi and

Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, 2019). The World Health Organization (2020) considers everyone between the ages of 10 and 19 to be an adolescent. Adolescent pregnancy, often known as underage pregnancy, is defined against this background as the incidence of pregnancy in female children between the ages of 10 and 19. According to statistics, about half of the 21 million girls in this age group who get pregnant each year in poor countries give birth (UNICEF, 2021), and 777,000 births are reported to teenage girls, particularly those under the age of 15. (WHO, 2021). This was further supported by the UNFPA (2021) analysis, which notes that while the worldwide teenage birth rate has decreased, nothing really has improved in Africa. In reality, the numbers are rising, and this has particularly been stated at 52.3 births per 1000 for girls between the ages of 10 and 19—more than twice as many as what is possible in affluent nations (23.4 births per 1000).

Adolescent pregnancy is defined by Ganchimeg (2014) as the result of inconsistent or non-use of contraception and is a health risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including contracting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Similar to this, UNESCO (2017) observed that young girls engaging in routine, unprotected sexual activity are associated with teenage pregnancy. While Muhle (2020) shares this opinion, his research on the factors that lead to adolescent pregnancy indicated that, despite young girls using preventives, these contraceptives occasionally lacked dependability and were untrustworthy. Along with this, they also exhibit a variety of other behaviors, such as promiscuity, poor socio-economic position, societal pressure, and evidence of one's fertility. Due to this, teenage pregnancy has become a significant public health issue, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where over 10% of girls are mothers by the age of 16. (Kassa, Arowojulo and Odukogbe, 2018).

A study by Getachew (et al., 2018) that examined the prevalence and factors related to adolescent pregnancy in 24 African nations revealed that one-fifth, or 18.8% of teenagers in Africa, became pregnant. This finding is consistent with other research. When comparing prevalence rates of adolescent pregnancies across the African continent, it was discovered that East Africa had a higher rate, at 21.5%. Additionally, it was found that teenage girls were more susceptible to getting pregnant at a young age depending on their location of residence, whether they lived in a rural or urban region, the educational level of their parents, their parenting style, and the way in which they interacted with them.

As early pregnancy has been the concern of governments and other stakeholders in society today, for economic and health reasons, studies have identified how being under-aged could engender single parenting. For medical reasons, pregnant teen or adolescent women and their offspring are more at risk than usual of having an unsatisfactory pregnancy (UNESCO, 2017). WHO (2020) also notes the issue of difficulties experienced at birth, and poor health in subsequent years (Fofack, 2012; Gatachew et al., 2018). Economic and health-related issues may not be as separate as they first appear since health issues may be related to inadequate levels of care just as much as they may be to any purely physiological issues brought on by early conception. The feeling of being socially deprived of problems like family income, work possibilities in the labor market, education, and housing (Goisis, Ozcan, and Myrskylä, 2017), among other situations, is another explanation for this worry.

It is difficult for fathers to support themselves and their children when they are more likely to be jobless, have low-paying jobs, and have less education than men who have children following marriage (Hardy et al., 2018), leaving teenage and young mothers to care for their children alone. These women are more likely to cohabit rather than get married later, either by choice or due to the circumstances of being single mothers. Even those who finally get married typically have worse financial circumstances than other women who start having children following marriage (Nock, 2018).

The issue of rape has been identified across literature as an important element in under age pregnancy. Just as Fitzsimons and Villadsen (2019) noted in their study on children's mental health, some teenagers and adolescents become pregnant simply due to being raped; and because of little or no understanding on the usage of contraceptives by some, they get pregnant. In the aftermath of denials by their partners, some women solely take up their newfound responsibilities. (Holmes and Kiernan, 2013; Fomby and Osborne, 201; Lachowicz, Preacher and Kelley, 2018). As an extension to this finding, a study by Dickerson and Popli (2016) on children's cognitive development noted how this experience shapes their cognition. Hence, the emergence of negative notions of hate and mistrust of the opposite gender. They thus form an impression of not getting married to man, even after having children. This decision is being facilitated with the perception

and belief that the family is a resort and a dependable ally would come to their rescue to bring up and socialize their children (Fields and Lynne, 2011; Mostafa and Wiggins, 2015; Hunt et al., 2017; Hughes and Tucker, 2018).

2.6. Conclusion

This section captured specific objectives and themes to address past and current issues regarding family background and age; and how these variables engender single parenting. The lives and experiences of single mothers and their children in various regions of Nigeria are impacted by single parenting, despite the fact that there is a dearth of study on unmarried women in Africa. Having related the findings of previous research, the next chapter focusses on a review of literature, regarding educational qualification and perceived economic benefits.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND PERCEIVED ECONOMIC BENEFITS ON SINGLE PARENTING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

Educational qualification and perceived economic benefits have both been also identified as instruments of single parenting in Nigeria. Regarding the former, research on the relationship between unmarried single mothers' educational levels and their goals for having children and getting married has produced contradictory findings. Numerous researchers find a link between women's educational attainment and reproduction rates to be unfavorable. Higher educated women are more likely to put off getting married or not do so in order to further their careers. They also tend to produce fewer children naturally or through adoption, depending on the situation, compared to women with ordinary levels of education. The latter covers difficulties that touch on the decision to choose single parenting due to the financial advantages associated with it.

To this end, this chapter examined and reviewed works of literature on the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to explore the following research objectives:

1. Determine the role of education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
2. Identify the influence of perceived economic benefits, or not as the case may be, on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

3.2. Educational qualification on single parenting

Studies have shown that education is a tool for survival in human society. However, every member does not have equal access to this because of the life chances of many of these girl and women (Weinsh and Kaufman, 2019).

3.2.1. Lower educational attainment and single parenting

Education has been found to impact on human life, which determines their thought patterns and behaviour. This is one rationale why the present era of globalization has significantly enhanced the lives of women throughout the world (Young and Schieman, 2018). However, women in Sub-Saharan Africa remain deprived of such education, which in turn compromises their civil rights, health and employment, among others (Weinshenker, 2016). According to a report by UNFPA (2021), 52 percent of the seventy-two million children who do not go to school are female. Equally, UN DESA (2017) reported that girls are 4% less likely than boys to finish primary school. This implies how the girl child has been relatively more deprived of education compared to her male counterpart; and with several gains recorded worldwide in terms of overall educational level, more children than ever are now attending primary school. However, the parity in education between males and females is still very wide (Center for Longitudinal Studies, 2019). Female education is a human rights issue (UN, 2015), and it is the responsibility of the government to facilitate this because they are instrumental and significant in contributing to the development of a nation (British Council, 2014). Yet, in Nigeria, women suffer exclusion from education, making them vulnerable to poverty and unemployment.

Basically, findings across works of literature have not been consistent in identifying the relationship between education and single parenting among unmarried women. In a survey conducted by OECD (2018) on young female adults, it was shown that men and women within the ages 16 and 39 had a link wherein women with low literary competence are more likely to be single parents. 11% and 4% of young women and men respectively who had literacy proficiency scores in the bottom 20% of their nation are single parents. The fact that persons with higher literacy rates also have greater academic achievement helps to explain this link. They thus establish families later on average than their less skilled contemporaries.

In order to prevent their own literacy from declining, it would be useful to recognize groups of youngsters from low-literate homes. OECD (2018) was able to get data on children who lived in single-parent homes, but it only obtained a small amount of data on the level of literacy and educational achievement of respondents' partners. In the 30 nations whose statistics were

examined by the OECD, on average, 3.5% of children under the age of 15 reside in homes where the sole parent, often the mother, has a literacy level in the worst 20% of the country. In terms of financial means, educational opportunities, and parental participation in their education, these kids generally receive inadequate support from family for their education.

There are still further areas to research. Rising divorce rates in OECD nations, which raise the proportion of kids raised by a single parent, are concentrated among families with lower levels of education and literacy (OECD, 2018). The fact that this trend is accelerating over time has important ramifications for the educational gaps between children from privileged and underprivileged homes. The first step in figuring out how to decrease these discrepancies is figuring out what causes them.

The fact that the prevalence of single-parent families has risen more quickly among individuals with a lower educational background over time may be one of the reasons why the negative effects of single parenting have not been reduced (Gähler and Palmtag, 2015). The majority of the studies on this topic have been conducted in industrialized countries, and it has not examined how the fragmentation of family system by educational attainment has changed over time or across different countries. Miller (2017) discovered that whereas better-educated women were more likely to be single mothers in Italy, fewer women who are educated were more likely to be single mothers in other countries like the United Kingdom and Finland, among others. However, only four studies have particularly investigated the changes in single parenting's educational disparities across a range of European countries. According to Monte (2017), there was an increase in the possibility that a Swedish child would grow up in a wealthy household between the 1970s and 1990s.

The academic differential of single-parent families in Spain, based on a survey by Garriga and Cortina (2017), shifted from favorable to unfavorable between 1991 and 2011. Garriga, Sarasa, and Berta (2015) add that whereas the link involving mother's schooling as well as single parenting in Italy was positive in 2005, by 2011 it had lost significance. The one and only survey that has tracked the educational variation of single parenting over time and across several nations is Härkönen's (2017) work. It demonstrated that "diverging destinies" are not exclusive to the U. S.,

rather than that there are significant cross-national differences. Researchers claim that the disparity between children from different socioeconomic groups and family structures has gotten worse as a result of significant increases in the number of single mothers among the least educated, as well as the well-documented adverse outcomes of parental divorce and growing up in a single-mother family (Augustine, 2014; Härkönen, 2017).

Nevertheless, Bernardi and Boertien (2017) argued that this outcome is only valid if a third assumption is also true, specifically that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more affected by parental separation and a fragmented family structure, or that the effects are the same irrespective of their economic background. They have argued that if, on the other hand, raising kids in a non-intact family has greater negative effects for kids from higher socioeconomic origins, this may actually balance out the rise in non-intact families among kids from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.2.2. Higher educational attainment and single parenting

Studies have shown that women with poor levels of education or literacy have a higher likelihood of being single parents (Amato, 2014; Issa, 2018). By implication, educational level informs decisions like unprotected sex which could lead to unwanted pregnancy; as a result, single-parent mothers would emerge. According to other research, women who have completed more schooling are less likely to be single mothers (Obasi, 2018; Elo, 2019) because of their knowledge of contraceptive use, which delays their child birth experience (Oyefara, 2011). In contrast, Roosa (2017) and Smith (2013) argued that higher educational attainment engenders single parenting because the increased empowerment of women builds an ideology of independence, making them get married late; hence, forcing them into single parenting.

Findings from Araba (2021) show that women with low literacy and educational background are more likely to become single parents, and that this connection holds among within ages 16 and 39. Similarly, a study by Kobi et al (2021) on the susceptibility of single women in higher education institutions discovered that young mothers were among the respondents with poor literacy proficiency scores. A reverse was the case for female respondents who scored higher. Furthermore, studies reveal that women who possess a Master's degree or above are more preoccupied with

professional stability and growth chances compared to their less educated colleagues, and they frequently work in secure positions in the government service (Liu & Hu, 2018). According to Du's (2008) research, women who are highly educated are far more assured of their ability to compete than less educated women. Female respondents with graduate degrees are often conversational, and laid-back (Zhang, 2014). They often possess a strong sense of self-assurance and were certain of their long-term goals. They exercise self-control, feel independent, radiate confidence, and value themselves, all of which may influence how they choose to have children.

3.2.3. Educational attainment and reproductive choices

There are conflicting findings in the research on the relationship between women's educational attainment and their plans for having children and their reproductive decisions. Numerous researchers, for instance, Broekmans, et al. (2007) and Kohler et al. (2002) claim that the amount of education for women and fertility rates are negatively correlated. Women with higher education levels are more likely than women with lower education levels to delay childbearing in order to advance their careers. (Pradhan, 2015; Dadrie et al., 2017; Nitsche and Bruckner, 2021). They also have few children, which implicitly lowers birth rates (Broekmans et al., 2007). However, women with a college degree or higher are now more probable than their less educated counterparts to have two or three children in Scandinavian nations (Kravdal, 2008). According to long-term research conducted in the United States, women who have doctoral and master's degrees now are more likely to become parents than they were ten years ago (Livingston, 2015). From a variety of angles, academics explain the positive correlation between greater education and higher reproductive intentions/choices.

A typical female university graduate today is probably less likely to be focused on a profession than her counterpart years back, and as a result, receptive to having more children (Shang and Weinberg, 2013). This is because more women are pursuing higher education. Also, spending money on education yields labor-market returns, or greater salaries, as well as higher returns on marriage (Chiappori et al, 2009). Women with greater levels of education are more inclined to marry men from comparable socio-economic backgrounds and earn better incomes, both of which

increase their financial security. They do not have to pick between job and family since they can afford to pay market rates for daycare (Cortes & Tessada, 2011).

Women with postgraduate degrees made reproductive decisions that were either directly or indirectly connected to their academic achievements, regardless of their family background or level of expertise. This was discovered in a qualitative study on the reproductive decisions of highly educated women conducted by Yang and Lai (2019). The respondents stressed that achieving academic success had a significant and beneficial influence on their mentalities, financial situation, personal life, and work chances. The discourse on professional women's jobs and family life frequently emphasizes the challenges and battles of finding a work-life balance. As noted by Javita and Murali (2009), some working mothers feel bad because they can't give their children their complete attention because of their job commitments.

However, according to the experiences of these individuals, job and family life may really complement one another rather than being mutually exclusive or antagonistic. These educated women were assured that they could strike an equilibrium between the two. Furthermore, none of them admitted to feeling guilty. Their lack of remorse and comparatively high employment levels can be attributed to the policies that still strongly encourage and occasionally even require women to work full-time.

This is related to an economic viewpoint known as the "Columbia-Chicago cost-of-time approach," which compares earning potential to fertility (Pollak and Watkins 1993). According to this theory, mothers must decide between caring for their children or working in the economy. The opportunity cost of raising children increases with their prospective pay, presuming they will take time off work to raise their child. Because the "price" of any hours of work lost to childcare is higher for those who are able to earn more, women with higher prospective income often decide to have fewer children.

Another study by Schwartz and Mare (2005), however, indicated that educated women tend to marry males with a higher education. The study was also supported by an economic perspective, which found that higher educational attainment among women raises their income, which

inevitably improves fertility options as well as the purchase of numerous durable consumer goods. The respondents in this survey hold these opinions as it makes raising kids more affordable. In fact, in principle, either men's or women's earning ability might have a positive "income effect" on fertility or an unfavorable opportunity cost effect (also known as a "price effect" by economists). However, because women handle the majority of the child-rearing duties, which reduces the supply of labor on the market, the income effect of men and the opportunity cost effect on the earnings on women are expected to dominate.

3.2.4. Relationship between level of education and choice of marriage

According to Anthony (2018), Eelke et al. (2017), and the World Economic Forum (2015), educated women frequently delay having children, which lowers fertility rates in Africa. Similarly, to this, Alice (et al., 2020) pointed out that educated women have the greatest marriage delays. The findings support the hypothesis that educated women delay marriage longer than their less educated peers. They also found that for educated women, there are very few eligible males to choose from, namely educated single men, which makes the conventional marriage market extremely competitive for this category of women. As a result, individuals frequently put off getting married in an effort to locate better spouses. While Alice et al. (2011) looked at the relationship between women's formal education and marriage, Poset et al. (2011) looked at marriage trends in the context of bridewealth (2020). In other words, they evaluated the impact of high unemployment rates and bridewealth on men's capacity to get married. Poset et al. (2011) further noted that the existence of bridewealth, or "Ilobolo," is the most likely factor contributing to the fall in marriage rates among young African South Africans compared to their white counterparts. Ilobolo is a bride payment given to the bride's family in the form of cattle, and the amount depends on the father's social standing. Given the high costs of getting a woman, it has become nearly impossible for these men to get married due to the high unemployment rates among men (Poset et al, 2011). But throughout the years, it has been noted that the rates of marriage between Africans and white South Africans are very different. White women marry more frequently than African women, more than twice as often. The majority of black women would rather be single than copulating before getting married, but most white people have no trouble cohabiting, which typically results in marriage.

3.2.5. Educational attainment and economic dependence/independence

Women's education has a substantial positive societal impact; some of the most noticeable outcomes include reduced rates of newborn and maternal mortality as well as lower fertility rates (Jungho, 2016). Moreover, closing the gender gaps contributes to gender equality, which is valued for its own sake as well as the fact that it guarantees that everyone has equal rights and opportunities, irrespective of gender. (Nussbaum, 2011); women can gain cognitively from schooling as well. Better cognitive functioning for women enhances the quality of life and provides extra benefits. One example is the notion that women who value education are more suited to make decisions about their own and their children's health (WHO, 2017). Likewise, women who are more intelligent are more inclined to engage in governance (IDEA, 2021). There are countless instances of trained women in developing countries securing privileges for themselves by participating in politics, as educated women are more inclined to become involved in politics and witness political events (WHO, 2017). According to evidence from Levine et al. (2018), countries with educated women are more likely to have democratic governments.

There are additional benefits related to the woman's position in the family. For example, it has been discovered that educated women face less domestic violence (Sen, 2019). Women with higher levels of education also tend to be engaged in family decision-making and reported contributing more to decisions over time. Particularly Leigh et al. (2017) noted that these advantages apply to financial choices; having women take a more active part in the family has social advantages for all family members in addition to the inherent value of improving a woman's autonomy (Aletheia et al., 2016). In addition, a study by World Bank (2021) found that children, especially girls, are more likely to go to school and advance their educational standing in a home where the mother has a degree. Adult literacy initiatives can indirectly assist in teaching women the importance of education and motivating them to enroll their children in school in homes where the mother is uneducated (MDRC, 2013). Having an educationally inclined mother as opposed to an educated father has a lot of additional advantages for kids, such as improved nutrition and greater survival rates (Katiyar, 2016).

3.2.6. Educational attainment and unwanted pregnancies

In a UNESCO (2021) survey, 36.4 million women in underdeveloped nations between the ages of 20 and 24 who had given birth before turning 18 acknowledged doing so. 95 percent of births to teenage mothers occur in developing nations, where two million girls bear children prior to the age of 15. Teen pregnancy is made more common in low- and relatively low nations by a lack of education (Decat et al., 2015). Education affects people's lives regardless of their socioeconomic status, and those who live in low- and very low-income countries typically have less access to educational opportunities than those who do in higher-income countries (Ferre et al., 2013). A lack of essential education, particularly for women, reduces prospects for economic growth and a decent standard of living, which, according to Michaelowa (2000), adds to economic suffering. Since poverty is usually associated with adolescent pregnancy and low levels of education, countries that experience poverty are more likely to observe a higher likelihood of adolescent pregnancy and low education levels among their young people (Decat et al., 2015). The correlation between low- and lower-middle-income countries and teen pregnancies draws attention to the high percentage of young mothers in different parts of the world (Azevedo et al., 2012). African poverty, education, and teen pregnancy have been the main topics of earlier studies. Nevertheless, no attempts have been made to examine the connections between these concepts. 86% of teenage or unplanned pregnancies result in less favourable educational achievements, according to Barmao-Kiptanui (et al., 2015). In addition to poorer educational levels associated with pregnancy, parents' responses to their teenage daughter's pregnancy also had a consequence on their daughter's success in school: adolescent mothers with supportive parents outperformed their classmates in terms of their academic careers.

Ayuba and Gani (2012) investigated 83 adolescent pregnancies with girls between the 13 and 19 years of age with pregnancies involving pregnant women who were picked at random and were between the ages of 20 and 32 in a four-year retrospective analysis. They found that young mothers were more likely than older women to have lower educational levels, have complications during pregnancy and childbirth, need cesarean sections, or even pass away. Neal et al. (2015) used several indicator cluster surveys to analyze adolescent pregnancy characteristics in three east African countries, including the age of mothers, relationship status, employment, education, state

or location, urban/rural domicile, and religion (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania). They discovered that young females who fall pregnant inadvertently are more vulnerable to problems and health concerns during pregnancy and delivery. Also, less educated females and poorer communities have a higher prevalence of younger adolescent mothers with their first children, particularly those who are under 16 years old. In addition, there is a significant connection between poverty, illiteracy, and teen pregnancy.

Exavery et al. (2016) used longitudinal data of females who delivered birth before turning 18 years from the Demographic Surveillance System of Tanzania to explore various trends and variables related to an adolescent unplanned pregnancy. They discovered that when a family's wealth rises, the likelihood of a teenage female falling pregnant declines. Similar to this, after females completed their secondary school, the rate of childbirth fell by 83%. This is also seen at lower levels of education, when the ratio of teenage and undesired births is larger, with individuals with little or little education having the highest adolescent birth rate. Their research indicated that education serves as a barrier to teenage pregnancy since it was discovered to be the component most strongly connected with adolescent pregnancies.

The association between education and unwanted pregnancies cannot only be felt by females. It has effects on men as well. By establishing that unintended pregnancy was most substantially associated with the least educational position of the husband. Canaan et al. (2020) supported the findings of past studies. It was discovered that being engaged to men with a university degree was associated with a 60% decreased probability ratio of an undesired pregnancy after taking the women's ages and where they lived into account. This might be explained by an association between using contraceptives and being married to a spouse with a high level of education (Tiruneh et al (2016). Similar findings were observed in Ethiopia (Beyene, 2019), where women who had spouses who were illiterate were 14 times more likely to conceive inadvertently than their counterparts that were educated counterparts.

This research raises the possibility that certain cultural attitudes are present in Ethiopia and may greatly increase the likelihood of pregnancy. This finding differs from a past study in high-income

nations like the United States (Koren and Mawn, 2010), where the unexpected pregnancy was not significantly correlated with the husbands' academic qualifications. The spouse of a woman who did not use any form of family planning frequently makes decisions regarding the use of contraceptives, based on Ethiopia's demographic survey (Darteh et al., 2019). Another study found that women from Ethiopia were much more likely to become pregnant unexpectedly than women with highly qualified husbands, who frequently claim to have less autonomy (Fite et al, 2018). On the other hand, women in high-income countries who have supportive partners are more inclined than those who do not successfully use contraception (Raj et al., 2016). This implies that women who have husbands who are less educated and less supportive could have certain family planning requirements that are not presently being met.

Along with the influence of the spouses' educational position, the respondent's age was also significantly linked to unwanted pregnancy. This is in line with certain studies like Tsegaye et al. (2016) and Mohammed et al. (2016) that were done in Ethiopia, where women over the age of 35 or 40 had a two- to four times higher chance of unwanted pregnancy than those under those ages. Similarly, studies like Hall et al. (2016) and Goshu and Yitayew (2019) with reference to Malawi and Nepal respectively, identified increasing age as a predictor of unwanted pregnancy. This may be due to the fact that women's usage of contraceptives declines with age, or women over 35 may believe they are at a reduced risk of pregnancy (Godfrey et al., 2011; Alemayehu et al. 2018). By contrast, studies in Kenya (Ikamari et al, 2013), Brazil (Theme-Filha, 2016), and Canada (Metcalf et al, 2016) reported higher rates of unintended pregnancy in younger women.

In the research by Sefiu et al. (2020), after adjusting for the influence of the respondent's age and the husband's educational position, residence and the use of family planning for conception were both low in relation to an unplanned pregnancy. This could be attributed to the study's rural areas using family planning services less effectively than metropolitan areas. In fact, relative to 11/93 (11.8%) of urban individuals who utilized family planning, 79/280 (28.2%) of rural respondents in our research experienced an unwanted pregnancy. Furthermore, 59/156 (37.8%) of rural dwellers used family planning techniques despite becoming pregnant unintentionally, compared to only 7/78 (9%) of their urban counterparts. This result is in line with other studies carried out in both northern and southern Ethiopia (Goshu and Yitayew, 2019; Bogale et al, 2011). There are

programs as shown in Ayebare et al. (2015) that emphasize partner engagement that have had successful outcomes, including shared decision-making about family planning. Furthermore, including males in family planning programs might enhance contraceptive use, which may reduce the likelihood of unwanted births (Raj et al., 2016). These results imply that, regardless of educational attainment, interventions involving couples may help male partners see the advantages of family planning.

3.2.7. Education and intimate partner violence

There are now a lot more statistics accessible than in earlier periods about violence against women and girls. 736 million women globally (almost one in three), according to WHO data from 2021, have suffered domestic abuse, non-partner sexual abuse, or perhaps both at some time in their lives. Women who have suffered violence are more likely than non-victimized women to have depression, anxiety disorders, unintended pregnancies, STDs, and HIV, as well as many other health issues that may persist even after the violence has stopped (WHO, 2021). It was also shown that most intimate partners or current or previous spouses are responsible for violence against women. Well over 640 million women, or 26% of all women in this age group, have experienced intimate partner abuse (WHO, 2021).

A quarter of adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 who have been in relationships say their husbands or partners had physically or sexually abused them (24%). Since the release of COVID-19, there has been an increase in risk factors for violence against women. WHO (2021) estimates that 16% of young women aged 15 to 24 have recently observed this assault. This is due to a five-fold increase in calls to helplines in some countries as recorded violence between intimate partners rise due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Globally, restricted mobility, social isolation, and economic uncertainty increase the risk of domestic violence in women (UN Women, 2020).

The majority of intimate relationship violence against women is physical, sexual, or psychological in nature and can be done by a spouse or a committed partner (WHO, 2012). UN Women (2016) reports that 1 in 3 women currently experience physical or sexual abuse, most often at the hands of a romantic partner. More than 20 years ago, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration for Eradicating Violence Against Women, which served as a framework for addressing this issue. Violence against women is defined as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is

susceptible to causing physical, sexual, or emotional pain or injury to women. This includes verbal abuse, force, or the restriction of freedom, whether it occurs in public or in private (UNGA, 1993). In their study of IPV among educated by Midlarsky et al. (2006), professional women from South Asian immigrant populations in the United States were identified. It was hypothesized that these women might be more susceptible to abuse as their families experience more stress. The authors list a number of cultural variables (including gender norms, the value placed on family, and the desire for a green card) as potential contributors to the prevalence and acceptance of violence against women in such regions.

Benebo et al. (2018) examined the impact of education on intimate violence and discovered that patriarchal, rural homes with less educated or economically powerful women are those where intimate partner abuses is more common. Similarly, younger women are more likely to have it. For instance, research conducted in Bangladesh discovered that older women with post-primary education, and women from wealthy homes had decreased risks of experiencing physical spousal abuse (Sambisa et al., 2011). While government regulations and frameworks in western nations address domestic and marital violence against women, it is more challenging in other country situations because a woman's role in the family and community is heavily influenced by socio-cultural norms and practices. The persistence of violence may also be explained by culture and women's dread of societal expectations. According to a survey by the WHO (2015), 55% to 95% of women who experience violence do not turn to official organizations or people in positions of authority for assistance.

While there is little study on the impact of women's empowerment through education on violence, studies have been done to determine whether economic empowerment has a negative impact on interpersonal violence. However, one study in Bangladesh (Schuler et al., 1998) discovered that releasing women from IPV may not be possible only through economic empowerment. Women's economic empowerment has a number of beneficial effects, including increased independence and self-assurance that allows them to live independently. However, a woman's independence may appear dangerous to her husband due to the structural aspects of a patriarchal culture, which might lead to increased violence. For instance, the outcomes of microcredit programs aimed at empowering women are unclear. As their lives become more apparent in society and via their

perceived value in society, participating in such projects may, on the one hand, reduce the likelihood of abuse; nevertheless, if the woman acts more confidently due to her economic options, her spouse may react with violence (Bates et al., 2004).

Sen (1999) also discovered that education above the elementary level is one of the few variables that emerge as being related with relatively low sensitivity to physical violence. Only 13% of women with greater educational attainment reported experiencing physical violence, compared to the 74 percent of women with less than five years of schooling in her sub-sample. Furthermore, people without formal education were less inclined to put up a fight. Sen (1999) also discovered that people with greater education had a higher likelihood of belonging to community groups that help women; this is another aspect that could account for why they are more able to withstand abuse. The author notes that formal skill acquisition and greater self-confidence and self-esteem are two significant factors that have a beneficial influence on women's resistance to IPV and may be connected with educational achievement of five years or more. The women polled in both Bates et al. (2004) and Sen (1999) studies appear to understand the value of education regardless of their level of education, and if they are more educated, they indicate the importance of being able to be more financially independent.

3.3. Perceived Economic Benefits on Single Parenthood.

Humans, have a rational too and hence they need to make decisions for survival in society. This basically informs the role of the economic system in the actualization of this (Van Gasse and Mortelmans, 2020). Economic advantage, according to Perry-Jenkins (2020), is a reward that may be substantial and in the form of money and material benefits. The economy knows no bounds, making survival applicable to both genders. This is why empowering women economically is just as crucial as empowering men, since it is essential to achieving gender equality and advancing women's rights (Herb, 2018).

3.3.1. Economic independence and building social capital

This economic independence and empowerment of women reflects several meanings and implications. For instance, the World Bank (2017) sees it as their ability to equally participate in

the existing labour markets; Gift (2013) defined it as their control and access to productive resources, however the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021) refers to it as their access to decent employment as outlined in the ILO's decent work agenda. They must also be able to manage their own time, lives, and bodies (Mahle, 2020); have a stronger voice and be more actively involved in financial decision at all scales, from the family to international organizations (Jackson et al., 2019).

In light of this, one of the fundamental principles for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda is to empower women and eliminate gender disparities in the workplace (UN DESA, 2017). The fifth objective specifically tries to establish gender equality, and the eighth goal pushes for full and productive employment and good work for everyone. This would make it possible to achieve Goal 1 (the eradication of poverty), Goal 2 (the security of food), and Goal 3 (the assurance of decent, high-quality health).

Over the past two decades, there has been a rise in the global acknowledgment of women as successful business owners and the number of female-owned firms has grown exponentially (Borcan et al., 2017). However, there are a lot of obstacles facing women entrepreneurs, such as childcare responsibilities and a lack of necessary resources like social capital. The research of Visscher et al. (2018) shows that, compared to males, female entrepreneurs frequently begin their own businesses with insufficient human and social capital. Geboers et al. (2016) also discovered that women who run their own businesses face greater resource disadvantages than their male counterparts. This is because they frequently are really not included in traditional business connections and do not have any access to information about these networks, which can help them access those resources.

Coll-Planas et al. (2018) found a high correlation between the initial under-capitalization of female-owned enterprises and the underperformance of those firms relative to those owned by males. This under-capitalization comprises social and human capital, which includes prior management and sectoral expertise as well as access to relevant personal and professional networks. It is not just limited to access to funds. Women are less accepted in social networks than males are (Nolasco et al., 2018), and this has a significant impact on the social capital endowments

that women utilize to launch their enterprises. The concept of social capital has gained some focus from scholars and researchers such as Markle-Reid et al. (2018) as well as Coll-Planas (2017) among the countless elements influencing the growth of women-owned enterprises. For instance, social capital is an extra source of funding that female entrepreneurs may use to grow their businesses. There haven't been many studies on how female entrepreneurs create, use, and preserve their social capital to expand their enterprises, despite the rising desire for social capital and entrepreneurship. The purpose of the current sub-theme is to examine how various women business owners perceive their social capital and to look at the ways they create and use it for their business.

From the work of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), they define social capital in terms of its relational, structural, and cognitive components. According to Claridge (2004), structural social capital, which consists of pre-existing roles and social networks together with norms, processes, and precedents, supports the mutually advantageous collective activity. Contrarily, cognitive social capital, which consists of common norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs, encourages people to engage in cooperative behavior (Krishna and Uphoff, 2002). Social capital may affect productivity in a variety of ways that are frequently related and mutually reinforcing (Blancafort et al, 2021). Last but not least, the relational aspects offer a setting in which trust, laws, and conventions may be used. Thus, the idea of social capital is examined in light of its heuristic potential. In other words, the idea of social capital is employed in this context to describe a variety of processes relating to women's access to networks and organizations as well as the process of developing connections based on trust in the context of commercial operations.

3.3.2. Changing Demographic Trends and Increased Women's Participation in Economic Activities

Much of what is reported on the airwaves in labour studies recently is the increased proportion of women that are actively involved in the labour market. This has been facilitated by women empowerments and the propagation of the need for women to utilize their potential effectively in the labour market, in order to achieve economic independence. This has also reached policy circles, as well as the academia over the past few years, to be an acknowledgement of the significance of women for economic growth and development (Akyeampong & Fofack, 2012).

Others, such as Darroch et al. (2016), Crouch et al. (2019), Hereyah and Purwanti (2021), and Asah (2021), have used spanning generation models to show that the potential contribution of single mothers to growth would be considerably greater in the absence of family occupational limitations, which are frequently made worse by the lack of or bad condition of infrastructure in low-income nations like Nigeria. Since single mothers are often the heads of their homes in Nigeria, poverty is a problem that affects them disproportionately (World Bank, 2017). Therefore, one way to lessen and buffer the consequences of poverty is for single mothers to participate in economic activity. Through salaries and other linked earnings, it is intended to increase incomes.

To this end, single parenting as a family type is highly likely to be exposed to poverty (Peterson, 2012). As single mothers lack second providers, their earnings are low, coupled with the demands from the home front and the need to take care of their children. Such factors place such families at an increased risk of being exposed to the conditions of poverty (Muhle, 2020). According to UNFPA's (2021) report, 40% of single-mother families in Africa live in poverty, implying that the number of single-mother households with low incomes would continue to increase. Single-parent families are more likely than other families to have consistently low incomes, and their periods of poverty are among the longest, according to a longitudinal investigation (Tubei, Kodero and Kimani, 2021).

With specific reference to Nigeria, the single parents' population is vast and rapidly increasing (Olurounbi, 2018). This has attracted widespread concern and attention from development experts and critical stakeholders in the country, due to the disadvantaged position single mothers are placed in, especially from an economic point of view. In Africa, divorce rates and the expansion of single-mother households are comparable to those in other Western nations. Since legislations on divorce were deregulated in 1965, the number of divorces has been gradually increasing, especially in Western countries (Macionis, 2006).

In recent times, the entire workspace has accommodated more women into paid employment. For instance, according to Lorretta and Ntoimo (2019), around 70% of women of working age are employed. This is also related to women having better educational levels than men. These were

made possible because of state's policies, especially in guaranteeing equality of females with other males, and ensuring the independence and rights of women. A notable example here is the legalizing of abortion. In addition, measures that created a comprehensive strategy for the society's most vulnerable members were implemented, including those that focused social welfare programs on single mothers and their children.

Thus, the tide is turning: single mothers participate in the job market at a higher rate than married women. According to data, single mothers are more likely to be employed than married women with children (Odumosu, 2017). This demonstrates that 80% of single mothers with children who live alone are actively employed, as opposed to 71% of mothers who live in nuclear families. Therefore, single mothers may devote more time to working. Because of this, they devote more time to their jobs, increasing their earnings and returns (McLanahan, 2019).

Few studies have managed to examine the connection between single parenting and perceived economic gains despite the dearth of available evidence. In a study conducted by Razeenah, Mahomed and Jacobus (2021) on the art of raising children by single parents, they found that some single mothers acknowledged economic gains from their current living arrangement which entails collection of financial resources and other valuables from different men they have children from. In the process of receiving regular income all in the name of personal upkeep and that of their children, they may also benefit from different streams of income if forthcoming.

Similar findings are recorded in Ameerah and Fiona (2021), though not specifically examining the role of perceived benefits: it was concerned with the individual preferences made by single mothers in deciding to be single mothers. Because of their backgrounds as children who grew up in their own households, some of the participants would like to continue being single mothers. Evidence from the study shows the level of independence enjoyed by such women, which gives them the feeling that they could do without living with a man.

3.3.3. Positives of human capital development for women

The value an employee contributes to the economy through their knowledge, skills, and talents is measured by their human capital. Studies have shown that investing in women's human capital has

a favorable effect on their ability to succeed in the workforce, with overall human capital expenditures accounting for about 70% of operational costs on average (Jeanetta, 2017). In light of the fact that investing in the professional advancement of women will boost work satisfaction, human capital development permits higher employee happiness, according to research by SHRM (2014). It further revealed that 42% of workers polled internationally felt their employer's support for professional growth is "extremely vital to their job happiness. Staff's internal professional development demonstrates to them that the company values its careers. This was also consistent with Thygesen's (2016) research, which showed that these women are more likely to be content with their careers when they believe their employers care about their professional growth.

Smith (2021) also mentioned how crucial retention is as a result of women's human capital development. According to his survey, 54% of workers responded that while seeking for a job, professional progression prospects are more significant than money. In addition, 44% of workers said that the biggest cause of stress at work is a lack of opportunities for development and progress. These figures demonstrate how crucial professional advancement is to female employees. According to his research, women who are obtaining professional development and education are less inclined to look for other job alternatives. Therefore, women would not need to hunt for promotion possibilities outside of the business if they can advance inside their own organization. Similarly, it was noted by Amy and Brandon (2016) that single mothers prioritize opportunities for growth above everything else. A 2016 Deloitte poll also revealed that the top reason female millennials, most especially, single and unmarried mothers desire to quit their present jobs is an absence of leadership development, which was cited by 70% of respondents. It is understandable why Smith (2021) estimated that replacing a paid employee would cost an average of six to nine months' income. Employee turnover may be significantly reduced with a small investment in an employee growth strategy.

For single mothers, there are effects of human capital development on their formal work possibilities and involvement. Single mothers would gain from the employment possibilities and placement that are available to them, but there is also a rise in their job satisfaction, which is a priority for any organization. As they are totally involved are more productive, Kenton (2020) noted how this affected investment and their results (ROI). By investing in their social capital,

single mothers are able to achieve their highest levels of performance and provide (physical or intangible) benefits to the expansion of their social sphere.

3.3.4. Economic benefits and asset accumulation

According to Moser (2016), asset accumulation is viewed as a means of escaping hardship, and it is crucial to take into account a person's economic situation. When utilized in this sense, the term "asset" often refers to conventional, private, financial, and productive resources as well as positions that give single moms economic advantages due to geography, social status, and market access (Edem and Etim, 2014). The function of assets is fundamental to understanding changes in welfare outcomes, according to modern sociology of development theories and studies. Evidence from the 2015 Global Monitoring Report shows that the ownership of the asset by single mothers to which they have access are significant since assets may help decrease vulnerability, a significant aspect of poverty. There is ample proof that having assets may assist offer insurance against shocks, decrease feelings of insecurity, and frequently reduce risk-averse behavior and dependence on more damaging coping mechanisms. All of these typically require having fewer assets, such as withdrawing kids from school. In many countries, single mothers may not have recourse to enough resources, which reduces their capacity to deal with susceptibility (Moser, 2006).

Likewise, assets have a significant impact on what single women may do in terms of earning and several other consequences (UN Women, 2018). For instance, single mothers who have more assets are frequently better equipped to increase their income and, as a result, take part in more activities that support economic growth. UN Women (2018) also pointed out that they are better equipped to defend themselves against unfavorable economic circumstances since they have better access to finance. There is no denying that women have a far lower capacity to accumulate money and assets than do males. This was explicitly justified in Erin and Robert (2014) in explaining why most households headed by single mothers experience persistent poverty. A key factor in determining a household's and an individual's longer-term prospects is their access to tangible and intangible assets. When permanent income drops underneath the poverty line or asset holdings fall below a key level, a decline in current spending is frequently perceived to have a structural component, which is more concerning (Adetunji, 2012). A nation's development and economic

growth are hampered in one way or another by household poverty, which is caused by the crippled rights of women, which have naturally limited their ability to accumulate assets and riches.

3.3.5. Economic support through social security (Childcare security or maintenance)

In response to the global need for protection from specific life dangers and social needs, social protection is a human right (ILO, 2020). Efficient social security systems ensure health and financial stability, which helps to prevent and reduce poverty and inequality and to advance inclusivity and human dignity. They do this by offering benefits, in cash or in kind, that are meant to guarantee access to medical care and health services as well as financial security throughout the course of a person's life, especially in the event of an ailment, joblessness, workplace injury, maternity, family commitments, incapacity, and the death of the family head of the household, as well as during retirement and old age.

Gechert et al. (2021) claim that social security helps to increase productivity, employability, and economic development. Social security assists businesses and employers in retaining a steady workforce that can adjust to change (Biljana, 2020). Finally, by guaranteeing good living conditions for all, it strengthens social cohesion and so contributes to the development of social harmony, inclusive communities, and a fair effect of globalization.

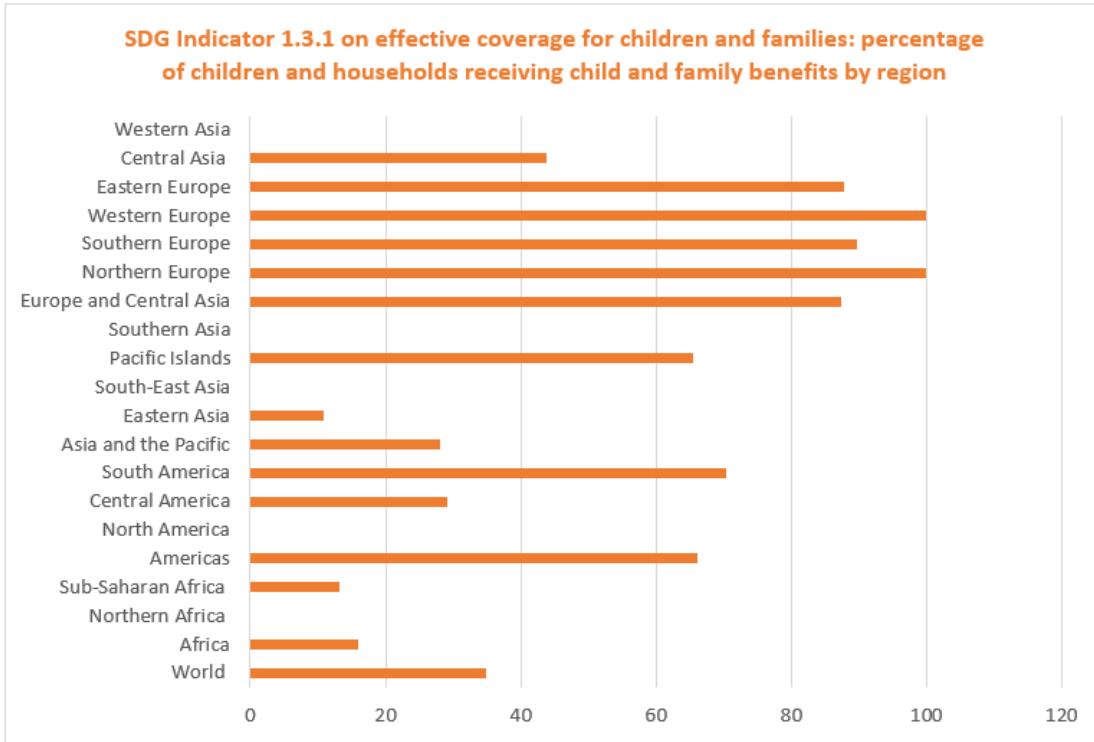
To Welfare support for children is crucial for reducing and preventing child poverty in order to meet the UN objective of eradicating extreme child poverty and decreasing country definitions of childhood poverty by 2030. (Zhang, Xiaorong and Long, 2019). The centrality of social protection is highlighted by the inclusion of protection in Target 1.3, especially as a component of centrally regulated social protection levels. The Joint Statement on Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection, published in 2009 by a coalition of United Nations agencies, bilateral donor agencies, and international NGOs, outlines the principles that all social protection activities should follow. To have the greatest possible effect on children, it is done (UNICEF, 2017). It will be impossible to attain children's rights to social security, suitable living conditions, health, education, and care, let alone to realize the 2030 Agenda, without a supportive policy framework that prioritizes children's needs and expectations. This policy framework heavily relies on international norms for child and family assistance. The Global Partnership for Universal Health has resulted from a

significant worldwide endeavor. ILO and UNICEF are both core members of the United States Partnership 2030 (USP2030), which promotes social protection. The inability of dozens of millions of children to seek social assistance runs counter to democratic principles and social justice, harms the capacity building, and has significant political repercussions for governments. The Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection is evidence of how committed the international community is to redressing this oversight and pursuing closer cooperation in this area.

Hidrobo et al. (2018) identified three different categories of social welfare programs, which include cash transfers, public works projects, and food transfers, and demonstrated how these programs accelerated asset holdings, including savings, farm, and non-farm tangible resources, as well as other types of assets. The average social protection system studied boosted food consumption or spending by 13% and calorie acquisition by 8%, in accordance with the same meta-analysis. UNICEF (2012) recommended including both types of provision in an evaluation of the aspects of social protection for children in Africa in order to understand the situation in contexts where children and families are collecting benefits even where initiatives are not put in place in statutory provisions, as well as situations where legal provisions may not fully translate into coverage, in reality. Similarly, a review of effective coverage reveals that non-contributory cash transfer programs have grown significantly during the past 20 years in low- and middle-income countries (Bastagli, 2016).

There are currently non-contributory unconditional cash transfer programs in at least 130 countries. Coverage and benefit levels, however, frequently remain modest. For instance, despite the adoption of such programs by 40 of the 48 African nations (Cirillo and Tebaldi, 2016), the coverage of child cash benefits in sub-Saharan Africa is still low: just 13.1% of children are covered, which is far lower than the global average of 34.9%. (ILO, 2017).

Figure 3.1: Children/families receiving child/family cash benefits (%)

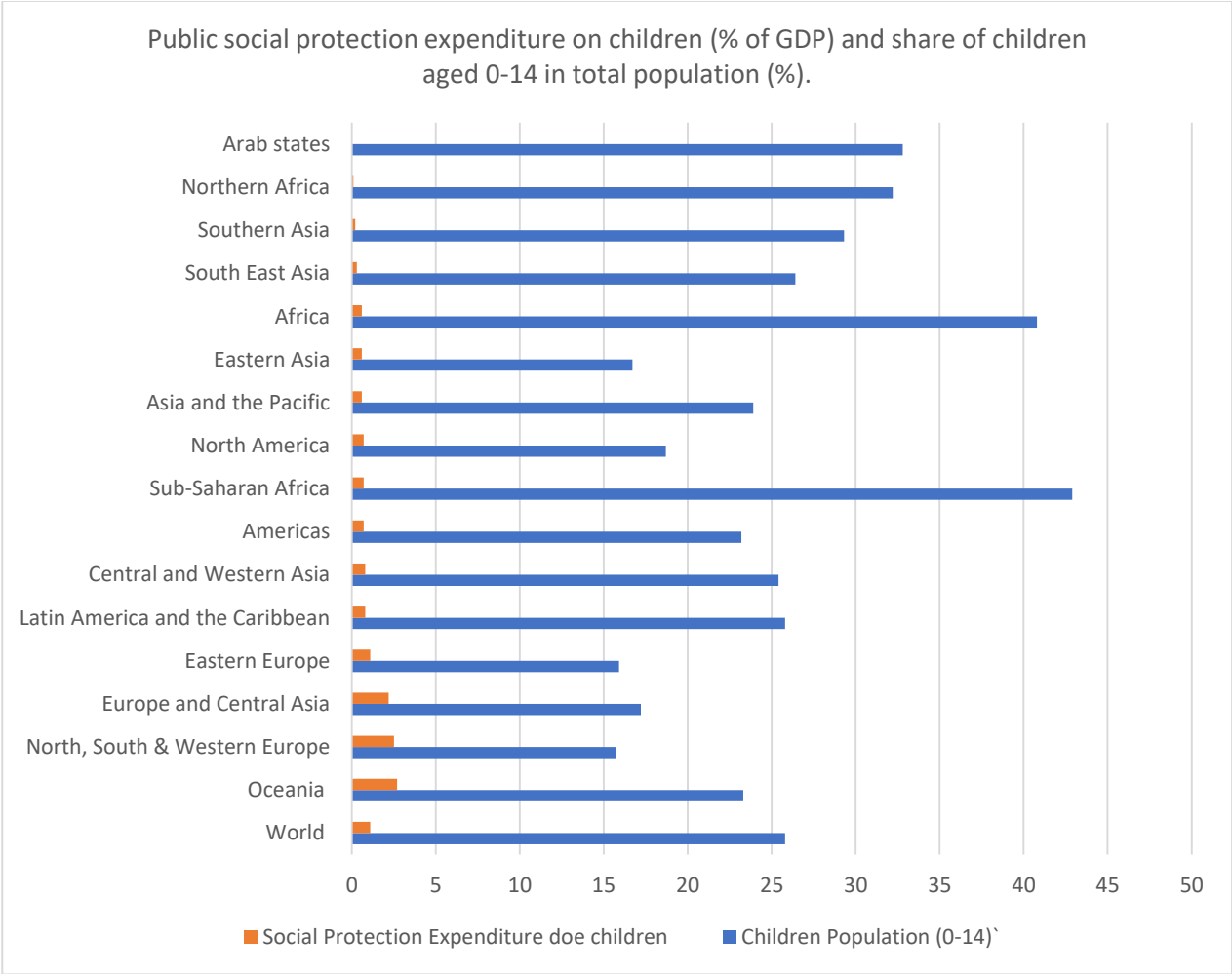


Source: ILO (2017)

The methods utilized to collect survey data to evaluate both the legal provision and the efficacy of cover are unable to capture changes in social protection coverage that occur more quickly (ILO, 2021). This underlines the growing ascent of social protection on both the national and global agendas, including their inclusion in the SDGs. Many developing nations, including Argentina and Chile, have achieved universal or almost universal social security coverage for children, despite the fact that universality is typically associated with high-income nations. A few examples of growing nations that are rapidly increasing coverage include Bolivia, South Africa, and Uruguay. Nevertheless, a number of nations are implementing fiscal consolidation strategies in spite of such significant advances. This may result in the reduction of allowances and a narrower focus on those who are poor for child benefits, denying many vulnerable children their legal right to social assistance (UNICEF, 2017).

Better resource allocation (extension of social protection) or budgetary pressures are to blame for some of the abovementioned changes in the social protection perks and coverage (contraction). To offer adequate social protection, a sizeable amount of money must be set aside for families and children. However, as of right now, countries only allocate on average 1.1% of GDP to social protection for kids (UNICEF, 2017), and the amounts differ significantly between nations and regions, as can be shown in Figure 3.2 below. While child benefit expenditure ratios are over 2% of GDP in Europe, Central Asia, and Oceania, they are still significantly below 1% of GDP in the majority of the rest of the globe (ILO, 2017).

Figure 3.2. Public social protection expenditure on children



Source (ILO, 2017)

Regional predictions for Africa, the Arab States, and Southern and South-East Asia suggest a level of investment of less than 0.7% of GDP, despite the fact that children make up a bigger share of their populations. The amount spent in the region appears to be relatively little when one considers that 43 per cent of people in sub-Saharan Africa are children between the ages of 0 and 14. The high rates of child deprivation and other indices of poor health, such as child mortality, undernourishment, and malnutrition, make it abundantly evident that inadequate resources are being dedicated to children's social protection. This is true even when it is taken into account that public spending on social safety programs, health care, and education in addition to child and family benefits, also helps to improve the status of children.

Future development potential is jeopardized by the low expenditure levels in low-income and lower-middle-income countries like Nigeria, many of which do not offer any benefits for either single mothers or their children. While single mothers are financially handicapped due to the fact that they take care of their kids all alone. This is worsened when adequate social protection and services are not available to cushion this effect; and if funding for children's social protection of single mothers is not increased, it is unlikely that the SDGs pertaining to children will be achieved (Franziska and Sri, 2017). It is crucial that a nation like Nigeria takes the initiative to look into all available financial options in order to promote the well-being of single mothers and their children.

3.3.6. Associated risk of human capital development for women

For a developing nation like Nigeria, developing human capital is a huge task (Chikwe et al., 2015). Given how far behind the world as a whole is and how much time and effort it would take to catch up to them, this is to be expected. The proportion of single mothers in the workforce has increased, and with it have come new risks and challenges in juggling and managing their roles in their roles at work and in their families (Owolabi and Ajibose, 2019). As documented in a report by McKinsey (2020), more than one in four women are reportedly thinking about leaving their jobs or downgrading their careers. This demonstrates the serious issues with keeping these single mothers in the workforce.

Women make up 49% of the world's population, according to Ritchie and Roser (2019). This is a highly important number because as the proportion of women entering the labor force rises, women are seen as a valuable resource for the workforce in terms of gender diversity, competence, and productivity for businesses (Turban, Wu, and Zhang, 2019). Unfortunately, it was claimed that businesses in certain societies find it difficult to keep women in the job due to the lack of initiatives or programs to encourage the inclusion of women who are expecting or already have children and, in some quarters, single mothers (TalentCorp, 2013). Due to the absence of policies promoting equal opportunity, many people in Nigeria believe that the workplace is patriarchal and male-dominated. According to survey findings by Talent Corp (2013), women are mostly excluded since it is assumed that they prioritize their families over their careers. According to reports, Nigeria's male-dominated workplace contributes to women abandoning their careers since they do not really feel socially accepted when in leadership positions because of the negative consequences it might have on their familial duties (TalentCorp, 2013).

Previous research has uncovered a number of reasons why women leave their employment. According to a poll conducted by HR Asia (2018), the main reasons for women leaving their jobs include an absence of flexibility (75%), childcare concerns (60%) and unsupportive managers and work environments (55%). Another issue is gender prejudice, which was identified by Williams, Phillips, and Hall (2016). It was also shown that 64% of gender bias was brought on by being a single mother. In the same survey, it was found that about 55.3% of single women described instances in which confrontations between women were sparked by gender bias. Adhikari (2012) went on to say that stress, tiredness, and worry are common difficulties for women. Specifically, single mothers struggle to strike a balance between their responsibilities at work and those for their children and family. Despite the fact that some single mothers now work in organizations as a result of their independence and empowerment, Yapp (2018) noted that they are still responsible for the majority of domestic duties on the home front. It was also noted that they spend three times as much time as married women doing housework and chores. This could have an impact on their performance evaluation as further noted in Sudha and Karthikeyan (2014), due to the stress that they experience when attempting to strike a work-life balance.

The lack of opportunities for career advancement for single mothers relative to married women is another risk factor. Evidence from earlier studies indicates that working single mothers encounter a number of obstacles to job success. Kurupparachchi and Surangi (2020) identified one of these as the "glass ceiling" factor. by implication, stereotypes towards single mothers do not allow them the opportunity to move through the ranks. They noted that their inability to stay with a man would not allow them to be better managers or administrators in the workplace. Furthermore, Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) noted that there are organizational behaviors pertaining to organizational structure and culture. Nowadays, the majority of organizations are male-oriented, and as noted by Ismail and Ibrahim (2009), women's needs and requirements receive little support and attention. This is because of the perceive notion that men devote more time to work, compared to their female counterpart.

In many societies, it is generally accepted that males can devote more time to work than women, and women agree with this notion because they have more domestic responsibilities (Parker, 2015). According to King's (2008) theory, misconceptions about working women will lead to inaccurate perceptions of how they view their responsibilities to both their families and their careers. This will explain why there is a "maternal wall." So, by exhibiting gender variations in impressions of work-family attitudes that affect career development, organizations are thought to exercise maternal prejudice (King, 2008). In contrast, Sandberg (2015) contends that the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and the lack of prospects for professional advancement are entirely voluntary choices made by women who are comfortable in their current careers.

3.4. Conclusion

This section has reviewed and provided relevant works of literature that addressed various issues relating to single parenting, being facilitated by educational qualification and perceived economic benefits. The dispute over high and poor educational attainment playing important roles in deciding single parenting has been found in several literary works. On the one hand, this research has been able to pinpoint the fact that women with low levels of literacy are more likely to be single parents. This is due to the fact that education provides the proper knowledge to people, forcing them to employ it in their daily activities. Making decisions regarding unprotected

intercourse or the utilization of contraception falls under this category. When this is absent, it causes unintended pregnancy, which would lead to single parenting. On the other hand, because they prioritize the advancement of their careers, highly educated women are more likely to be single mothers. They choose to have children without being married when they get older and are going close to their low fertility years, while others choose to adopt children in their names. Having related the findings of previous research, the next chapter focuses on a theoretical framework that explains issues related to single parenting.

CHAPTER FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to look into the socioeconomic factors that affect single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Out-of-wedlock birth rates are steadily rising in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African nations as a result of family history, age, educational attainment, and anticipated economic benefits. Despite the advantages of marriage, this has led to a significant number of single mothers serving families across the nation. The perspectives of women who have never been married but have children and are raising those children alone were therefore studied and discussed in this study. The study is anchored on micro theoretical perspectives: from the point of view of Symbolic Interactionism (Meads, 1932; Blummer, 1969), Social Exchange (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964), Economic Hardship Theory (Davis and Havighurst, 1946) and Intersectional Feminism (Crenshaw, 1991). These micro sociological theories provide insights into individuals and small groups, coupled with the level of interactions that operate between them, rather than focusing on large structures, patterns and conflicts across the whole of society. The applicability of these theories demonstrates how heavily gendered the discussion of single parenting is because most single parents are mothers, who consequently face discrimination based on their gender and unequal opportunities in society.

The interactionist viewpoint, which was predicated on the idea that people interact with one another to give meaning to themselves, other people, and the environment around them, served as the foundation for the relationship between symbolic interactionism, social exchange, and economic hardship theory, and intersectional feminism. They make decisions in their daily lives based on such meanings. This connection fosters the idea that society, culture, and our individual identities emerge from long-term patterns of contact and conduct. They are insightful in addressing the major concerns and arguments surrounding single-parent households; rather than advancing a single viewpoint, they present a variety of different ideas without taking a side.

These four ideas, which are associated with the micro sociological perspective, discuss how the resources, education, and age among other personal qualities of single parents influence them. However, the main emphasis is on how women's choice of family structure (single parenting) is influenced by their socioeconomic environment.

4.2. Key aspects of the theoretical framework and how they relate to each other

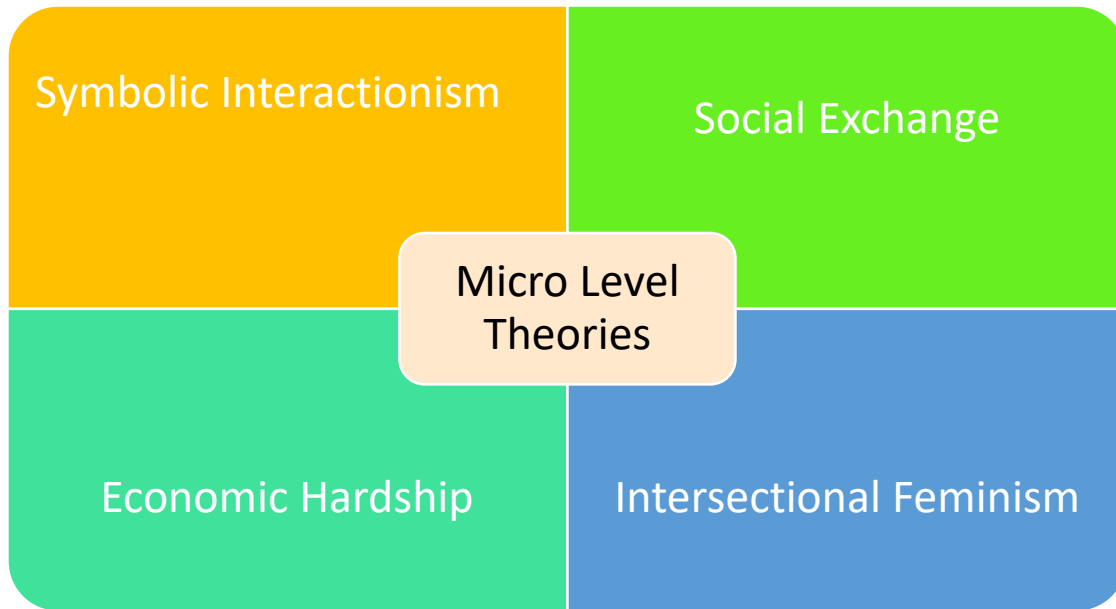
For this research, four theories that explain single parenting were employed. The justification for the choice of four theories is based on the fact that no particular theory best explains a social problem, and to this end, it is essential to utilize an eclectic approach in order to explain single parenting from different perspectives. These theories will complement each other in explaining the concept, making it confer on this research an added value. Apart from this, they would be used to explain and justify the relationship between socio-economic, demographic identity axis factors and single parenting. They are:

1. Symbolic Interactionism Theory
2. Economic Hardship Theory
3. Social Exchange Theory
4. Intersectional Feminism Theory

In their analyses of social structure, Symbolic Interactionism (Meads, 1932; Blummer, 1969), Social Exchange (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964), Economic Hardship Theory (Davis and Havighurst, 1946) and Intersectional Feminism (Crenshaw, 1991) all took the observation of microsocial processes as their strategic point of departure. The central unit of analysis for these theories is the social 'act' or 'activity,' although authors differ in their respective conceptualizations. For instance, while in symbolic interaction theory, acts are always conceived as constructive and creative processes, exchange theorists present a less unified perspective. Whereas Blau (1964) in many places imply the constructiveness of human acts, Homan (1958) simply refers to overt behavior as a unit of observation. These theories view human interaction as the interactive stimulation of actions by a group of actors (Mead, 1934; Thibaut and Kelley, 1967; Homans, 1961). In their approach to interaction, exchange theory and symbolic interactionism for instance, can be linked in two ways. In the first, interaction consists of formative processes of 'fitting

developing lines of conduct to one another' (Blumer, 1969), or 'stabilizing' behaviors at levels that are perceived as most 'profitable' under current conditions (Homans, 1958).

Figure 4.1. Theoretical linkages



Source: Developed by researcher (2021)

One very significant point of convergence between these theories is that they all tend to see institutions as dialectically emerging from the actions of individuals and existing as independent objective realities over and against the individuals once established. According to Mead, institutionalization results from a person's ability to act in ways that are similar to other members of an organization or community and to take the responsibilities of a "generalized other." Therefore, an institution is a common behavioral pattern in a specific, socially defined environment that is so structured that it allows actors to adopt other people's perspectives on their own behaviour (Mead, 1934). Such institutions are, on the one hand, conservative mechanisms of social control by perpetuating an existing social order (Mead, 1964). On the other hand, Mead recognized that institutions need not necessarily be oppressive obstacles to the expression of

individual spontaneity. Rather, he argued, that institutions define socially responsible conduct in a broad sense that leaves ample room for individual flexibility.

4.3. Contributions of theoretical frameworks on Single Parenting among unmarried mothers

Several theories are used in addressing variety of issues in the social world. The case of single parenting is not left out, as there abound several theories and contributions from researchers on the subject matter. In a study titled: “Correlates of single motherhood in four Sub-Saharan African Countries”, conducted by Odimegwu, Mutanda and Mbanefo (2017), from a macro level analytical framework, identified *Social Change theory of the Family*, and all sociological theorists concur that change is a fundamental aspect of society; it may follow particular patterns or just happen randomly. According to social scientists, social change is guided by a pattern that can be identified. Change is therefore unavoidable, and as a result, African countries are seeing a shift in the family structure from two parents to a single mother, as well as from a patriarchal to a less patriarchal family structure. Thus, cultural, religious, economic, and technological influences all influence social transformation. All facets of human life are being forced into unprecedented complexities by economic and cultural globalization (Reeler, 2007). As a result of some shifts in attitudes and behaviors about marriage and fertility, family systems have been substantially impacted (Ellwood and Jencks, 2002). The majority of African households were strictly patriarchal before globalization and modernization, with wives having only husbands to answer to. Change is inevitable, as was previously stated. The acquisition of knowledge and income has given women more authority today, and as a result, they are able to decide how many children to have. To this end, most communities are beginning to accept single-parent families as a growing and desirable family type.

Modernization theory is utilized in part in Chizomam and Isiugo-Abanihe's (2014) paper which was titled "Determinants of Singlehood: A Retrospective Account of Older Single Women in Lagos." The study specifically used Giddens's Structuration theory to examine single parenting in the perspective of unique modern aspects that influence people's choices and quality of life. Giddens demonstrates that disembedding mechanisms, reflexivity, and distance are traits of modernity. The separation between time and space is referred to as distance. Disembedding is the removal of time and geographic constraints from social interactions. Modern societies' time-space

distantiation and disembedding processes, including money and expert systems, require that human knowledge is no longer the foundation of trust (Ritzer, 2008). Reflexivity encompasses all facets of social interaction, including individual worldviews, choices, and self-identity formation. Albert Bandura's social learning theory was used by Mooney, Oliver, and Smith (2009) in their article titled "Impact of Family Breakdown on Children's Wellbeing." These academics contend that the social learning theory promotes individuals to observe and imitate the behaviors, emotions, and attitudes of others. As a result, it places a strong emphasis on imitation and observational learning. Children first engage with their family, and watch and pick up on caregivers' behaviors. This theoretical perspective overlaps with the focus of the current investigation and is crucial to understanding how family background affects single parenting. With single parenting, the children have only one parent to observe and imitate. In order to prevent children from developing an "Oedipus complex," it is crucial and extremely critical to have both parents. Children pick up behaviors from their families, as stated by Bandura. Children will pick up parental irresponsibility in some way. Lack of trust between parents and children increases the likelihood that children will struggle to build healthy relationships with everyone around them, including their spouses.

Similar to this, B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning was used by Hong and Park (2012) in their article titled "Impact of attachment, temperament, and parenting on human development." Operant conditioning is the process of modifying behavior by rewarding it after a desirable behavior has been demonstrated. The most crucial elements of learning are rewards and punishments. These techniques are employed by parents to reinforce desired behaviors and to reduce undesirable ones. For instance, there is a strong likelihood that a child who receives his or her favorite toy from the mother for completing an assignment on time would repeat this behavior because of reward. On the other hand, if the youngster receives a reprimand from her mother for failing to turn in an assignment on time, he will learn that this behavior only results in punishment and will change his behavior accordingly. The average single parent prioritizes working and providing their children the necessities of life while ignoring their kids' undesirable conduct that may cause them problems in the future. In order to teach their children which behaviors are appropriate and which are not, parents typically praise appropriate behavior while punishing inappropriate behavior.

In a paper titled; “The role of parenting styles in psychological development of adolescents business” by Abrhiem (2014) employed *Erik Erikson’s psycho-social theory*. This theory has eight stages that span every stage of an individual's life, from early childhood to late maturity. These phases are intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, integrity vs. despair, guilt vs. independence, guilt vs. innovation, industry vs. inferiority, identification vs. identity crisis, industry vs. industry uncertainty, and trust vs. distrust. Conflict occurs during each of these stages, which can have both beneficial and negative effects on a person's personality. These disputes were referred to by Erikson as crises that had to be addressed before moving on to the next phase. The possibility exists that a child of a single parent will go through crises at every stage. For example, during the early stages of infancy, the infant needs its caregiver to be accessible so they can be fed, have their worry reduced, and be made to laugh. However, a single mother may not be able to meet all of their demands, which could put them in danger. All of these unhappinesses might result in depression and other mental illnesses like hopelessness. This was also identified in this study and it shares boundary with the Economic Hardship Theory which argues that the behavioural deficiencies of single parent children is as a result of the inability for mothers to provide children with socio-economic and psychological needs.

There was a point of convergence in Connor and Scott (2007), in the work titled ‘Parenting and outcomes for children’; as well as in Chapman et al. (2004), titled, ‘Adverse childhood experiences and the risk of depressive disorders in adulthood.’ Both of them used John Bowlby's theory of attachment in their own studies. Attachment is a basic human need that must be met for children and carers to have a healthy relationship. The attachment theory was developed by child psychiatrist John Bowlby and discusses in detail how the relationship between children and their parents grows and how it impacts the child's emotional and social development. Four stages make up Bowlby's system of attachment. These phases start during infancy. Pre-attachment, attachment in progress, clear-cut attachment, and the development of a reciprocal connection are these stages. All of these phases result in the forming of relationships that, on an emotional level, bind parents and children.

By extension to this theory, Holmes (2019) identified three additional stages that children go through when they are taken away from their caregivers. Detachment, revolt, and despair are these stages. If a single parent cannot establish a better bond with their child, there is a greater likelihood that the child may experience psychiatric disorders, social problems, and irreversible developmental repercussions, such as a decline in IQ or a rise in aggression and violent conduct.

After outlining the theories used in earlier studies, two significant gaps have been found: The first was the stringent application of macro level theories, which emphasizes the structural level analysis of social structures and populations. Although individuals, households, and other societal elements are of interest to macro-sociology, it does so in the framework of the larger social structure that these are a part of. The method is also capable of analyzing generalized collectivities, as demonstrated by, among others, the Social Change Model (Odimegwu et al., 2017; Reeler, 2007), Modernization Theory (Chizomam and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014), Structuration model (Ritzer, 2008), Social Learning theory (Mooney, Oliver, and Smith, 2009), Psycho-social Theory (Abrhiem, 2014), and Attachment Theory (Connor and Scott, 2007; Chaptman et al., 2004).

To this end, this current study has employed micro theories of the family to further explain single parenting among unmarried mothers. It places a strong emphasis on smaller units, patterns, and trends, frequently at the grassroots and against the backdrop of everyday occurrences. Secondly, the interactionist approach formed majority of the theoretical perspectives used and developed by the previous studies in examining factors of single parenting. This approach focused on the micro-subjects of social life. However, there are other dimensions to which single parenting can be examined that were not discussed, for instance, the new media and its role in forming and shaping behaviours. To this end, this current study utilized four theories that capture both social and economic dimensions. These are the Symbolic Interactionist Theory, Economic Hardship Theory, Intersectional Feminism, and The Social Exchange Theory

4.4. Symbolic Interactionism Theory

George Herbert Mead (1932), who is renowned for his alternative perspectives on comprehending human society, is the source of the primary tenets of symbolic interactionism as an important sociological perspective (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 2004). As a student of Mead, Blumer (1969) was able to coin the term "symbolic interactionism," which refers to the process by which people act toward objects in society based on the meaning that those "things" (derived from social interaction and reconfigured through interpretation) have for them. Blumer was able to support Mead's claim that the "self" is a social product that is purposeful and creative.

Mead's theory was built upon by Blumer (1969), who developed symbolic interactionism into a paradigm and approach for analyzing human interactions in social contexts. It is impossible to assume that everyone in our complex, industrialized society holds the same conventions, beliefs, and values because we all have distinct ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Instead of having common interests and aims, people frequently hold opposing and divergent opinions. Rather than being the result of consensus, organized activity could be the outcome of self-interested discussions between two or more individuals or the consequence of coercion by those with more authority.

The theory is based on three premises, according to Blumer (1969). First off, people behave toward objects in society based on the meanings associated with them. These things include actions and tangible objects that people can observe in the environment in which they live and work. It suggests that attitudes and behaviors towards other people and things are influenced by the meanings associated with them. The idea of meaning serves as the cornerstone of the Symbolic Interactionism paradigm. The second fundamental idea is what gives symbols and interactions meaning to the mind and facilitates the creation of certain assumptions. Based on the theory, names are given to things through language, and since each object has a name, names give things meanings (Janoski et al., 2021). Prior to labeling something, it's important to understand it; names frequently represent attributes or other types of information. This information is converted into names by languages. The third pillar of symbolic interactionism is therefore taken into account. Thought implies the interpretations we have assigned to the symbols. The basis of thought is language. It entails mentally exchanging concepts involving names, interpretations, and symbols.

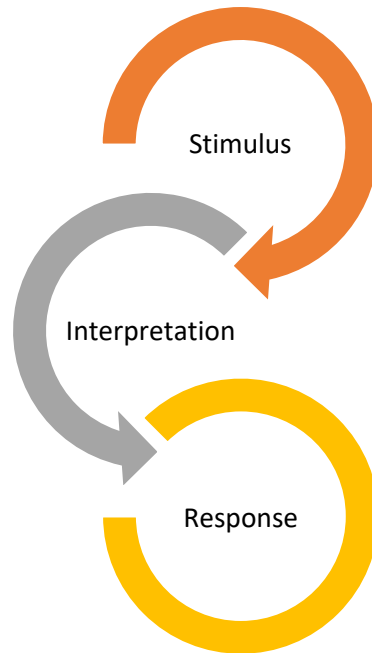
One aspect of cognition is the ability to create an idea, even one about an unknowable entity, using previously acquired information. Through an interpretive process that the individual employs in engaging with the events he or she experiences, these meanings are kept intact.

Symbolic interactionists employ the descriptive meanings that people have given to things, events, and actions to examine society (Bijak, 2021). People act in accordance with their subjective views rather than the scientific reality. Therefore, these descriptive meanings will serve as the foundation for their behavioural patterns. The theory holds that since these descriptive beliefs and assessments are nothing other than human perceptions, society is constructed on the interpretations of its members. People give meaning to one another's acts, and it is from this meaning that a social relationship is built. These interpretations are commonly referred to as "definitions of the circumstance" because the scenario is one that is socially built and derives from social construction.

4.4.1. Basic assumptions underlying symbolic interactionism.

First, it makes the supposition that people behave in accordance with the meanings they give to the things around them. The term "object" is used extremely liberally by interactionists to refer to tangible items, occasions, symbols and deeds, as well as other individuals and social entities. According to this viewpoint, people's actions or behaviors are greatly impacted by how they perceive the circumstances (Bijak, 2021). Interactionists implicitly hold that before acting, humans interpret or give meaning to the stimuli. This procedure is shown in (figure 4.2.) below.

Figure 4.2. A model of symbolic interactionism



Source: Developed by researchers (2021)

Second, symbolic interactionism contends that new definitions of reality constantly emerge and spread and that this is a crucial aspect of social evolution. They claim that established interpretations of objects, including social values, are constantly subject to change. Behavior that deviates significantly from predetermined meanings is seen as dangerous and immoral. Interactionists investigate how social movements and significant cultural upheavals can occasionally contest long-standing meanings and supplant them with new interpretations of reality.

Thirdly, Mulyasih et al. (2021) made the notion that symbols and their associated meanings serve as a vehicle for communication, implying that communication is impossible without symbols

Fourthly, Sinthia and Muhammad (2021) also pointed out that individuals sharing meanings and symbols as a unifying factor in any social unit, is essential to the creation and preservation of all

social units. Social groups frequently create their own unique collection of meanings and symbols. By using the group's shared symbols and meanings, individuals can join that social group. People are also actors, not reactors, which means that although an action may start as an impulse, a conscious, thought-out decision must finally be made. The interpretations that external stimuli (things, events, behaviors) hold for a person determine how they act toward other people. Last but not least, the interpretations we provide to external stimuli are shaped by previous social interactions and are constantly altered by subsequent social interactions.

4.4.2. Application of Symbolic Interactionism Theory to single parenting

In a similar dimension where symbolic interactionism explains individuals and their interpretations of objects and events in their environment, single parenting is not left out. Just as Blumer affirms that people act based on the meanings they attach to actions and activities around them, it can also depict that single parenting is also a preferred form of family structure by some women. The understanding people have about specific events that have been identified in the literature predisposes them to single parenting. This is engendered by their belief that single parenting arises from social interactions with others and their society. Single mothers tend to conceive single parenting because of their experiences as it is reflected from their family background. It could also result from what they experience, which they take after as they get older, such as mothers' maltreatment by fathers. The nuclear family represents a particular type of a family structure with symbolic meanings given to particular individuals, such as the mother and father, and these symbolize different aspects of a traditional family. In the latter case, it's the father who is in authority and the mother is the care-giver, but in Nigeria we find that a different symbolic structure emerges that will be further elaborated hereunder.

Symbolic interactionist theory also shares a boundary with the 'Looking-glass self' of Cooley (1983). He described how contacts with other members of a society help people advance as members of that community. In this, members of the society are shaped by the perception that others have towards them. Aiken (2016) identified three steps in exploring the tenets of 'the looking glass self'. Firstly, how individuals think of how they look to others; Secondly, how people perceive how others perceive them as a result of prior judgments. Thirdly, how people perceive how others assess them depends on how they believe others regard them. In a nutshell, the theory

attempts to express the predisposition for a people to comprehend oneself through the perception others have about them.

Significantly within the family, the interactions a child has with the parent would to a greater extent form a self-concept, which Mead (1934) identified as the 'Social Self' or 'Me'. They are relevant, making it have predictive capacity for the future development of the child. Traditionally, in Africa, role identities are the self-meanings which are attached to positions and their corresponding roles (Unoka and Vizin, 2017). For example, the identity of a mother and the reaction of others to her performance may become conspicuous after exhibiting singleness.

In Nigeria, the long-standing traditional values that have served its past generations, and to some extent, defined its actions and behaviour have been eroded in the modern era. Our values are products of social constructions, and the meanings we attach to them depend on what society expects. As such, when our values are no longer helping us towards our collective interest as a nation, it becomes a national challenge. We are in the era of transformation in our national life. This transformation includes value transformation, that is, in essence value reorientation. Such aspects are what this research seeks to discuss.

4.4.3. Criticisms of Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism has changed significantly since it first emerged as a worldview, and at times it has broken down because of disputes between various philosophical traditions and perspectives (Fine, 1993). Though many of its critics originated from both the worldview itself and from other research traditions, it is not without weaknesses or critics. Due to its perceived deviation from the prevalent scientific technique at the time of its birth, symbolic interactionism has faced more criticism in the past than it has in more recent times. Criticisms first surfaced when positivist research predominated the recognized research paradigms, and qualitative research was perceived as being unscientific (Meltzer et al., 1975). Rogers (1973) accused interactionists of investigating interaction with people in a vacuum and focusing on brief, one-on-one encounters without taking into account their social or historical context. This study draws on Skidmore (1975) to fill in this knowledge gap and discovered that interactionists were unable to describe why individuals consistently choose to act in particular ways in specific circumstances. Although the

arguments are fair, they were expressed when symbolic interactionism was still emerging as a theoretical school of thought. Thus, there is a growing argument that suggests that the gaps between symbolic interactionism as well as other viewpoints are gradually closing (Dunn, 1997).

Methodological flaws in symbolic interactionism are evident in the preference for more qualitative, humanistic techniques to study social interactions over more scientific, quantitative approaches (Meltzer et al., 1975). Blumer (1969) makes the argument for a unique approach to the investigation of human action that increases our understanding of contemporary society (Meltzer et al., 1975). However, irrespective of methodology or school of thought, symbolic interactionism has both a quantitative and qualitative tradition, representing "an approach that attempts to understand human behavior, neither to anticipate and control it nor to have more statistical information about it" (Musolf, 2003).

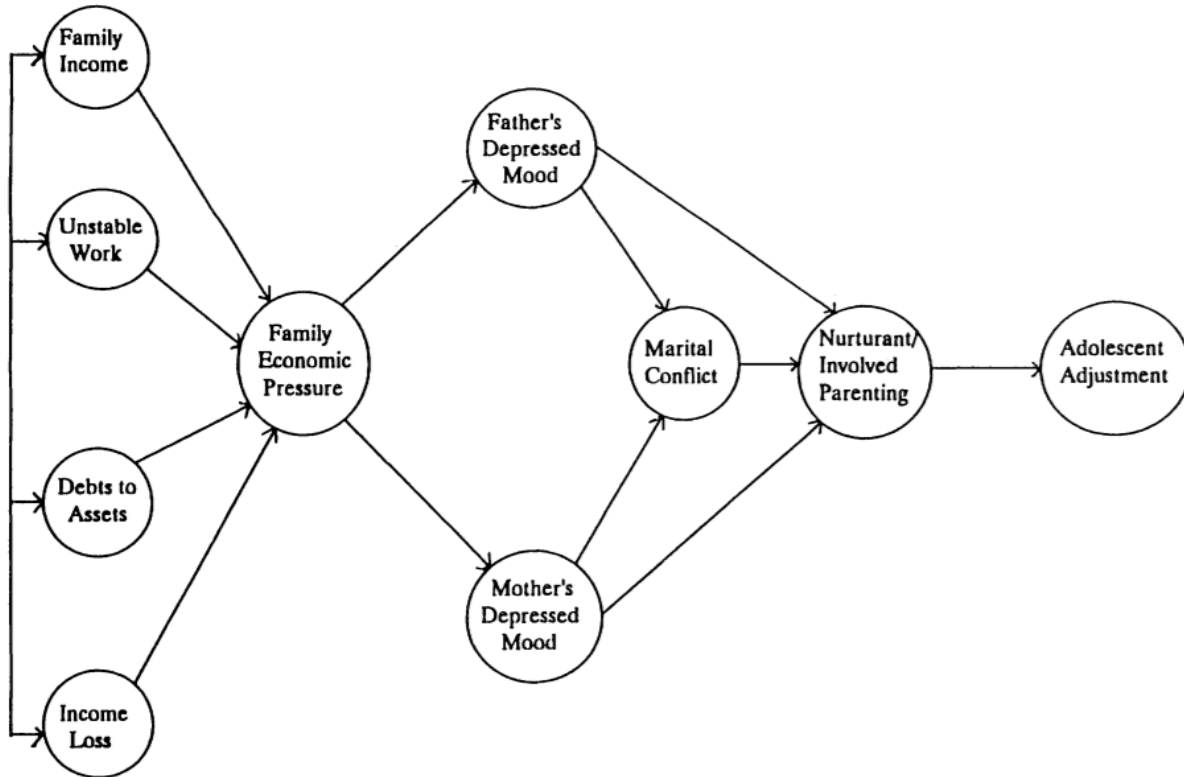
Symbolic interactionism, according to Kuhn (1964), should represent quantitative technique, he claimed, highlighting the significance of methodological coherence across all scientific fields. Kuhn noted a number of issues that 'stunted the growth of symbolic interactionism and other research traditions' acceptance of it as a valid research approach in the context of its brief existence at the time. The lack of scientific legitimacy, which marked the division between the quantitative and qualitative schools, was one of the fundamental problems. In an effort to develop a theory of self that could be tested and applied, Kuhn made an effort to elaborate on Mead's theory of social behaviorism.

Dunn (1997) asserts that symbolic interactionism offers scanty evidence of the origins of meaning. These objections are true, but they were leveled shortly after symbolic interactionism became its own perspective and hadn't yet fully taken advantage of how other perspectives had evolved over the previous few decades. In order to highlight the similarities and diminishing differences between different research traditions, such as the use of language, Dunn (1997) presents contemporary comparisons between symbolic interactionism and other research traditions. Similar to this, Callero (2003) contends that contemporary sociological theories of the self that use a symbolic interactionist paradigm emphasize power, reflexivity, and social constructionism.

4.5. Economic Hardship Theory

Davis & Havighurst (1946) as well as Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) are pioneers of economic hardship theory. They created the idea in response to the economic developments in the U.S., particularly the country's growing income inequality. This increased interest in how families and children's development are impacted by social status and economic resources. The idea examined the mediating role of family processes in relating socio-economic issues to both the prosocial and negative adjustment of early adolescents given the significant indication that children from early infancy to adolescence respond differently to family economic challenges (McLoyd, 1989). Similar to this, Conger et al. (1991) said that the structure of economic hardship and experiences specifies a series of events in the development of anxiety, starting with actual economic conditions and their psychological effects on parents. They proposed and emphasized that hardship increases mental pain, which disrupts marital and parental attitudes, which then directly affects children's activities and behavior. A high level of economic pressure, according to Rand et al. (1999), denotes that the household (a) cannot meet its material needs, (b) regularly reverts back on its debts, and (c) has had to make cuts to regular expenses in an effort to live within resources available, as demonstrated in the economic hardship framework below (figure 4.3)

Figure 4.3. Economic Hardship model



Rand et al. (1999)

As was previously stated, when economic situations deteriorate to the level that parents see this level of financial deterioration, they will experience depression, demoralization, and pessimism, as well as a general decrease in their mental stability (see Figure 4.3 above). The primary mechanism by which financial issues would affect marital and parental actions, which would then translate to either favorable or negative developmental effects for children, is likely to be a depressed mood.

4.5.1. Assumptions of the Economic Hardship Theory

According to the economic hardship model, interparental interactions have an impact on children's results because of poverty and other financial strains. The mental health of parents is impacted by poverty or economic hardship, which can lead to parental conflict and parenting challenges. The

results and prospects for the child's future are thus negatively impacted by these problems, which also include difficulties with academic performance and physical health, problems with interpersonal and social relationships, externalizing and internalizing problems, and other problems. Single parenting is increasingly seen in the family system as the primary cause of, or a precursor to, poor parenting and poor outcomes for the children. Thus, except if the interparental relationship is also addressed, parenting interventions in families with high levels of single parenting or upbringing as a result of single-parent households are unlikely to be successful (Conger et al, 2002).

Economic hardship raises the chance of behavioral issues, mental illnesses and physical health issues, which is why it is a serious public health concern (Sareen, et al., 2011). As noted further by Conger (et al., 2010), children who grow up in low-income families are in fact more likely to experience a variety of adjustment problems. By extension, financial stress fuels interpersonal tension, which is linked to parental conflict. These observable interactions are connected to hostile and coercive parenting styles. The resulting behavioral issues that children experience are linked to the types of observable parenting behaviors. For authorities and government stakeholders and mental health professionals who work with families experiencing economic hardship, having an understanding of the long-term effects of economic stress on family relationships and child development might be helpful.

4.5.2. Economic and Financial Challenges of women

The economic hardship model is beneficial for describing the financial difficulties that Nigerian women face, particularly from the perspective of the gender gap, which is a significant problem because it mostly affects women in the nation. Out of 206.13 million inhabitants, Nigeria has an estimated 101.67 million females (Statista, 2021). About 26.25 percent of this population of women reside in rural areas, where they make up between 60 and 79 percent of the labor force (Trading Economics, 2021). In spite of the fact that financial inclusion is rising for both men and women, this country has a bigger gender gap than the majority of other nations. Comparable African nations, however, show a shrinking gender gap, including Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Nigeria has a significant gender gap since it has the most people living in severe poverty anywhere in the globe (Nwaka et al., 2020). Given that women frequently experience

hardship and financial issues, this has repercussions for them. Financial exclusion affects 36% of women and 24% of men, which is not surprising (Taiwo et al., 2021). Nigeria is below its peers in terms of the relative gender gap linked to financial inclusion. Women's exclusion has decreased since 2012, but the gender gap has widened, showing that men's inclusion has advanced more quickly than women.

Recent research has supported the assumptions and results of the economic hardship theory put forward by Davis & Havighurst (1946) and further developed by Sears, Maccoby, & Levin (1957). They contribute to the problems surrounding the economic and financial hardships that women deal with on a daily basis. The difficulties of property rights and asset control were mentioned by Agarwal (2003). There are various barriers faced when applying for loans or accessing credit from financial institutions because of the stringent legal limitations and cultural norms that usually prevent women from having control over and access to other property that could be used as collateral. This is functional because of the male-dominated nature of the society we currently reside in, and even with modernization and awareness as a result of education and awakening, cultural values are still held in high regard.

Just like Economic Hardship Theory's supposition that single mothers are faced with economic hardship because of the demands at the home front, they mainly lack access to sufficient capital to run their desired venture, and with the fact that banks are to provide succor through loans, Fletschner (2009) reported there is a biased attitude exhibited towards single mothers because they are seen as economically unattractive or incapable of repaying such loans. Similarly, Halkias et al. (2011) found a lack of start up capital or collateral as a challenge for single mothers in Nigeria.

The availability of security and asset-based lending typically restricts borrowers' access to capital. For obvious reasons, this is considerably more serious for women. Findings from Pablo et al. (2021) showed that men are two times more likely to secure finance or credit facilities when compared to their women counterparts. A recent World Bank report claims that capital severely restricts the range of activities that women can engage in rather than productivity. As a result, the majority of these women must rely primarily on their own resources and retained earnings, with only about 1% receiving capital from the formal system of finance. This has significant

implications for the Nigerian economy. The paper provides evidence that financial institutions, particularly banks, have not adequately supported women's economic and financial conditions.

4.5.3. Economic Hardship and Reproductive Challenges

Numerous economic factors have been linked to fertility in a vast and extensive body of literature like (Julia et al., 2021; Isabella et al., 2021; Konstantinos et al., 2021; Jona et al., 2020; Luca et al., 2020). According to standard economic theory, if children are a valuable commodity, fertility should rise with family income in terms of the current financial situation (Gammage, Shareena and Yana, 2020). It is no longer required to have many children to ensure that a few survive to adulthood because child mortality rates have significantly decreased. Furthermore, despite the fact that they may still be valued, children no longer contribute to the family's income by being employed in the fields or industries. They are not a resource in the economy. They actually pose a significant liability. Larger wages may therefore be linked to decreased fertility rates, especially for families in the middle- and upper-class groups who have high aspirations for their children (Aaronson, et al.; 2017; Muchomba, et al., 2019).

Why teenagers have children is a significant concern for their future financial situation given that early childbearing is linked to later life with limited income. Teenagers may start having children early because they are beginning to comprehend what experts are now confirming, which is that the link is likely not totally causal. Even if she waits to have children, a woman may face dire financial circumstances in the future because teens who become pregnant are more highly likely than those who do not to come from low-income families, and this is likely the main factor in why many teens who start having children in their teens end up being poor as adult women (Connelly et al., 2018; Finlay, 2019). It's debatable how much a teenage birth contributes independently to a girl's financial situation as an adult, although it's presumably less than her family's original financial situation (Julia et al., 2021). Teenagers might not want to postpone having children just because there is a slim chance that their financial situation will improve if they wait. This may help to explain why programs that encourage alternatives to early parenting and teach work skills to mothers-to-be rarely have a lasting effect on subsequent fertility. Both of these initiatives aim to reduce the number of first conceptions among teens (Babiarz, et al., 2017). Short-term interventions, even ones that focus on enhancing adolescents' future economic status,

may not be able to counteract the influences of impoverished communities, substandard schools, and broken families—all of which are partly a result of economic trends.

4.5.4. Rational Adaptation Theory – An Extension of the Economic Hardship Theory

The rational adaptation theory identifies a few factors that influence individual choices and strategies for aggregating social behavior that is dependent on individual actors' choices (Karin et al., 2021). The idea of rationality is frequently applied to economic models, where people are also known as homo-economicus, which denotes their rationality and self-interest (Robinson et al., 2020). Finding the optimal means to achieve certain aims is generally what rational choice usually emphasizes. More specifically, when faced with a decision-making scenario, an actor weighs a limited number of options, assigns consequences to them, ranks these consequences in terms of relevance and value, and selects the best option out of those that are available. The actor is presumed to be aware of all options, and she chooses the optimal course of action or method based on predictions for the future effects or results of her decisions (Chater, 2015).

This theory further asserts that an actor or collective agents in a decision scenario specifies or recognizes various acts or actions, or her repertoire of possibilities in the decision situation, that are recognized to be indisputably possible (permitted) and possible. The actor is presumed to be aware of all the effects of her various acts, and she assesses the effects resulting from each alternative as well as the potential consequences or payoffs of the possibilities.

In conclusion, rational adaptation is driven by an individual's (self-)interest that is focused on the consequence as she experiences or interprets them (Burns and Hall, 2012). The actor evaluates or compares the costs and advantages of different acts (i.e., their effects or results), focusing entirely on the effects. For example, Amoateng et al. (2007) noted that transactional sex is used with older males to cope with poverty. Some adopt this rational adaptation by either engaging in sexual activity without the desire of getting pregnant, and this is solely aimed at paying their bills and school fees (Ellis, et al. 2013); while others make use of pregnancy as a rational adaptation strategy. This will help them get married and increase their chances of getting pregnant (Richter, 2007). Recent research has revealed that these females can get married related to pregnancy,

despite studies showing that the likelihood of getting married can be decreased because of giving birth outside of marriage (Grant, 2018; Bumpass et al., 2019).

4.5.5. Applications of economic hardship theory to single parenting

The economic hardship theory examines the behavioural deficiencies in children which can be traced to the economic hardship that their mothers face. The theory made some assumptions regarding the life chances of children under partnered and single parent mothers. Firstly, children from two parent family are better off when compared to single parenthood, because couples can pool resources together to run the affairs of the home (Amoateng, et al. (2007). When men are employed, they often provide more for the family income. Additionally, this has effects on the social and cognitive growth of their children (Richter, 2007). On the other hand, families with a single mother have limited networks because of insufficient funds to run the affairs of the home. They are more prone than individuals with sufficient resources to leave school early. This reduces the opportunities available to get better jobs, which usually translates to living better lives, and also leads to intergenerational poverty (Panday, et al, 2009).

The economic hardship theory further states that children from single parent families undergo some financial and economic challenges (Posel, et al., 2006). By implication, they are faced with risky sexual behaviour (Hawkins, 2007) because of the need to survive. This leads them to premarital sex, and the result is unwanted pregnancies or the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases. This may also be a result of these kids having to take on adult roles at a young age. They are not attending school because their mothers do not have the necessary resources to do this. It has been found that enrolment in school prevents early pregnancy among adolescents because this will make young women less sexually active. They are therefore less inclined to begin having children at a young age (Hill et al, 2011). When compared to people who are not in school, they would also use contraceptives more frequently (Grant and Hallman, 2008).

4.6. Social Exchange Theory

George Homans, an American sociologist, wrote a paper titled "Social Behavior as Exchange" in 1958, which is when social exchange theory first emerged. Homans (1958) came up with a theory

that combines behaviorism and fundamental economics. Homans first thought that understanding any civilization or organization as a social system was the most effective approach to do so. Homans investigated small groupings. Rather than the social systems that people established, it was first essential to examine an individual's actions in order to comprehend that social system. Homans started studying small groups to determine the advantages and disadvantages that each group member received from the unit and other participants. He put together a framework for the interactions, emotions, and actions that constitute social behavior.

All of these elements needed to be considered in respect to a group's internal and external systems. In his first book, he revealed the results of a study he conducted using this paradigm on different groups. Later, Homans started to go into more detail on the most fundamental social interactions, or basic social behavior, which involves at least two people engaging with one of them either praising or penalizing the other's behavior. Homans' adoption of behavioral psychology theories concerning human behavior and fundamental economic ideas can be seen in this concept.

The main ideas presented by Homans were expanded upon by additional research. According to the social exchange theory, a cost-benefit analysis results in the development of a relationship between two people. In other words, it's a statistic created to assess someone's level of dedication to a personal connection. Evidence from the assessment of the benefits and drawbacks of a connection may be used to establish whether someone is investing excessive effort in their connection. After Homans, Blau (1964) also contributed to the social exchange theory. His approach was centered on ideas like preferences, interests, indifference curves, supply and demand rather than behaviorism. Modernized versions of the social exchange theory emphasize power relations and draw inspiration from both men. The theory of social exchange is not a single, established theory because of this variety. Instead, each theorist applies a different set of notions and presumptions to their specific application.

Theoretically, one would weigh the advantages of a social interaction against any potential negatives (positive outcomes). Similar to this, Karen and Kahn (2021) divided these expenses and benefits into two categories: immaterial (intangible), such as effort, social acceptance, love, pride, shame, respect, opportunity, and power, and material (tangible), such as with wealth, time, or a service. This suggests that everyone wants to get more out of a relationship or an encounter than

they provide. When the expenses of a relationship surpass the advantages, people end their relationships. However, people remain in relationships when they provide enough advantages. What is or is not enough is dependent on a number of variables, including a person's hopes and comparison to other prospective interactions and partnerships. Another aspect of social exchange theory is people's expectations of equity in exchange (Saad et al., 2020). People become outraged when they do not even get paid equally for the identical expenses they expended.

To a greater extent, social exchange accommodates love and kindness among others. Single mothers are not exempted from these acts. In the same vein, the social exchange theory is distinctive in that it uses logic and mathematics, not just emotional measurements, to assess the balance in relationships, as opposed to other theories that focus on emotional metrics (Duan et al., 2021). The idea can be used to evaluate romantic relationships as well as to assess the balance of choices made during the marriage, such as single parenting.

Similar to this, Cook et al. (2021) assert that social exchange theory holds that society is made up of constant interactions between people who want to maximize benefits while reducing costs. Cost, Benefit, Outcome, Close connection, Satisfaction, and Dependence are the fundamental ideas covered. Figure 4.4 below shows the mathematical representation of the model.

Figure 4.4. Cost–Benefit Model of Social Exchange Theory



Source: Adapted from the study (Owolabi, 2022)

Gains in material or financial terms, social standing, and mental comforts are examples of benefits. Cost typically consists of missed opportunities, money or sacrifices in terms of time. The contrast between rewards and costs is known as the outcome. A mechanism of structured exchange between parties is how social psychology and sociology explain societal change and stability. According to this theory, every (human) relationship is created through the application of subjective cost-benefit analysis and the evaluation of different options. People are logical beings capable of making wise decisions once the benefits and drawbacks of their decisions are understood. Just as Saad et al. (2020) also added, options available are weighed as best as possible to maximize

rewards and minimize losses. Therefore, pros and cons are constantly weighed, to maximise the outcomes of whatever choices that will be made. In consistency with Karena and Hahn (2021), sometimes these decisions are gotten right and in other times bad choices are made.

4.6.1. Assumptions of Social Exchange Theory

The key assumptions that underlie the premises of social exchange theory concerning human nature and personal relationships include the following. First, it is assumed that people choose rewards over penalties (Cook et al., 2018). By implication, someone who starts a conversation with the goal of making the most money possible with the fewest resources is motivated by "What's in it for me?" As a result, before taking action, people usually weigh the benefits and drawbacks.

Social interactions entail social exchanges of value in a different level (Karen and Hahn, 2021). Because rational humans seek out social interactions where the benefits outweigh the costs, people are driven to keep some worth (reward) when they must give something else up (cost). People anticipate being similarly rewarded when they experience the same costs (Lawler and Thye, 2006); in addition, rewards and costs can be material or immaterial commodities (equity of exchange). As a result, people break up with relationships when they think the downsides outweigh the upsides. Cook and Rice (2003) claim that when comparing rewards to expenses, people make comparisons to their expectations, prior encounters, or alternatives.

4.6.2. Application of Social Exchange theory to Single parenting

The social exchange theory holds that as people communicate over time, they develop a need to return the other person's support and aid, which is known as the reciprocity norm (Blau, 1983). For instance, if someone helps a person, he or she will feel obligated to repay the favor at a later date by providing aid of a comparable value. If the reciprocity rule is followed, a trustworthy and enduring relationship develops (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In this situation, there will be a duty to repay the government if it helps single parents by providing for their children's fundamental necessities (healthcare, education, and shelter) (Give back to society what you have been given). The responsibility to raise their children in a way that will benefit society and to raise a generation of law-abiding, crime-free citizens is therefore paramount in their plans.

Consequently, there will be reduction in the cycle of fatherlessness or separation in marriage (single parenting except in cases of death) and criminality. This will also bring about desired stability in marriage and family structure. Therefore, the society will be more at peace with individuals trying to see how they can benefit (give back) the government rather than what the government can give to them especially in a society like Nigeria where everything seems to be in the hands of the government.

4.6.3. Criticism of Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory has a number of drawbacks or shortcomings. The theory can appear overly straightforward. Relationships can be complicated in terms of what people gain from them and what they cost them (Cook and Rice, 2003). Although the theory assists in providing a comprehensive view of a connection, there are still a great number of other aspects to take into account before deciding whether to keep the connection going or end it.

Furthermore, the theory says nothing about altruism or selflessness. People occasionally behave in a manner that benefits another at tremendous personal expense without anticipating receiving anything in return in the future. The theory does not take into consideration those who do not look for partnerships that will benefit them most or who stay in relationships where they will gain less than they would lose. Additionally, according to the social exchange theory, people act in particular ways to build intimacy and trust (Homans, 1961). Although this presumption mostly applies to romantic partnerships, not all relationships have similar objectives. When two individuals are not interested in developing trust and closeness, it raises questions about how they weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the interaction or their objectives. Additionally, according to Cook and Rice (2003), connections progress, retreat, skip phases or repeat specific stages, contrary to the social exchange theory's assumption that they do. The intersectional feminist viewpoints and how they were used in this study were covered in the part that follows.

4.7. Intersectional Feminism

In her 1989 paper "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," Kimberley Crenshaw introduced the theoretical paradigm known as "intersectional feminism" (Downing, 2016). A qualitative analytical framework known as "intersectionality" was created in the late twentieth

century to describe how interconnected systems of power influence society's most marginalized people (Cooper, 2016). A type of feminism known as intersectional feminism upholds the rights and liberation of all women while acknowledging their individual diversity, including those based on radicalization, sexual orientation, economic standing, nationality, religion, and language. By universalizing the concerns of fairly insignificant women, intersectional feminism pays focus on the ways in which concerns made in the name of women as a class might serve to suppress or marginalize some women.

By allowing for the privilege, Crenshaw used the term intersectionality to describe how racial, economic class, sexuality, and other systems interact to impact the perspectives of many people (Crenshaw, 1991). She also employed it to highlight the negative effects of associated institutions that encourage the sociopolitical, organizational, and representational components of violence against minorities in the workplace and in general society. In both politics and academia, Crenshaw demonstrated how the subtleties of utilizing power based on factors such as gender, racism, and other factors are crucial to intersectionality (Cho et al, 2013).

The theory advanced and saw the way different aspects of the social world collectively operate to explain female roles in the society (Collins, 2015; Jibrin, 2015; Cooper, 2016). It began by explaining how women are subjugated and oppressed in the society. However, in recent times, it has been amplified to consist of several aspects of social identities like sexuality, race, religion and gender among others (Fixmer-Oraiz, 2015; Walker, 2017). These identities and aspects according to Crenshaw (1989) combine to create variety of privilege (advantage) or discrimination (disadvantage). This was supported by Walker (2017) who borrowed from the concept of intersectionality to explain the advantages or disadvantages that are experienced by females as a result of the combination of these factors.

4.7.1. Assumptions of intersectional Feminism

Utilizing an intersectional lens also involves taking into account the historical context of a problem (Brah and Phoenix, 2013). Long histories of violence and institutional prejudice have created grave imbalances that affect some people right away. These inequalities, which deprive people of their

rights and fair opportunities, including racism, sexism, caste systems, and poverty, intersect with one another and have enduring impacts. The links between all movements for justice and freedom are revealed by intersectional feminism, despite the initial appearance that unequal environmental restrictions and prejudice based on sexual orientation are unrelated. It shows that fighting for equality requires eradicating all forms of oppression as well as ending gender disparities. It offers a framework for the growth of powerful, inclusive movements that simultaneously combat overlapping forms of prejudice.

4.7.2. Application of intersectional feminism to single parenting

Although feminism promotes the privileges and equality of women (Collins, 2015), intersectional feminism seeks to understand how women's overlapping identities have a significant impact on how they are perceived in society (Brah, 2004; Crenshaw, 1989; Mann, 2005), particularly from the perspective of the family and how they express their roles. In addition to assuming that identity is dynamic and multifaceted, intersectionality also assumes that gender does not entirely explain the lived realities of women. The deconstruction of women's social positioning as a result of intersectionality demonstrates how these relationships of power are played out and expressed in general (Brah and Phoenix 2004). However, the theory demonstrates that single parenting is not driven by a single element or variable but rather by intersecting and overlapping variables that explain why they adhere to such a family structure. Therefore, this study demonstrates how a variety of factors, including age, family background, education, financial status, and other advantages, can affect single parenting.

By implication, maintaining women as a social grouping does not have to be sacrificed in order to problematize women's identities and experiences inside the marriage and family structure. Post-structural theorists concur that sustaining identity categories is essential. Despite disputing the very nature of gender, they acknowledge that it is problematic to theorize without resorting to specific identifying categories. To think about how women's specific social places, affect their daily struggles, one need not agree on the extent to which gender is an intrinsic attribute. Since liberal and perspective feminists have been criticized for overcomplicating how women understand work and family life, intersectionality is favorable to them. Additionally, it gives post-

structural theorists a chance to demonstrate how their theoretical insights may be applied to enhance the lives of women while still honoring their views of how identity is created.

Women in Africa are subjected to a variety of sociocultural and economic situations that provide the ground rules for their behavior (McCall, 2005). These could be shown in their responsibilities as mothers, wives, breadwinners, and childcare providers. The culmination of these would subject them to family upbringing, divorce, and sexual and domestic abuse, all of which would result in what is referred to as "single parenting." Additionally, intersectionality emphasizes how experience is greatly influenced by the historical and cultural environment in which single mothers are present, in addition to how the intersection of social categories generates lived experiences of their choice of family patterns. This needs to be kept in mind in order to make it easier to design policies that can effectively serve the various demands of women.

4.7.3. Criticisms of intersectional feminism

Important objections of the application of intersectional feminism include the framework's propensity to reduce persons to specific demographic characteristics and its use to subvert other feminisms (Tomilinson, 2013; Downing, 2018). The framework has come under fire for being vague and lacking specific goals. The reliance on subjective impressions, according to critics, can lead to contradictions and make it challenging to identify typical origins of oppression because it is based on viewpoint theory.

It can be difficult to derive testable hypotheses from intersectionality theory; post-intersectional critics of intersectionality theory accuse its proponents of failing to fully explain their causal methodology and of making inaccurate predictions regarding the condition of some minority groups (Bright et al., 2015). Intersectional feminism, according to Davis (2008), is unclear and open-ended, and because it lacks a precise definition or even guidelines, it can be used in almost any setting of inquiry (Davis, 2008). Since it focuses too heavily on group identities, intersectionality, according to Downing (2018), tends to miss the idea that people are beings and not just part of a class. Ignoring this could result in intersectionality leading to oversimplified analyses and false assumptions about how someone's values might be expressed.

4.8. Conclusion

The number of single parents is rapidly increasing, making them even more prevalent than the so-called "nuclear family." Although single parenting is on the rise, it refers to the kind of family structure where the children and one parent live together. The term "single parent" in this context refers to a parent who has exclusive custody of the children in a single-parent family and who did not remarry after getting divorced, widowed, or never married. After finding various shortcomings in the application of theories from earlier studies, this chapter primarily focused on the theoretical framework used in this study, which is generally constructed on the micro-analytical framework. Hence, symbolic interactionism, economic hardship theory, social exchange theory and the interactional feminism are used for the study. The point of convergence for these theories is based on the idea that unmarried single mothers who form the unit of analysis for this study give meanings to themselves, others and the world around them in symbolic and material forms. This is done in the face of economic hardships they face in being single parents, and within the limits of exchange theory they negotiate the existence of themselves and their families. Their identities are defined in terms of intersectional contexts including s being mothers, caretakers, wage earners, employees, and even assuming the role of home head.

CHAPTER FIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter's main objective is to outline the methodological approach used for this investigation. Discussions cover topics including the demographic and setting of the study, data collecting and analysis, data sources and research tools, and study design and setting. The study's primary objective was to investigate the socio-economic factors that influence single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. The previous chapters have shown how the family is the backbone of society, and it is expected to be functional not only in procreation but also in the course of socialising members according to the demands and core values of the society. Ideally, these roles are expected to be carried out by the father and mother. But due to factors including family background, age, education, and perceived economic benefits, the phenomenon of single-parent families has suddenly increased in recent years.

The most recent chapter (chapter 4) looked at the theoretical framework from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, which contends that society is a continuing activity of many interactions that are based on symbolic context; as a result, the marital environment in which females find themselves (for instance, as single parents) essentially informs what structure is seen as an ideal that they would embrace. This was captured in the research objective that attempts to investigate the variable relating to family background. In like manner, the social exchange theory was being used to explain the ongoing nature of society: there are a series of exchanges which occur during these interactions. Perceived economic benefits spoke to this, as the adoption of single parenting is a function of the rewards and benefits accrued to this. The intersectional and economic hardship theories were also explored. The former was based on the fact that, there are multivariate levels by which single parenting could be analysed, not just tailored towards a particular variable; while the latter was instructive in examining how the economic hardship and deficiencies of single women in providing for their children translate into some deviant behaviour in these children.

In order to better comprehend single parenting, experiments and analyses of certain details have been conducted using these theories, among others. The theory guides the selection of the relevant

variables, the selection of the variables to be controlled, and the selection of the variables to be measured (Pearson, 1984). Consequently, it offers a more effective framework for structuring numerous additional ideas with a high level of predictive variable (Asnat, 2021). Against this backdrop, this study sought to examine the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Explore the role of the family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
2. Examine the influence of age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
3. Determine the role of education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
4. Identify the influence of perceived economic benefits on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
5. Determine methodological approaches or paradigms used to study single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

5.2. Methodological approaches or paradigms in previous single parenting studies

Earlier studies have shown a number of methodological approaches in empirically studying issues that border on single parenting. Asnat (2021) used qualitative phenomenology to examine the benefits and drawbacks that 20 single mothers who choose to stay single experienced. The method is a type of qualitative design that examines people's actual experiences of the world. Its findings show that the problems experienced by women who decide to become single mothers are the same as those faced by single women for other motives. In their study titled "Predictors of singlehood: a retrospective perspective by older single women in Lagos," Ntoimo and Isiugo-Abanihe (2014) employed the qualitative technique. The results indicate that the desire for financial independence and economic empowerment, personal mate preferences, the influence of other women's marital experiences, cultural practices and beliefs, factors related to the family background, and exposure to higher education were the primary factors that contribute to singlehood among them. The traditional Nigerian nuptiality pattern of earlier and general marriage is in danger due to the rising number of single women, and this trend may become one of the key factors in the demographic change in Lagos in the twenty-first century. Such a pattern has a wide range of micro and macro consequences, making it an important area for study.

Through a manual thematic analysis, a qualitative study by Hasani et al., (2021) which examines the difficulties faced by working single mothers with at least one kid, identified experiences of conflict, stereotyping, weariness, fluctuating work schedules and prospects for career advancement. This qualitative method used showed some form of strengths and benefits which can be adopted across future studies. For example, it made provision for the deficiencies in studying human behaviour, therefore making it possible to study respondents in their immediate environment. In the course of this, the researchers took cues from non-verbal responses which also form part of the findings for the study. In addition, the qualitative study also enables the researcher to probe deeply into the lives and experiences of single mothers. Still, there are also shortcomings to such an approach, in that it takes up more time than a quantitative study, since it involves field work, transcribing and translating (in the case of language differences) and identifying themes.

Odimegwu et al. (2017) used the survey and quantitative research method to collect data from 5586 women in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Lesotho, aged 15 to 49, for their study on the prevalence and correlates of single parenthood in Southern Africa. In testing the key variables, it found that age was highly significant as a correlate of single parenting among the three study locations. However, education was not significant since the higher the level of education among women in this region, the more likely she would become a single mother. This was not the case for Nigeria, in that, the inability of getting in-depth experience of these single mothers created a gap in study, hence, the adoption of a mixed research method for this study in order to explore the unique contextual factors that contribute to the spike in the cases of single mothers who choose not to get married.

Parul (2015) in his work titled 'Single Parenting: An urban Indian experience', employed the quantitative technique, and supplemented it with secondary data sources in the study of 200 women in India. Many have personality issues, he discovered. The majority of women separated during the initial three years of their marriage, and frequently for causes beyond their control, such as the husband's disability, the marriage occurring without the husband's agreement, and the wife's in-laws tormenting her, even though divorce is frowned upon. The women's own intentions to separate or divorce also seemed to have a positive relationship with schooling.

In order to evaluate the quality of sibling relationships and age spacing in single-parent households in relationships to two-parent households, Mari (2017) also used a quantitative approach with 124 adult mothers who had at least two children. This quantitative study evaluated four research topics using a chi-square test of independence and two-factor multivariate analysis of variance. It was discovered that the kind of household had an impact on sibling rivalry, with 1-parent families reporting less fierce competition than 2-parent households. The findings also demonstrated that neither single-parent nor two-parent households preferred any particular technique for resolving sibling disputes. The gap identified here was that, the reasons for these disputes were not extensively articulated. Hence, this study, with the combination of the qualitative and quantitative research methods, would unravel the reasons behind certain actions that single mothers take in the course of their single parent lives.

In a study on single parenting and the emotional growth of primary school students conducted by Nigerian primary school teachers using the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Lateef (2019) discovered that poor self-esteem was the factor that had the greatest impact on the emotional growth of single parent primary school students. In order to lessen the detrimental effects of single parenting, it was advised that counselors work in tandem with educators and parents. As a follow up, this study aimed at, not only the emotional growth of single parent primary school students, but also, how their social growth and development drive them to become single mothers.

It is crucial to take into account the cultural, societal, and economic aspects of Nigeria that affect single parenting when applying these findings to the country's circumstances. The different cultural customs and beliefs of Nigeria may have an effect on the choices and experiences of single mothers. Women's decisions to become single mothers can also be significantly influenced by economic issues, such as the desire for financial independence. The options and perspectives available to single mothers in Nigeria may change depending on their educational background and exposure to higher education.

The aforementioned studies clearly show that both qualitative and quantitative research techniques have been used to study single parenting in Nigeria. While quantitative methods have made it possible to examine prevalence, correlates, and statistical linkages, qualitative approaches have

given detailed insights into the experiences, motives, and difficulties experienced by single mothers. Combining these methods enables academics to develop a more thorough understanding of the complex facets of single parenting in Nigeria and to guide interventions and policies that support single mothers and their kids

Quantitative methods used by such studies have enabled these researchers to examine research problems and questions by deductively forming hypotheses that were also derived from theories. This method provides steps that are standardised in order to reduce bias in the course of collecting data. This makes results reliable and valid. Aside from this, quantitative studies are effective in conducting studies that involve numbers, as it helps in objectively testing relationship that exist between two or more variables. However, the application of quantitative studies in previous studies have shown some elements of weakness, mainly from the point of view of the measuring phenomenon which is human behaviour. For instance, measuring single parenting through quantitative method in these studies is not done in a natural setting, which makes it trickier. This method is also vulnerable to errors, such as making mistakes in measurements and sampling techniques. In order to overcome these weaknesses, this study has been complimented with a qualitative research method, which would be done in a natural setting. Here, there will be a one on one interaction with single mothers. In the course of this interview, the researcher identified body languages and unspoken questions that shed insights to the study.

5.3. Study Design

This study combined quantitative and qualitative methods using a non-experimental research design; and basically, the paradigm used was exploratory. The primary objective of this is validation and to identify areas, such as an individual's attitude and behavior, that the quantitative approach will not be able to identify (Creswell and Plano, 2011). A greater comprehension of the experiences and lives of single mothers is also feasible. For the quantitative technique, a questionnaire was used, whilst for the qualitative research, Key Informant Interview (KII) was employed to gather and delve into the opinions, convictions, and experiences of the participants.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in travel and gathering restrictions, an online survey was used for both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Apart from the reduction of risk through physical contacts that the researcher would have been exposed to, it would ease data gathering and

would automate data collection, input and handling (Mae-Sincero, 2008). Findings have also shown that it increases overall response rates because it connects the researcher to a wide range of respondents (DeFranzo, 2010; Wright, 2017). As a result of these, Facebook was selected for the study, because it is a platform that drives engagement and where wider respondents can be reached. It also allowed the researcher to capture a specific target audience regardless of age, gender and socio-economic class variables, among others (Yuval, 2020).

The researcher identified a group of women on Facebook called Nigerian Single Parent Lounge (NSPL). It is a community of single mothers alone with over ten thousand active members. This group is made up of divorcees, 'baby mamas', and widows. They discuss issues regarding women folk in the social world, how well they can be protected and how their rights can be safeguarded. The specific characteristics that the researcher was looking for were single mothers that were over 18 years old, who have never been married, but have at least one child (this excludes women who are divorced or separated). After contacting the group administrator about the objectives and scope of the study, the researcher was granted permission to conduct the study, with the approval of the group members (single mothers) on Facebook. A gatekeeper approval letter was issued to this effect. This was structured in such a way that the gatekeeper added the researcher to the Facebook group where he had direct access to members. In essence, Facebook was used to recruit and select the respondents for the study, and the researcher was responsible for this.

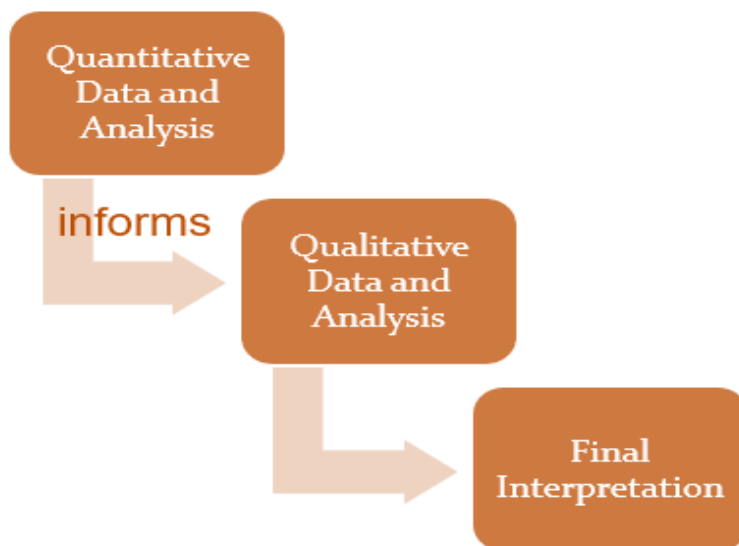
Participants were required to take part in the study for the duration of the data collection process, just in case they needed to provide additional information regarding their experiences. Therefore, they were requested to consider providing follow-up information.

5.3.1. Mixed research method

Having established the strength and weaknesses of various methods explored in previous studies, this study was positioned to integrate both quantitative and qualitative research methods; hence, a mixed method approach. A proposed method called the mixed method of research improves the systematic blending of qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study or investigation (Wisdom and Creswell, 2013). It is congruent with the approach used by Bower et al. (2013) since it combines the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine

a variety of viewpoints and determine how factors relate to one another. This method originated from the social sciences (Wisdom and Creswell, 2013), and has been expanded into other fields, including social work, medicine, and the natural sciences (Creswell, 2013). Essentially, the sequential mixed explanatory approach was used for this study. A quantitative analysis and data collecting come first in the sequential explanatory mixed technique. (Tegan, 2021; Creswell, 2013). Then the qualitative data collection and analysis would commence. It is mainly used when a researcher wants to use qualitative data to contextualise and explain findings from the quantitative study. This method was used for this study since qualitative findings could be validated by quantitative data.

Figure 5.1. Process of sequential explanatory mixed method



Source: Tegan (2021)

Though, the mixed method was associated with the problem of possible conflicting and differing results as well as workload on the part of the researcher, there were several reasons for the utilisation of mixed research methods which justifies its use in this study. Firstly, the case of generalisation (Tegan, 2021). A qualitative study has unique characteristics that prevent it from

being generalizable, due to the small sample size. The relative strength of "large N" counteracts the mixed research method's comparative weakness. It was also highlighted that contextualization enables the researcher to offer additional detail and context to the study results. According to an analogy used by Wisdom and Creswell (2013), it's like adding flesh to the bones of research analysis. The validity and reliability of the findings would also be strengthened by the use of a variety of techniques in the data gathering on the same topic. This would increase the credibility of the results.

A mixed method approach benefits from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research while minimizing their weaknesses. For example, this study was not just interested in collecting and collating numbers, but also, interested in examining both physical and emotional components of respondents, with a view to understanding how this answers some of the research questions. Moreover, the application allowed for the integration, which permits a systematic data utilisation that the application of the separate methods. The following table (3.1) below summarizes the methodological approaches and tools used for the study

Table 5.1 Summary of methodology

Research questions	Research instruments	Data collection	Data analysis
How does family background engender single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?	A Five-point Likert scaled questionnaire was used A Key informant interview guide Was used	Responses were collected and collated online through Google forms Online interviews through skype was used for the participants	Responses were converted and analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS); using univariate analysis Data was recorded via skype and the transcribed, coded and classified according to reflexive thematic analysis. This approach analysis responses and the sentence structure in order to make Inductions were made
What role does age play on single parenting among unmarried	A Five-point Likert scaled questionnaire was used	Responses were collected and collated online through Google forms	Responses were converted and analysed through the Statistical Package for

mothers in Nigeria?			Social Sciences (SPSS); using univariate analysis
	A Key informant interview guide was used	Online interviews through skype was used for all respondents	Data was recorded via skype and the transcribed, coded and classified according to reflexive thematic analysis. This approach analysis responses and the sentence structure in order to make inductions.
What role does education play on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?	A Five-point Likert scaled questionnaire was used	Responses were collected and collated online through Google forms	Responses were converted and analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS); using univariate analysis
	A Key informant interview guide was used	Online interviews through skype was used for the participants	Data was recorded via skype and the transcribed, coded and classified according to reflexive thematic analysis. This approach analysis responses and the sentence structure in order to make inductions.
How does perceived economic or other benefits contribute to single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?	A Five-point Likert scaled questionnaire was used	Responses were collected and collated online through Google forms	Responses were converted and analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS); using univariate analysis
	A Key informant interview guide was used	Online interviews through skype was used for all respondents	Data was recorded via skype and the transcribed, coded and classified according to reflexive thematic analysis. This approach analysis responses and the sentence structure in order to make inductions.

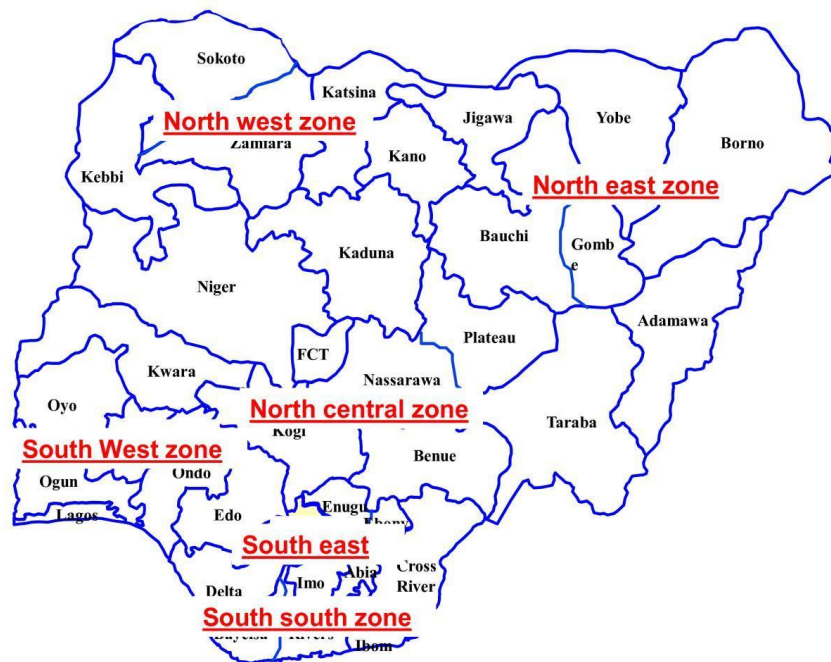
What are the Desk/literature review methodological approaches or paradigms used to explain single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?

Logical arguments were presented according to methodologies adopted in previous studies

5.4. Study Settings

The study location for this research was Nigeria, which is a federal republic having a population of approximately 210 million (Worldometer, 2021), of which the female population is 101 million, making it of substantial growth with an annual rate at 2.56% (World Data Atlas, 2021). As a result, an increase in female population would lead to a decline in marriage, as well as increase in births outside marriage.

Figure 5.2. Map of Nigeria



Source: <https://maps-nigeria.com/map-of-nigeria-showing-the-36-states>

Nigeria is made up of 36 states and its capital is a federal territory. In addition to the division by states, it is further divided into 774 local government areas for administrative ease. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa (World Population Review, 2021) and the seventh in the world (Bloomberg, 2019; United Nation, 2019), estimates predict a population of 400 million by year 2050 (Bloomberg, 2019). It has more than 250 ethnic groupings and more than 500 languages (Worldometer, 2021). From these, the Yoruba from the western region, the Hausa and Igbo from the northern and eastern regions respectively, form the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. With a Muslim and Christian population of 53.5% and 45.9% respectively (World Data Atlas, 2021), Nigeria is seen as a religiously diverse entity. With respect to its economy, it operates a mixed economic system (Bloomberg, 2019), and according to the World Bank (2020), it is abundant in natural resources with a well-developed financial system, and is the largest economy in Africa and 21st in terms of world GDP rankings.

The study population for this research involved women who have given birth to children but were never married. This formed the inclusion criteria. It excluded single mothers due to divorce or spousal death but targeted women with at least one child as a dependent. The United Nations (2012) defines a dependent child as one who lives with the parent and is below 18 years of age. In this study only women who are above 18 years will participate because, according to the Child Right Act of 2003, 18 years is the legal age in Nigeria that is permissible for marriage and to give birth to children (Girls Not Brides, 2013).

With Nigeria's population at 210 million (Worldometer, 2021), the Internet World Statistics (2021) reports that there are about 31,860,000 active Facebook users from the 154,301,195 internet users. Despite this increasing number, a share of Nigeria's population still lacks access to internet connection, especially in the rural areas. According to Statista (2021), the share of urban population to the overall population is 51.16%, making the rural areas lag behind in the use of the internet. This is one of the limitations of this study as it cannot capture those without internet or Facebook in the rural areas, making it selective in nature. In view of the fact that only individuals with access to Facebook took part in the study, the findings are not a real reflection of Nigeria. As a result, the results cannot be applied to the entire Nigerian population.

5.5. Data Source

5.5.1. Sampling

The quantitative study in this research used a probability sampling technique, while the qualitative study used a non-probability sampling technique. For the former, a multistage approach was adopted. This began by getting the population of members of Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge Facebook, which is 10, 000. The next step entailed calculating the sample size statistically by using Raosoft sample size calculator. (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>). With a margin of error of 5%, confidence level of 95%, 370 possible participants were derived. Among other techniques for determining sample size, Raosoft has provisions to determine margin error and confidence level which made it scientific in nature (Crilly et al, 2017). Although the Raosoft sample size calculator suggested 370 samples; to make provisions for non-respondents, as well as poorly completed questionnaires, the sample size was increased to 450, and this was selected across Nigeria using an online survey.

An advert was placed on the Facebook group, and members were allowed to voluntarily to register their interest directly to the researcher's contact as provided in the participants recruitment advert. This recruitment exercise would be carried out to identify potential participants who met the following eligibility criterion:

- i. They were unmarried mothers with at least one child
- ii. They resided in Nigeria
- iii. They were more than 18 years

Among the total population who willingly agreed to participate in the study, 450 responses were further chosen using the simple random selection technique. In doing this, potential participants were assigned numbers with the aid of the “**random number generator**” - <https://stattrek.com/statistics/random-number-generator.aspx#error>. Based on the specifications of the study, it generated a random number table, which showed the respondents that have been selected for the study.

As regards the qualitative study, a convenience sampling was employed. The first 30 respondents among those who participated in the quantitative study, and who showed interest for further interviews, were selected. At the end of the questionnaire, the researcher further asked through a compiled specific informed consent leaflet if they were willing to be interviewed, and their contact details requested: for example, Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom details were requested. The most preferred channel for interviews was sought from them.

Figure 5.3. Sample size determination using Roasoft Sample Size Calculator

Roasoft Sample size calculator

What margin of error can you accept?
5% is a common choice

What confidence level do you need?
Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%

What is the population size?
If you don't know, use 20000

What is the response distribution?
Leave this as 50%

Your recommended sample size is **370**

The margin of error is the amount of error that you can tolerate. If 90% of respondents answer *yes*, while 10% answer *no*, you may be able to tolerate a larger amount of error than if the respondents are split 50-50 or 45-55. Lower margin of error requires a larger sample size.

The confidence level is the amount of uncertainty you can tolerate. Suppose that you have 20 yes-no questions in your survey. With a confidence level of 95%, you would expect that for one of the questions (1 in 20), the percentage of people who answer *yes* would be more than the margin of error away from the true answer. The true answer is the percentage you would get if you exhaustively interviewed everyone. Higher confidence level requires a larger sample size.

How many people are there to choose your random sample from? The sample size doesn't change much for populations larger than 20,000.

For each question, what do you expect the results will be? If the sample is skewed highly one way or the other, the population probably is, too. If you don't know, use 50%, which gives the largest sample size. See below under **More information** if this is confusing.

This is the minimum recommended size of your survey. If you create a sample of this many people and get responses from everyone, you're more likely to get a correct answer than you would from a large sample where only a small percentage of the sample responds to your survey.

Online surveys with Vovici have completion rates of 66%!

Alternate scenarios

With a sample size of	100	200	300	With a confidence level of	90	95	99
Your margin of error would be	9.75%	6.86%	5.57%	Your sample size would need to be	264	370	623

Figure 5.3. Sample size determination using Roasoft Sample Size Calculator

Source: <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>

5.5.2. Research Instruments

With regard to this study's objectives, a questionnaire and the key informant interview guide were used in order to collect primary data. They are discussed below.

5.5.2.1. Questionnaires

This study employed a questionnaire to gather quantitative data on the relationship between socio-economic factors and single parenting. From the perspectives of family background, age, education, and perceived economic benefits, these socioeconomic determinants were investigated. According to Roopa and Rani (2012), a questionnaire is a research tool that consists of a sequence of questions for gathering crucial data from respondents. It enables a researcher to gather information that is relevant, in order to arrive at a definite result in the course of the research. The main trust of utilising the questionnaire is to build up a research data set through the process of asking questions that are standard in order to get the right answers. It is also a good approach in the collection of anonymous responses from target audience.

Questionnaires are of different type, beginning with *online questionnaire*, which involves a set of standardised questions distributed to respondents online. Several form builders are available online in today's world, and they assist researchers in making data collection process seamless. The use of online questionnaires save time during collection of data, it is also cost effective and also allows a researcher to collect responses from a large pool of respondents. However, the size of the sample being reached out to is a function of the availability of internet to complete the interview questions.

Telephone questionnaire is another form which can be used in data collection process through telephone conversation. This is done by placing a call to members of the survey sample, thereby, asking a set of questions that are relevant to the research. It best works when a small set of questions require quick responses. Apart from this, is the paper questionnaire which is the oldest form, as well as the most common type of questionnaire. In this, a set of predetermined five-point Likert scale questions are written on a paper while respondents are required to respond by selecting their preferred options with a writing material. Although this is an effective way of data collecting, it has financial implications particularly when respondents do not respond and the questionnaires have to mailed again. The type of data and questions that were asked in this instrument where the ones that specifically speak to the research objectives, in terms of family background, age, educational qualification and perceived economic benefits on single parenting. In addition, since the study was conducted during COVID-19 era, questions that captured the experiences of single mothers during this period were addressed.

Face-to-Face interview, which Lavrakas (2008) called a researcher aided questionnaire is another form of 'questionnaire' which allows a face-to-face interface with the study respondents. This facilitates a system where the researcher directly communicates with the study population based on already listed questions. Although, Ali et al. (2010) suggests that the success of this form of interview depends largely on the interviewer's skills, researchers could still build on its strength, not just because it aids in the development of verbal but also non-verbal cues across the interface, but also by the fact that it allows for the collection of more accurate data.

Several forms of questions were available in the use of questionnaires for this study. Firstly, the **open-ended question** where the research questions had no form of restriction to the responses from participants as supported in Escandon et al, (2008). It gave room for single mothers to express themselves, their opinions, and thoughts about what was being asked. This made Fredrick (2012) believe that the use of open-ended questions would make researchers see things differently and from the point of view of the respondents. While Gengler (2013) noted that open-ended questions enable a researcher in gathering detailed responses, Hughes and Haddaway (2014) also noted it has the possibility of infinite responses which supports variations in research data. On the flip side, it can be said that open-ended questions could be time consuming when responding to them, and this leads to respondents abandoning the research midway (Fredrick, 2012).

The study also employed **closed-ended questions**: where the research question limited the possible responses of single mothers. That is, they were required to choose options that closely resonates with their opinions on single parenting. In relation to this, several findings have shown that closed-ended questions are quick and easy to answer (Langhaug et al., 2011), they are also cheaper to collate and analyse since the options have already been made available by the researcher (Mensch et al., 2011). However, the major limitation is that it limits the information that respondents that provide during the data collection process as the responses are pre-set, which makes it useful for statistical purposes but lack the depth of more qualitative research. This research covers for that possibility by engaging with participants through the qualitative research described earlier.

In addition to the open and closed ended questions, there was the Likert Scale questions which sought to measure the perception and opinion of single mothers, as supported in Hughes and

Haddaway (2014). According to Mneimneh et al. (2020), points are used on Likert Scales to rate the respondents' various opinions. To gauge the level of acceptability of a question, a five-point scale was used. Likert scale inquiries have been shown to be simple to compile and evaluate, and they also give responses in more precise settings, enabling the researcher to ascertain how much people agreed with a topic.

The questionnaire was divided into six sections, and these were in tandem with the research objectives. The respondents' sociodemographic information was recorded in the first section, relating to the age, religion, ethnic group, highest educational level, income, employment status and number of children the respondents currently have. This was analysed using the univariate analysis, that is, the use of charts, frequency tables and simple percentages.

The second section captured family background on single parenting. The third related to age on single parenting, the fourth with education on single parenting, the fifth with perceived economic benefits on single parenting, the last one, however, concentrated on how the COVID-19 epidemic affected single mothers. The study was carried out during the COVID-19 era, which served as the basis for the last section's argument. To assist with this, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (UD) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

5.5.2.2. Key informant Interviews

This study also made use of key informant interviews to collect qualitative data in the course of the study. As supported by Paudel et al. (2013), this form of interview was utilised to collect information from single mothers who had first-hand information about issues on single parenting. The justification for this was based on the fact that, it was affordable and it enables the researcher to gain a bigger picture of the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Apart from this, the data gathered through this means came directly from the respondents who had adequate and relevant information on the discourse, making the information undiluted.

While employing the key informant interview, the *semi-structured interview* approach was used, because it used interview protocol which guided the researcher in the interview process. This was justified by Wan et al. (2013), who added that this type of interview builds a conversational approach; where a structure is built and maintained. This was why it enabled the researcher to probe further in order to get additional details on single parenting in Nigeria; and as a result, it made it flexible in relation to other forms of interviews. The semi structured approach also, allowed further probing of questions from single mothers. The interviews were done through the aid of the computer software of Skype, WhatsApp or Zoom, depending on the preference of the respondents. The interview guides were classified into six sections. This first part examined the socio-demographic profiles of respondents. This captured cases like age, ethnic and educational background, among others. The research objectives which cover family background, age, educational qualification and perceived economic benefits covered the second, third, fourth and fifth respectively. The sixth section was tailored towards issues on the experiences of single mothers during COVID-19 era.

The instrument used in this study consistently measured the same thing; hence it ensured *reliability*, because without it, the results would not be accurate. It also ensured that the data is valid, while at the same time, the tests truthfully measured what was expected to measured.

Trustworthiness is the foundation of effective research and decision-making. Hence, the researcher ensured that the results gathered from the study were accurate, factual and trustworthy. This was achieved through conducting a consistent and precise data analysis through recording and revealing the methods used in analysing the data gathered from the study. In addition, the researcher ensured probing of questions, reframing questions in different contexts, like paraphrasing them for easy comprehension, and also observed non-verbal communication cues. This was done to get consistent responses from the respondents.

The researcher came up with a research schedule and time frame to ensure the adequate *monitoring* of the research process. The scope of the study had been identified and a detailed plan mapped out to guide the researcher so as not to derail from the objectives of the study.

5.6. Data Analysis

Research is incomplete without analysing data gathered from the field. It deals with the process of sifting relevant data, and transforming the data with a view to identifying and extract valuable information that would aid decision making (Xa and Gong, 2015). For this exercise to be effective for this study, the suggestion for data analysis process by Johnson (2021) was utilised and this began with *data gathering and collection* from various sources. This was built on the nature of the research. *Data cleaning* follows, which involved sieving less important data which was not useful for the research. This was to ensure it is error free, and also, duplicated pieces of information are removed. *Data analysis* followed, and this involves a systematic process of understanding, interpreting and deriving conclusions. *Data interpretation* was also included, as it entailed communicating the data by words, tables and charts. This would also inform the conclusion and the recommendations to be made in the research. Due to the mixed research methodology used in this study, quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately, but all pointing toward the goals of the study that are described in Chapter 1.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze quantitative data (SPSS, version 27). This was used for both the Univariate and Bivariate analysis. Everitt and Skrondal (2010) define univariate analysis as the simplest approach in analysing data. “UNI” being derived from “ONE”, is a data that has only one variable: hence, it does not possess a cause-effect relationship (Kotz, 2006). Age, work status, the highest level of education, religion, ethnicity, and income, among other factors, would all be subject to univariate analysis for the purposes of this study. The goal of this was to summarize, characterize, and identify trends in the data. Univariate data can be described in a variety of ways, however, for the purpose of this study, frequency tables, pie charts, and bar charts were employed.

Responses to the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique for analyzing qualitative data, according to Caulfield (2021). In essence, it is frequently used to describe a group of works (for instance, transcripts from interviews). In this study, responses that were consistent with the research objectives were addressed after the data had been read through and transcribed. The objectives were structured in themes and analysed alongside the quantitative data. The six-phase framework of the theme analysis approach proposed by Braun and

Clarke (2012) was used, starting with familiarizing oneself with the data. To get comfortable with the complete body of information, this process started with reading and rereading the transcripts. It became crucial at this point to take notes on initial feelings. The step when initial codes were generated came next. This was done in order to meaningfully and systematically organize data. By this time, the coding had broken down a large amount of data into manageable units.

Thirdly, was the stage to *search for themes*. A theme is characterised by its significance, and in this stage, When the researcher reviewed the codes, some of them obviously made up a theme. For instance, the researcher had a number of codes related to an objective such family background on single parenting, as well as internal experience and socialization into single parenting and the decision of single parenting. By the time this process was complete, the codes had been grouped into thematic areas that appeared to have something to say specifically about this research question. The fourth stage was the examination of topics, which included developing, modifying, and finalizing the initial themes that were determined in Stage 3. The purpose of the fifth stage, which was based on the definition of themes—i.e., on the themes' final refinement—was to pinpoint the core of what each theme was about. Writing the report came last.

5.7. Ethical Considerations

Certain ethical considerations must be achieved in gathering research information and evidence. Principally, the researcher made efforts to gather data from respondents freely among members of the Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge. Efforts were also made to carry out the research in the best of academic traditions, specifically, considering North West University's research guide. The researcher also made certain that participants for the study participated voluntarily. The language of communication was English and the *consent* of participants were sought by the researcher before the research commenced, and they were not in any way forced to participate in the study. They were also allowed to opt out and leave the study in the middle of their participation. Prior to the data gathering process, the researcher was be added by the administrator to the Facebook group of Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge where the study was conducted. This was done with the support of the Lounge members. This enabled the researcher to have direct access to members of the group, to introduce and share the consent letter to prospective participants.

For the quantitative study, a participant recruitment advert was shared with members of the group, and prospective participants were given a period of seven (7) days to decide on whether to participate in the study. They were required to directly contact the researcher on WhatsApp to express their interest in participating in the study. For respondents who showed an interest, their details (specifically, their mobile numbers) were captured, and this was used to create a special TELEGRAM group for participants to communicate. This was done after adequate screening ensures that they have met the requirements for the study. The justification for this is to bring all respondents together under one platform, and also because Telegram messenger has the capacity to accommodate more people as compared to other media sites, like WhatsApp. After this, the BaSSREC (full word first, then the abbreviation but also explain what BaSSREC is) informed consent form was shared so that they could complete it, before data collection.

For the qualitative study, another participants' recruitment advert was placed among the respondents who participated in the quantitative study to indicate interest in the interview sessions. Hence, the first 30 respondents who voluntarily indicated interest were selected for the study. The BaSSREC informed consent form was also shared with them to complete before the commencement of the interview sessions.

With regards to *reimbursement*, participants were not rewarded or compensated for participating in the study. The study did not yield any monetary or economic gains because it was solely for academic purposes. Also, the study did not require participants to travel to another location because it was strictly conducted online. As a result of this, the researcher requested for the mobile number of respondents, which was credited with data of 500 naira for the online survey and interviews.

No personal information of the respondent was disclosed, whether deliberately or accidentally, to ensure a guarantee of *anonymity*. To achieve this, each questionnaire was labelled and coded as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc. This was to ensure that respondents' identities are not revealed or made public.

The information provided by the respondents were kept *confidential*, and no third party had access to their responses. Before the commencement of the interviews, the researcher assigned pseudonyms to each respondent, and these were used to capture the names and identity of respondents. In the course of the reporting, participants' names or any means of identity was not included in the final report. When the participants did not wish to disclose or discuss some delicate issues, the researcher ensured privacy by not probing further when conducting the interviews. As a result of this, neither was translator, transcriber nor a note taker used in the course of the interview.

At the end of the study, the final *data was documented* in form of a Ph.D. Thesis, which was submitted to North West University for examination. Additionally, the researcher anticipated to publish some of the data collected in this study in the form of book chapters, articles and peer reviewed journals. The general findings of this research were shared with the participants by e-mail or hard copy, this was basically for those who were interested in receiving the report. Live sessions could also be held on Facebook to discuss the findings of the study with the respondents on a planned date.

The researcher made sure that the information in both hard (print) and soft copy electronics were carefully locked away and encryption key in order to prevent a third party from having access to the file because the safety and storage of data are crucial in ethical concerns. The raw data is only accessible to the researcher and his supervisors, and will be destroyed 5 years after the study is finished and once all the data analysis has been completed.

5.8. Risk and Benefits

The study did not induce any risk. However, some potential risks arose in the course of the study. Firstly, COVID-19 pandemic posed potential risk to the researcher in the course of administering the questionnaire, or interviewing respondents. The mitigating strategy employed was to administer the questionnaires and interviews online in order to avoid being exposed to COVID-19.

Secondly, was the issue of possible tiredness and discomfort on the part of the respondents during interviews. However, the mitigating strategy employed was to allow short breaks to enable

respondents to cool off. The interview lasted for about twenty-five (25) minutes on average. The researcher developed the “**10-5-10 rule**” to guide the interview process. That is, the first ten (10) minutes was devoted to answering questions on the first three sections from the interview guide. Afterwards, there was a five (5) minutes short break. The last ten (10) minutes was devoted to questions from the last two sections on the interview guide.

Thirdly, due to the nature of the study, there is was the possibility of the risk of emotional discomfort among respondents in the course of responding to the questionnaire and interview questions. In a bid to mitigate this risk, a psychological therapist and counsellor was consulted to assist the researcher in offering some counselling services to single mothers who experienced emotional distress. The counsellor offered this service willingly and voluntarily, and a written proof of agreement was submitted to the NWU ethics committee. The counsellor also had to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Fourthly, the fear of lack of anonymity posed potential risk for the study, because the respondents had felt their privacy was not respected. This led to them declining to participate or to provide false information which can invalidate the data. However, a mitigating strategy was employed, and this was done by discussing how anonymous their identities would be at the onset. This was necessary for obtaining informed consent and building trust and confidence in the researcher.

The participants were made aware of both the dangers and the benefits of participating in the study. For instance, in the participants’ consent form, the researcher stated the direct and indirect benefits. The former being attached to the participants, that is, acknowledging them for the insights they provided in the course of the study on single parenting, while the latter was centred on how the study contributed to knowledge on the factors influencing single parenting. Participants were told they could decline to take part in the study if they did not agree with it, and their choices were honored.

5.9. Conclusion

This chapter's focus was to clearly explain the methods and procedures used to collect the primary data. The main goal of the study was to investigate the influence of socioeconomic factors on

single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. The following topics were covered: research design, data collection method, sampling, sampling techniques, sampling size, study population, and study area/location. The chapter goes on to talk more about the mixed technique of data collection. It appears from the literature that no study of single parenting has integrated quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Hence, this was selected based on the gap identified across earlier studies. The next chapter presents the findings of the study on socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

CHAPTER SIX
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS,
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON FAMILY BACKGROUND
AND AGE ON SINGLE PARENTING

6.1. Introduction

The focus of this investigation is to examine the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria, and this chapter is centered on the presentation of data as it deals with the socio-demographic characteristics of the participant. Data was gathered through the mixed method approach, that is, the utilization of both qualitative and quantitative research methods with unmarried single mothers spread across Nigeria, and attempts were made to address these research questions:

1. What role does family background play on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?
2. What role does age play on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?

On the one hand, the quantitative research method employed questionnaires, and the questions were conducted online, mainly for ease of accessibility by respondents and the need to ensure the safety of both the researcher and respondents in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) application was used to collect and transfer the data to where it was further cleaned (relevant respondents were captured) and 450 respondents were used out of several responses; and these were further presented using the univariate analysis. On the other hand, for the qualitative research method, key informant interviews were used, and the findings from these unmarried single mothers were presented in excerpts and analyzed accordingly. During the data gathering and presentation, the following themes were derived.

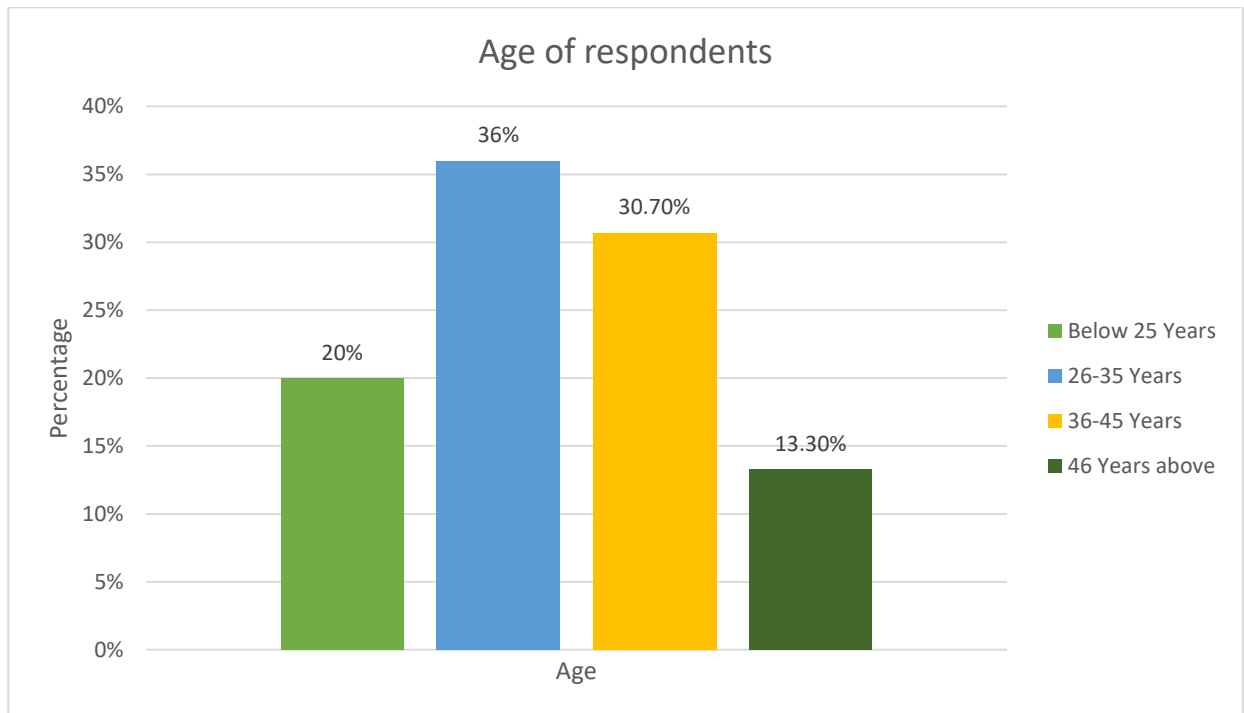
6.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The following section provides and presents findings from this study on age, religion, ethnic group, educational qualification, monthly income, employment status and current number of children.

6.2.1. Age Distribution of Respondents

The chart (Figure 6.1) below presents the various age categories of participants. As revealed in the data, there are 20% below the age of 25, and 30.7% were 36-25 years, while there were 13.3% that were 46. A 36% majority of the respondents were between 26 and 36 years, which falls within the recommended and statutory age (18 years) for marriage in Nigeria. Hence it could be inferred from the data that, despite being unmarried, most participants are of marriageable age. Unmarried single mothers who fell within the age bracket of 46 years and above were less represented because some of them would have decided to have children later in life because of the role education and career development played in their lives.

Figure 6.1. Age Distribution of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Figure 6.1. demonstrates how being a single mother is now the norm in Nigeria. The rising prevalence of children conceived outside of marriage is partly to blame for this prevalence. This is consistent with Ntoimo and Odimegwu (2014), who noted that the mean age of single mothers in Nigeria is 29 years; and this was not also far-fetched from the findings of Ovuorie (2020) who found that Nigeria is experiencing a steady growth in out-of-wedlock motherhood, and the majority of those are younger females.

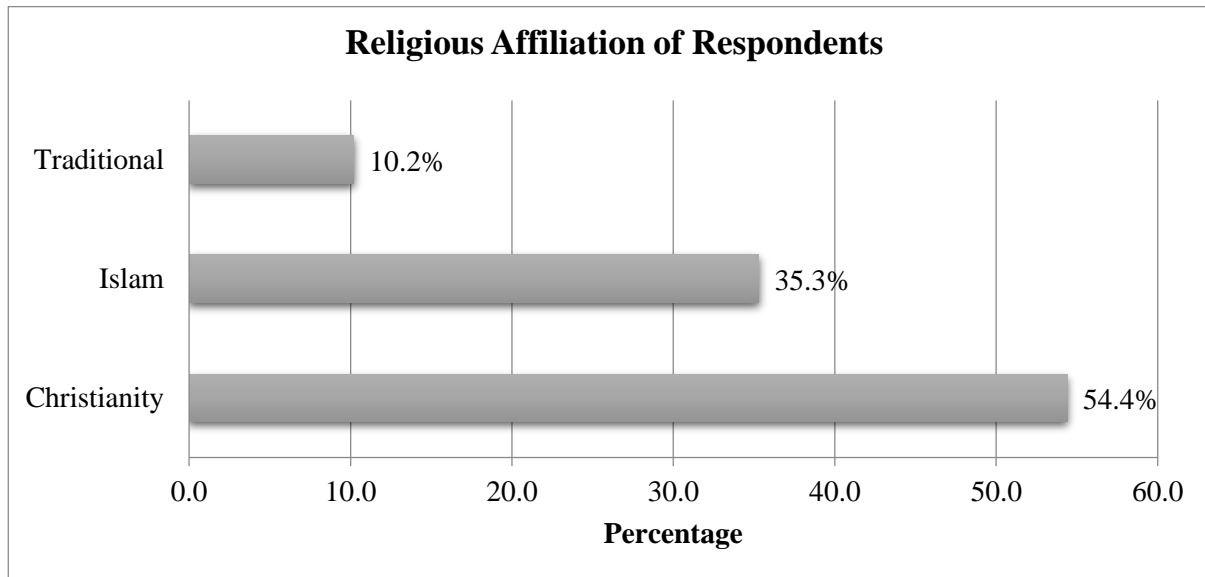
6.2.2. Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Nigerian society has three major religious groupings: Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (Aluko, 2017). This is explicit from the point of view of this study, as shown in figure 6.2. below 54.4% of the respondents practice Christianity, 35.3% Islam and 10.2% traditional and other forms of religion. Though there is no study to affirm the specific religious practices of single mothers in Nigeria, findings have shown a deviation against the results gathered from this study. That is, Nigeria sees Muslims forming a majority (52%) and 43% identify as Christians (MCKinnon, 2021). This is consistent with the statistics from Pew Research Center (2019) and Statista (2022). In similar findings, Nigerian women affiliated to other religions that are not Catholic or Christian, have a lower chance of being single mothers. This is because the divorce rates are lower among other religions, such as those of Muslim faith (Tilson and Larsen 2000, Adegoke 2010). This is due to the disdain and non acceptance of single parenting by the Muslim community, more especially if it is not as a result of spousal death (Anyebe et al. (2017). They perceive it as abnormal and unacceptable; and as further noted in the findings of Munira (2011), the phenomenon of single parenting is thus generally an unwelcoming social reality among the Muslim religious circles. This is reflected in the social services and Aids granted to single mothers, which are only granted as a result of spousal death. Unlike single mothers by choice or women with unwanted pregnancies, these forms of aid and assistance are not likely to be enjoyed by them, owing to the fact that generally, it is not unacceptable in those communities.

In consistency with Munira (2011), sadly, single parents are frequently shunned and marginalized in the Muslim community, and it is frequently decided which single parents "deserve" sympathy depending on the circumstances that they are single. Judgmental behavior does not inspire single

parents to provide their children with the finest care available. Among this religious sect, some women who go on to become single-parent later face social stigma and, in some cases, isolation. As a result, they also lack the proper resources for assistance and sometimes do not have helpers nearby to assist.

Figure 6.2. Distribution of Respondents by Religion

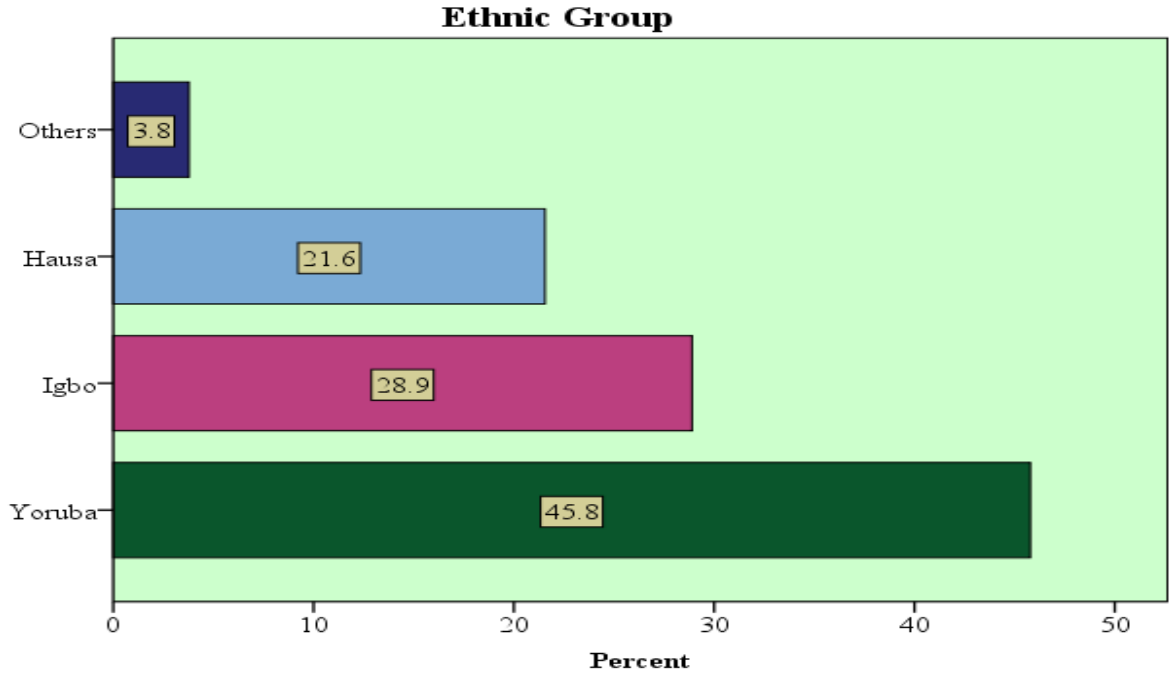


Source: Fieldwork (2022)

6.2.3. Distribution of Respondents by Ethnic Group

Nigerian society has over 250 ethnic groups, and the most populous and politically influential are the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo (Statista, 2022). Based on the statistics obtained from this study as shown in Figure 6.3 below, the following ethnic groups of respondents participated in the study; Yoruba 45.8%, Igbo 28.9%, Hausa 21.6%, while participants from other ethnic groups represented a mere 3.8%.

Figure 6.3. Distribution of Respondents by Ethnic Group



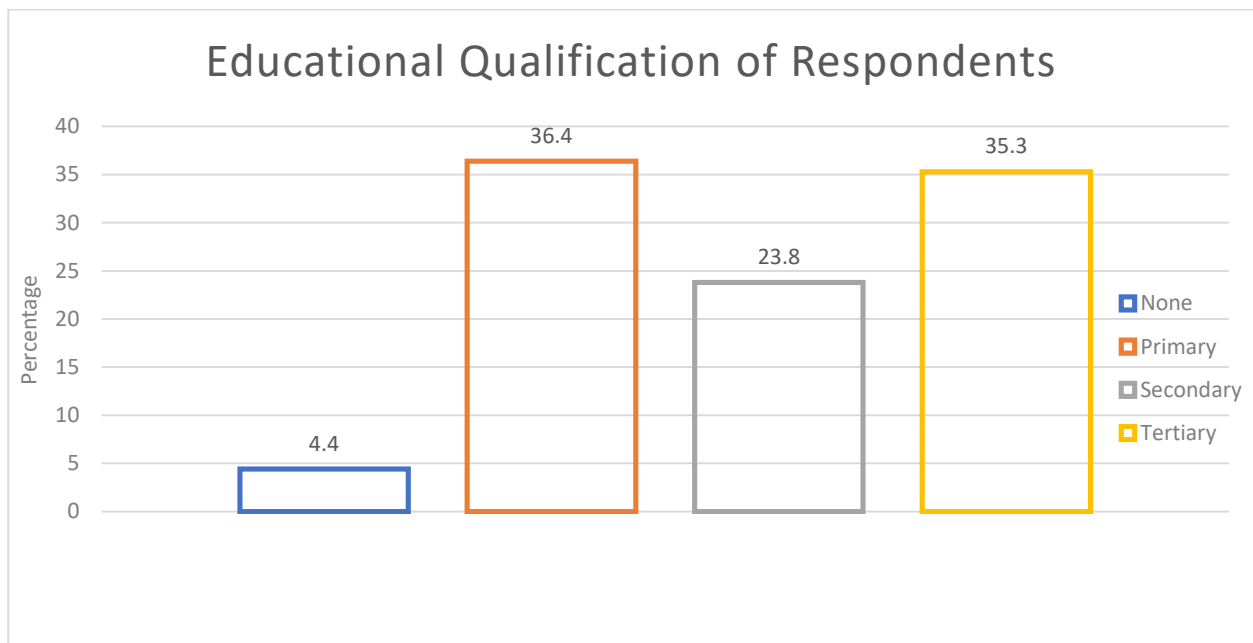
Source: Field Work (2022)

From Figure 6.3 above, single parenting sees a predominant occurrence among the Yorubas and Igbos, who mainly occupy the southern part of Nigeria. This can be linked to the findings of Adewoyin, Awelewa, Uzoma and Anazonwu (2022), who found that out of the 9.5% of the population of single mothers in Nigeria, 20.3% are from the southern part where the Yorubas and Igbos are domiciled; while the northern part, also consistent with the results of this study, has quite a low rate of 2.9% of single mothers. This regional variation is a function of the experiences of women from the point of view of industrialization in the southern part of Nigeria, increased access to education and the greater economic empowerment and freedom enjoyed there, as compared to the women who reside in the northern parts of Nigeria. These economic empowerments have paved the way for them to participate equally in existing labour market. They have access to decent work, and basically have control over their own time, bodies and lives. As a result, they give lesser attention to marriage because of the need to pursue economic freedom.

6.2.4. Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

The figure below offers information on the various educational standings of the respondents. The data reveals that 4.4% of the participants have never been to school. As a result, they have not acquired any form of formal education or training. 36.4% of respondents see their educational career end at the basic level (primary school), while 23.8% manage to complete a secondary level, while people with university and polytechnic achievements (tertiary education) are 35.3%. Going by the data, respondents with the attainment of primary and tertiary education seemed to level up, and by implication, single parenting could be engendered by both low and high educational attainment. This could be attributed to the evolving family structure that has seen an increase of women who voluntarily or involuntarily become single mothers without being married.

Figure 6.4. Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

6.2.5. Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

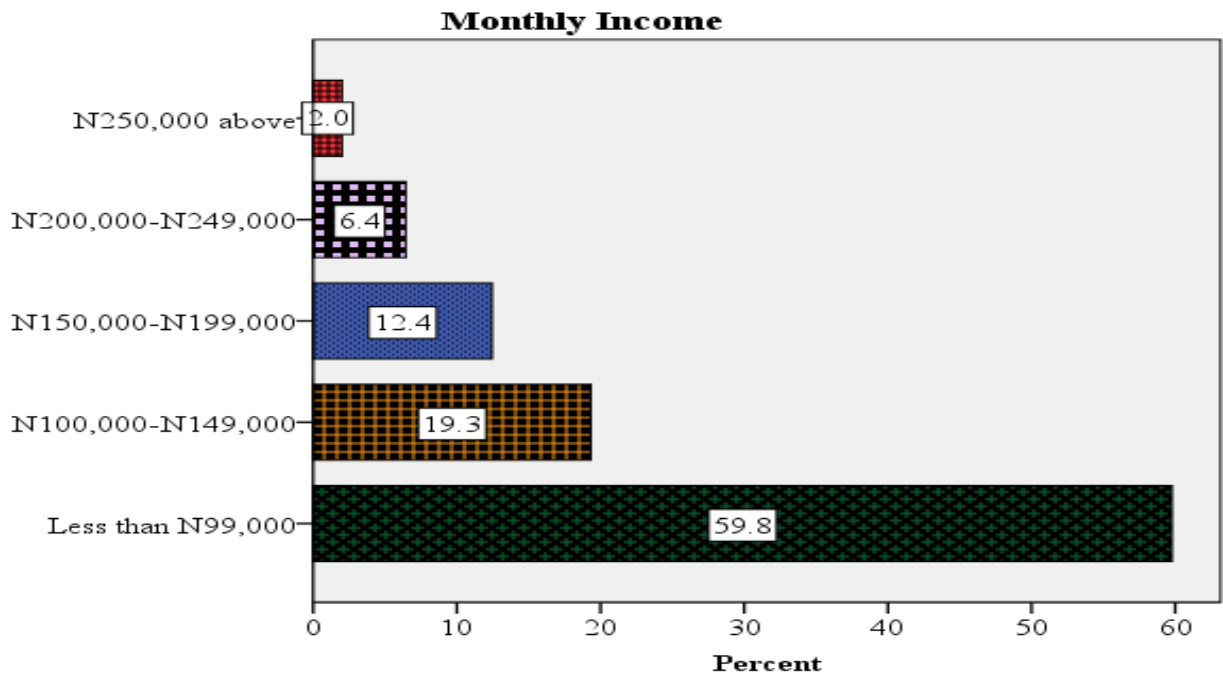
Figure 6.5 below presents the level of income of respondents. The data reveals that 59% of respondents income is less than ₦99,000 (US\$220), representing majority of the respondents, while 19.3% earn between ₦100,000 – ₦149,000 (\$220-\$330) are 19.3%, and 12.4% earn

between ₦150,000 – ₦199,000 (\$330 - \$442), and a further 6.4% earn between ₦200,000- ₦249,000 (\$442 - \$553) and only 2% earn above ₦250,000 (US\$553). Based on this study, the income of single mothers in Nigeria is generated by their singular effort, and in some cases, a combined effort with the father of their children. With few (2.0%) single mothers earning above 250,000 Naira monthly (\$US553-), while more (59.8%) earn less than 99,000 Niara monthly (\$220); it still cannot measure up with the living average and the accurate standard of living of single mothers in Nigeria; even with a per capita income of \$2097 (Akinpelu, 2021; World Bank, 2021).

By implication, this impacts the standard of living and living conditions, including having not having enough to feed their children and cater for other basic needs. As a result, single mothers face a financial strain, and hence, the economic hardship theory will be useful at this point. It is crucial to remember that a single mother's immediate family's fundamental needs—housing, clothing, and food—must be met. Having more financial resources assists her to meet the basic needs of the family. Numerous other research (Conger et al., 2012; Immerzeel and van Tubergen, 2013; Clark et al., 2014) have demonstrated that single mothers adjust to income rises to some extent, keeping their happiness levels stable when their income keeps rising and experiencing difficulties otherwise. These financial hardships have been linked to a number of adverse child outcomes, including an increased risk for behavior.

Insufficient income places pressure on single mothers in the form of unmet material requirements (such as insufficient groceries or clothing), the difficulty of meeting basic needs like health, food and accommodation which makes them to reduce on spending on necessities. These demands are believed to put them and their children at a higher risk of experiencing emotional distress (e.g., depression, anxiety, anger). These emotional issues are therefore anticipated to enhance the display of bad behaviors toward their children, who may eventually develop into deviants in the community (Conger et al., 2010; White et al., 2015).

Figure 6.5. Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

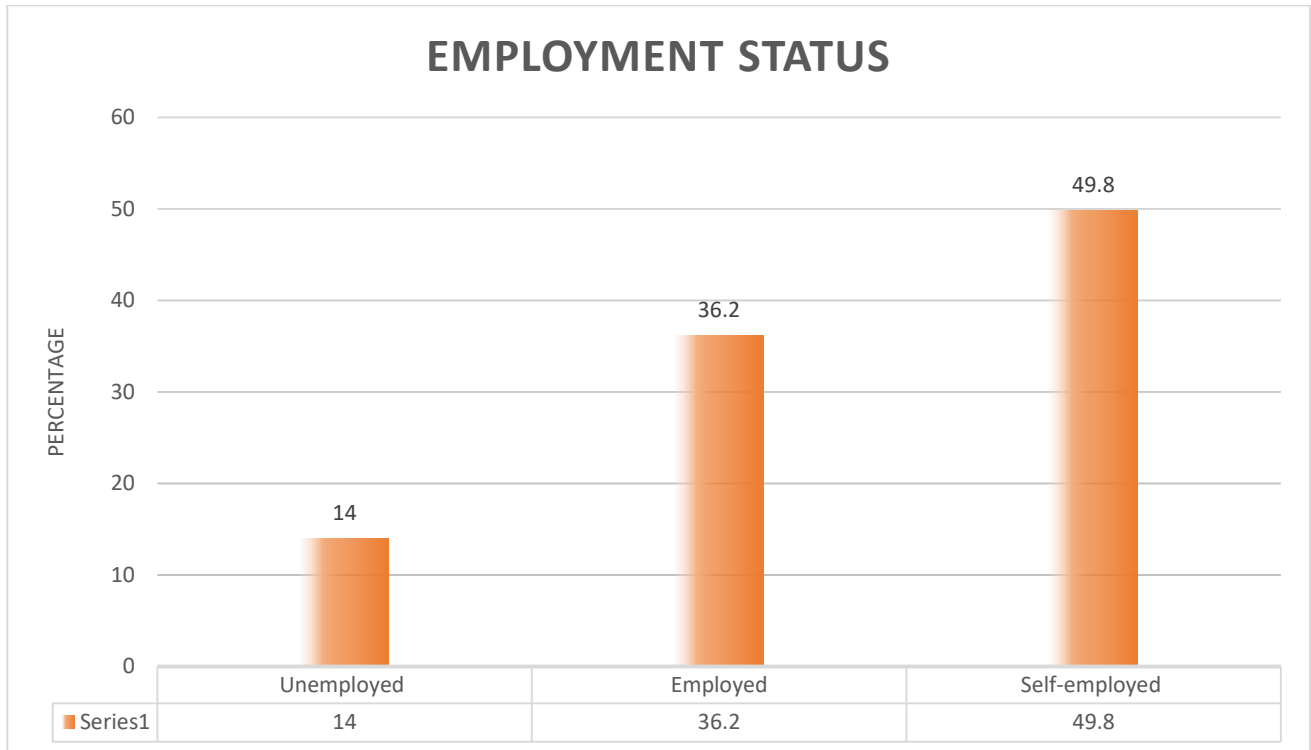


Source: Fieldwork (2022)

6.2.6. Distribution of Respondents by Employment Status

The employment index of the respondents as present in the chart below (Figure 6.6.), reveals that 14% are unemployed, 36.2% are gainfully employed while 49.8% are self-employed, with the latter representing what the majority of single mothers. It could be said that they have embraced the concept of entrepreneurship and self-reliance initiatives as a way to cushion the effects of poverty. As supported by the findings of Kayode (2018), single mothers, in a bid to have time for their children, venture into self-employment and entrepreneurial activity, as an antidote to the prevailing abject poverty in Nigeria. Thus, they identify various opportunities that are related to the satisfaction of needs, and this is done by converting them to products and services of value (Akinyemi, 2016).

Figure 6.6. Distribution of Respondents by Employment Status

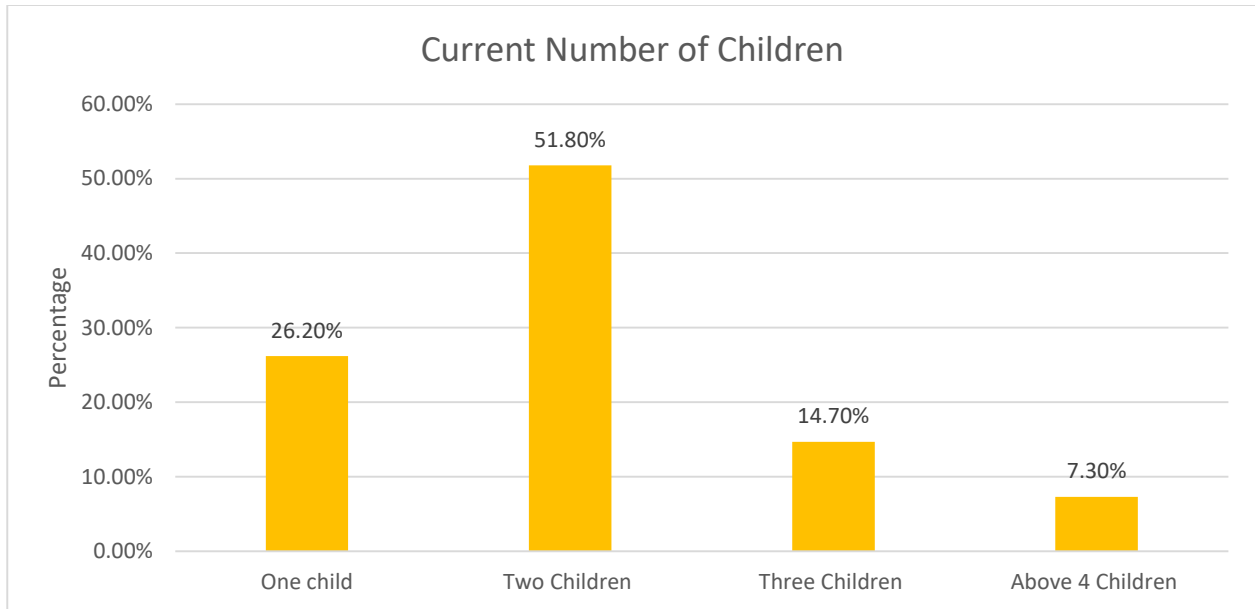


Source: Fieldwork (2022)

6.2.7. Distribution of Respondents by Current Number of Children

Figure 6.7 below reveals the current number of children per respondent. According to the data, 26.2% of the study population are with a single child, and the most respondents (51.8%) have two children, and those with three children is at 14.7%, while those with four children and above are 7.3%. Since a majority of single mothers in Nigeria have two children, they are guided by the philosophy that their children may fall victim to circumstances, or that they may be at the receiving end of negative circumstances. Hence, they decide to limit the number of children they raise. This was justified in Daily Post (2021) where it was articulated that single parenting makes children victims of emotional backlash, and this might be too burdensome for their mothers. To this end, in order to reduce this stress, trauma and struggle all alone, they reduce the number of children they give birth to.

Figure 6.7. Current Number of Children of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

The following section discusses themes from objective 1. It identified issues and themes from family background from the point of view of in-house experience of females while growing up, coupled with their feeling and emotional component as well as the choice they make based on these to be single mothers.

6.3. Family Background on Single Parenting

Without taking into account the significance of family in a child's growth, human development cannot be comprehended adequately. It is the primary social institution that fosters many of a child's socialization processes. As a consequence, the disruption of family life brought on by being raised and fostered by a single parent is a remarkable disruption of daily living. Due to the psychological development process and the adaptation of children in single-parent families can be followed by comparable experiences of being a single mother.

The section discusses themes from objective 1. It identified issues and themes gathered from the study on family background; these are from the point of view of family socialisation and the adoption of single parent family system; witnessing their mothers going through intimate partner

violence and abuse; hatred towards their fathers; depression emanating from dissatisfaction experience in single mother families and individual preference and single parenting. These are articulated in the table below.

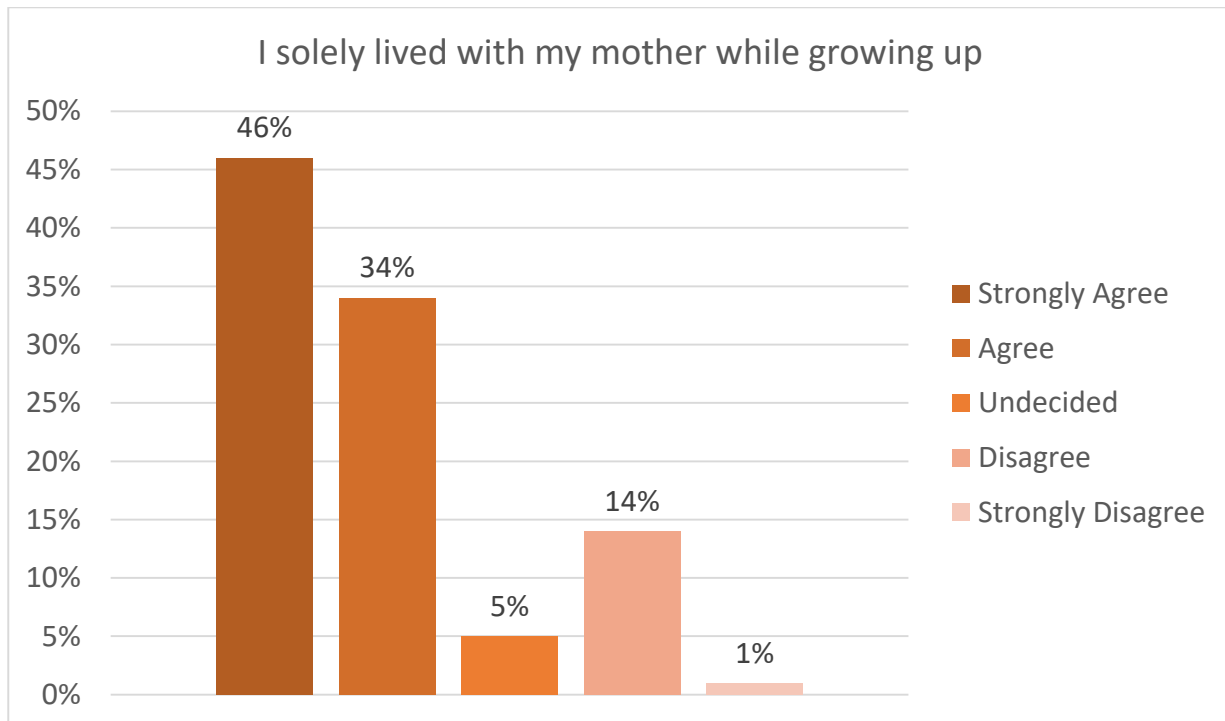
Table 6.1. Identification of themes from responses

Objective	Sub-Theme for Analysis
Family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Family socialization and the adoption single-parent family system
	Witnessing their mothers going through pains
	Hatred toward their fathers
	Depression emanating from dissatisfaction experience in single-mother families
	Individual preference and single parenting

6.3.1. Family socialization and the adoption single-parent family system

Figure 6.8 below show that 15% of single mothers did not at any point live solely with mothers, majority (80%) of single mothers solely lived with their mothers while growing up; this would have facilitated a learning a process from their mothers who nurtured them singlehandedly

Figure 6.8: I solely live with my mother while growing up



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Findings from the interviews are in line with empirical findings emanating from the survey conducted. The following interview responses corroborated the socialization process of these single mothers, coupled with the justification of those who they solely lived with while growing up.

“Of course, I grew up staying with my mother, and she often narrated how my father abandoned her for another woman. In the course of this, she decided to leave the marriage. Till she died, myself and my two siblings lived without her remarrying.” (Interviewee 2, January, 2022).

“My mother was never married, though I know my father, who I stayed with briefly when I was much younger. He was never forthcoming because he had no job, so I decided to stay with my mother for a substantial part of my life. While staying and growing up with my mum, I understood her position on why she never got married. (Interviewee 8, January, 2022)

...and

“Growing up with my mum has taught me a whole lot about men and their ill behaviours. I appreciate the legacy laid and passed down from my mum to me. Without the support of a man, she was able to raise her kids, we were all five girls. Why can't I take after this legacy” (Interviewee 16, February, 2022)

From the data above, children identify and learn particular traits from their mothers' families that they later emulate in life such as economic independence and resilience to continue with life despite being neglected by a partner. It was noted from this study that the development of these unmarried single mothers begins at the point of childhood. This happens from the point of view of physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. As a result, the foundation that is laid there engenders certain actions and behaviors from them. As these unmarried single mothers interact with their mothers, what they get from them often results in what they now carry with

them for the rest of their lives. This does not go down well with the respondents who are products of single parenting themselves. In the course of their interaction with their mothers, coupled with their experiential learning, they go through serious pains, seeing what their mothers went through. By implication, the family serves as the foundation for socialization and helps children identify with and assimilate into their communities. By watching their parents interact with others, children pick up social skills. They acquire conflict resolution skills as well as how to get what they desire from others.

This was in line with other studies; for instance, Berns (2010) stated that the family serves a functional purpose in determining the social status of the young members and is crucial in educating them about what society expects of them. For this reason, the family is the basic unit of society. Children begin to observe their parents and siblings as they try to fit in socially, and this continues to have a significant physical impact on their lives. Family influences on socialization have grown to be quite powerful; the family is still the most important socialization component, regardless of kind or size. In addition, Mitchell (2008) pointed out that the family acts as a socialization agent by giving a person the knowledge and habits required to engage in social activities. Community and cultural stability are attained through the family; this necessitates a grasp of how society works and the forming of emotional bonds with its members. Through the family, socialization furnishes a member of society with the duty to carry out specific obligations in society.

Therefore, it can be concluded from this study that humans heavily rely on learning for child development. Since we do not come into the world knowing how to act in society, we must acquire numerous social behaviours from the people and things around us. Children acquire these beliefs and standards from their families, and as they mature, girls learn what is expected of them. Their learning and socialization come in different forms: sometimes, their mothers tell them about their experiences directly, and at other times, these single mothers observe events while growing up, as they happen in their everyday lives since their immediate family is their primary social group. Hence, they built this innate desire to be single mothers.

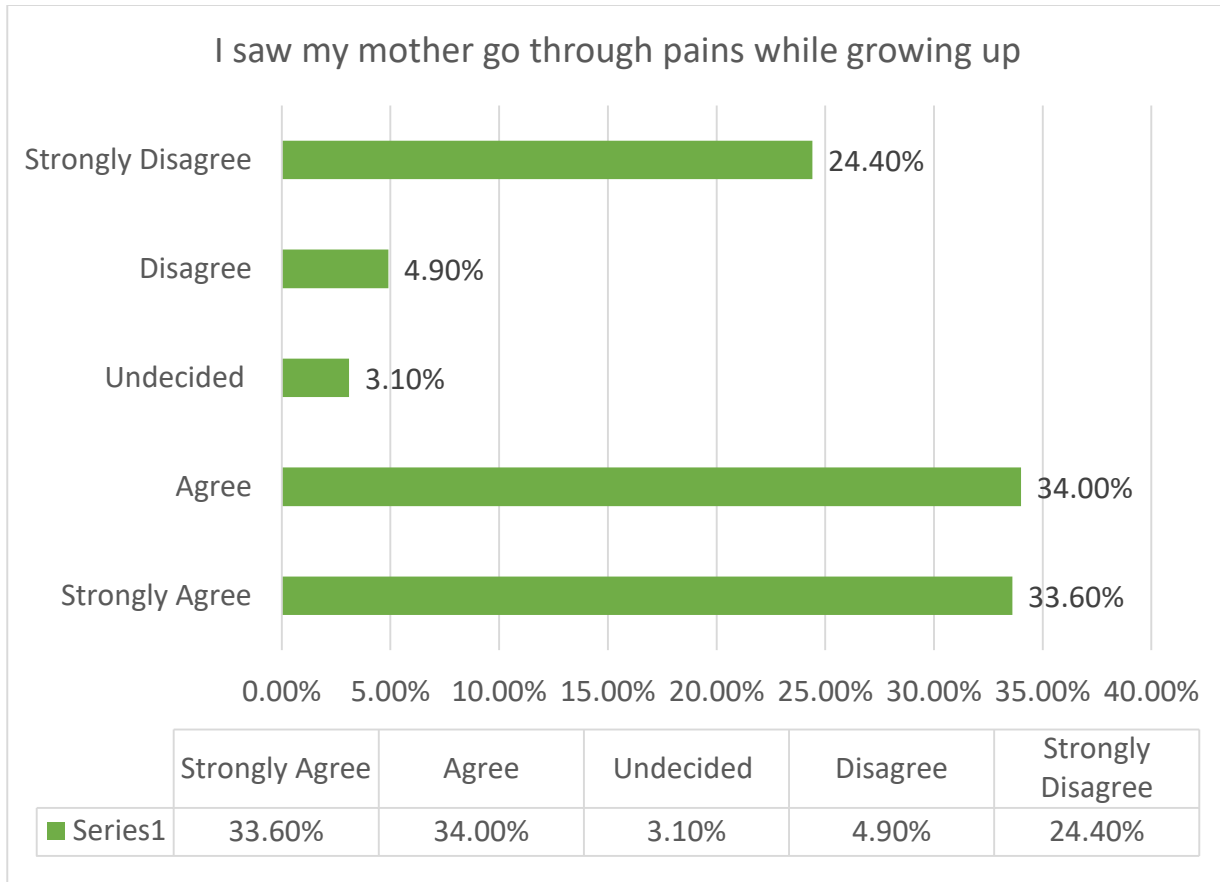
Symbolic interactionism theory is instructive in explaining this theme of family socialization and single parenting among unmarried mothers. In essence, people never live their lives in seclusion

or by excluding themselves from their surroundings or social context. The participants' childhood experiences with single parents whom they lived with in the same environment (home) shaped their perceptions and attitudes towards the institution of marriage with some later opting to follow suit by becoming single parents. Societies thus distinguish between several jobs or statuses, and the holder of each post is required to perform a specific set of duties. Human socialization, in this sense, is all about the various roles that we play as people in connection to the duties that holders of any position are required to perform in respect to other positions in society. For instance, a woman typically fulfills the duties of wife and mother in addition to other roles that may involve involvement in the political, religious, or economic spheres. Modern symbolic interactionists such as Wolfgang and Stuart (1994), Nan and Ching (1997), and Barry (2001), in addition to Mead (1932) and Blummer (1969), asserted that the socialization process enables humans to lead their lives while focusing on the microstructural minute details of social life rather than on the objective. Due to the socialization of unmarried single mothers towards single parenting, these women are less concerned with what is expected of them in society—namely, to be married to a partner and have children—and instead choose to make this choice and concentrate on their own desires. Those who believe themselves to be single mothers would proceed in this manner.

6.3.2. Witnessing their mothers going through pains

Despite the fact that single motherhood is sometimes viewed as a challenging circumstance, many become single parents through practical learning from the family they grew up in as they dealt with parental divorce, separation, or death. These transitions to solo parenthood bring with unforeseen issues with household organizing. However, there are some single parents for whom being a single parent is a success. These people chose to be single parents. Today, anyone can choose to become single parents through their own pathways, so having a spouse is no longer necessary in order to begin a family. As in the case of this study, one of the reasons for venturing into single parenting as a type of family system is as a result of the experiences these women went through while growing up. They saw their mothers pass through hardship, and this informed their decision.

Figure 6.9. I saw my mother go through pains while growing up



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

From Figure 6.9 above, respondents witnessed their mothers go through pains while growing up. Findings revealed that over two thirds (67.6%) of unmarried single mothers saw how their mothers went through pains while growing up. 3.10% were undecided while 28.9% disagreed that they saw their mothers go through pains while growing up. With this in sight, they would rather opt for a single parent family system. Similarly, in this study, exposure to traumatic childhood experiences such as witnessing their mothers go through these pains also facilitated an inner feeling of hatred towards their fathers as evidenced in this study. Children of single mothers have disruptions in their relationship with their fathers, and this builds a kind a hatred in them, not only for their fathers, but also, to men in general. In relation to this, some unmarried single mothers expressed the following from the qualitative study:

“I cannot imagine myself going through the horrible pains my mother went through while raising us alone. It is just shit, because all these men are not responsible for one bit” (Interviewee No 23, February, 2022)

“Right from when I was a teenager, I had decided I would not get married. The best would be to just have children and move on with my life. My father was more like a demon. If you see how he molested my mother under our watch, you will pity me” (Interviewer No 21, February, 2022)

“I really do not care what people say, they know me as a “no nonsense” woman, even the so-called men. You see, it is tough. I have to care for my children alone, pay bills and survive. At the same time, I enjoy it because there is no man to nag or shout at me at home. I am indeed free. Yes. Very free from men’s troubles” (Interviewee No 13, January, 2022)

“Does it (...feel...) worth it staying in the same roof with a man? My mother was a victim with two men in a row. She left the first man who was violent. She had three kids. Same story for the second, where she had 2, where I am the first. In order not to bury her early, she left the abusive marriage which was even worse than the first. Seeing all these, do you expect me to live with a man? It’s not possible” (Interviewer No 30, February, 2022)

I disagree with how my father handled my mum. My decision on who to marry was impacted by that. I've decided not to wed someone who is like my father. Therefore, whenever I notice a resemblance to my father in any male that comes through, that makes it irrelevant. I'll recognize a trait and think, "Oh, this is yet another father of mine.” (Interviewee No 1, January, 2022)

...and

“While growing up, I used to see myself in my mothers’ shoes, this unconsciously built in me the mindset of a single mother. Infact, I started seeing myself as a single mom right from my teenage age. This was due to the hate I had for my father who maltreated my mother.” (Interviewee No 6, January, 2022)

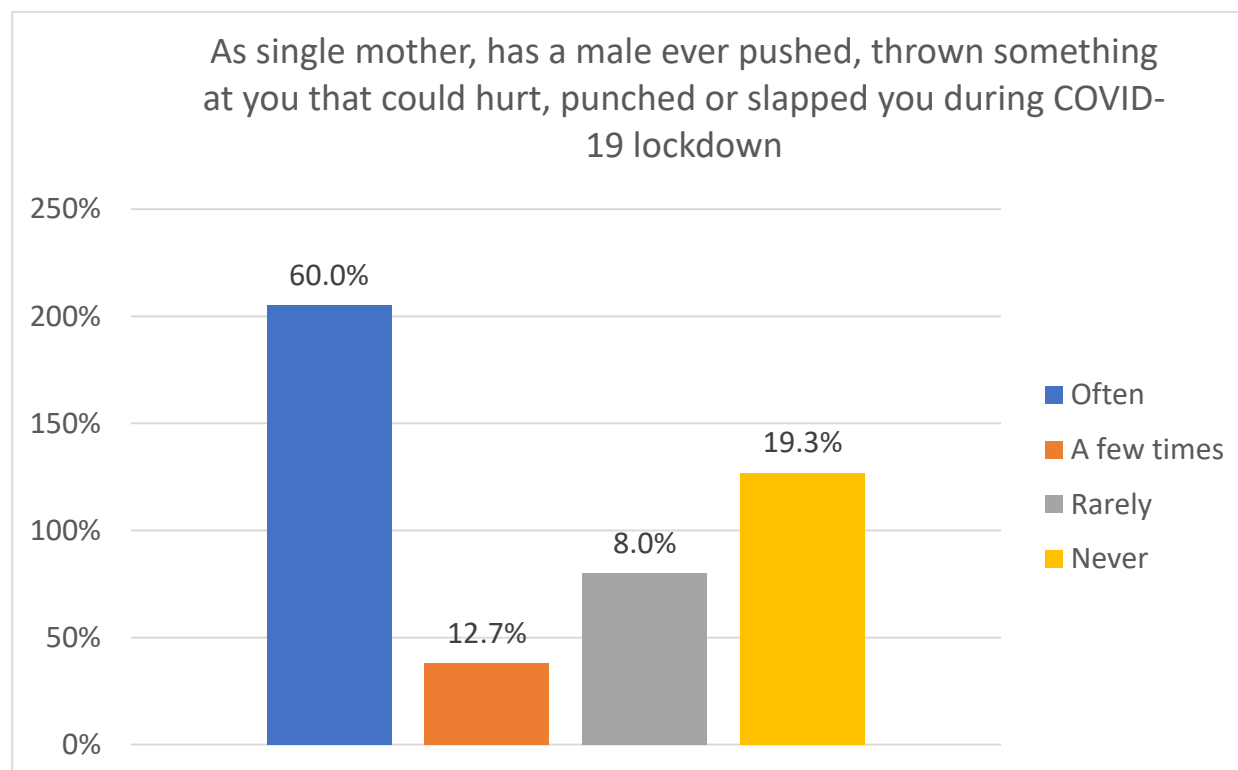
Inferring from this, it may be said that unmarried single women who were forced to remain single nonetheless had a deep desire to have children and chose to do so. As single women actively choose to raise their children alone, this indicates that single parents provide a unique perspective on single motherhood. To integrate their professional obligations and their parental commitments, however, single parents by choice, confront the same challenges as other single parents. From a different angle, single parenting by choice contradicts the theoretical presumption that a family is started by two individuals and that single parents must adjust to changing circumstances. It does not start from a nuclear family type. In comparison to Goldscheider (et al., 2015) and Mortelmans (et al., 2016), these single mothers made preparations for being single and chose to start a family, but they differ fundamentally from them. However, the particular situation may have an impact on the routes to parenting and, therefore this preparedness. This is why the study's focus is on unmarried single mothers who chose to start a single-parent household. According to this survey, "by choice" refers to beginning a home in general, even though one does not have a spouse. In other words, these single mothers most likely made a conscious decision to become parents after reaching a biological tipping point.

Women who believed their fathers to be ideal husbands had a propensity to romanticize marriage to the point where they were unable to detect the true and presumptive attributes of their fathers in other men. In the same way that those who disliked their fathers' traits or their parents' turbulent marriage are likely to become victims of an endless search for a "better" relationship, respondents who emphasized such "father" qualities are likely to fall victim to the endless search for men who embody the masculine ideals found in their fathers. Some unmarried single mothers in Nigeria were particularly impacted by their mothers' marriage experiences when making decisions about marriage.

Similar incidence was a reflection of what was experienced by unmarried single mothers during COVID-19. Those who experienced violence between their fathers and mothers while growing up prefer to be single mothers now. They also experienced this with either their men-friends or their neighbours who are men during COVID-19, and this not only justified their decisions, it also, validated their claims as single mothers. For instance, as shown in this study, figure 6.10 below shows the responses of single mothers when asked if a male ever pushed or threw something at them and which could hurt them, during COVID19 lockdown. A majority (60%) agreed that it

happened often, 12.7% agreed that it happened a few times during the lockdown, while 8% believed this violence rarely happened, while 19.3% believed it never happened.

Figure 6.10 Experience of domestic violence during COVID-19



Source: Field Work (2022)

It is acceptable to claim that single mothers in Nigeria are a vulnerable category of women even though existing literary works have not sufficiently documented occurrences of domestic violence against them. This has been supported by Rousou et al. (2013), Van de Velde et al. (2014), Kim and Kim (2020). They discovered that single parents, especially single moms, are an economically and socially vulnerable population who run the risk of developing a variety of physical and mental health issues. Though, like every other woman, single mothers in Nigeria have poor physical and mental health statuses, but since they stay alone with their kids, the kind of violence peculiar to them is non-physical and emotional (Haley et al., 2020). This is justified by the following responses.

“I have this man I am dating. You will not believe that he is married...During the lockdown he could not leave his house, but he was always monitoring me through WhatsApp video calls. Most times he...threatens me and my kids...(but)...just to be sure there was no man living with me” (Interviewee No 17, February, 2022).

“I made the greatest mistake of my life by dating a younger guy; he was like 7 years younger than I am. We had just dated for like four months when the COVID-19 lockdown was initiated. He kept calling and threatening me that I should send him money, otherwise, he would release my nude pictures online. Everywhere was on lockdown, and there was no way I could get the services of a lawyer or the police. I had no choice than to keep sending him money. He nearly ruined my life” (Interviewee No 22, February, 2022)

During the lockdown, my neighbor dealt so much with me, most especially the male. Before this time, I leave home with my kids very early. I drop them off in school and go to my business location, and we come back at night. On Saturdays too, same thing, but my kids go with me. But during the era of COVID, we were all forced to stay home. I was dragged into all manner of shits because they know I have no husband and they verbally abused me, to the extent that one of them threatened to arrest me, and that he will see the husband that will come bail me. I was so depressed that day” (Interviewee No 30, February, 2022)

... and

“I never allowed my man friend to come to my house before the lockdown, we only ate out and, on some occasions, I went to his house. But when the lockdown started, he was just a control freak. He was always telling me to send him my nude pictures, at times, coercing me to transfer money to some people on his behalf. Till today I have not recovered my money” (Interviewee No 18, February, 2022)

According to these single mothers, domestic violence—which is often gender-based—evolved from threats and verbal abuse to physical violence. While physical harm may be the most immediate danger, unmarried single mothers in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic were also suffering from severe emotional and psychological effects as a result of domestic abuse. These

single moms' self-worth was negatively impacted by emotionally abusive relationships, which resulted in anxiety and sadness and a sense of helplessness and isolation. In a similar perspective, Karakurt and Silver (2013) note that there is a growing focus on comprehending emotional abuse as a concept distinct from physical abuse, deserving of its own theories and prevention efforts. By implication, emotional abuse, which is also non-physical abuse does not share a boundary with physical abuse, and this is the form of domestic violence unmarried mothers in Nigeria often experience. This form of violence and abuse against unmarried women goes on to explain the applicability of the theory of singlism (New Times, 2013), which explains the widespread stereotype, discrimination, and unfair treatment against single mothers. Findings from this study shows that, despite the fact that a majority of single mothers' experience more emotional abuse during the COVID-19 lockdown, there was still a fair share of single mothers who experienced physical violence, mostly perpetrated by members that share their physical environment but who do not stay with them at home. This would include house owners and co-neighbors, among others.

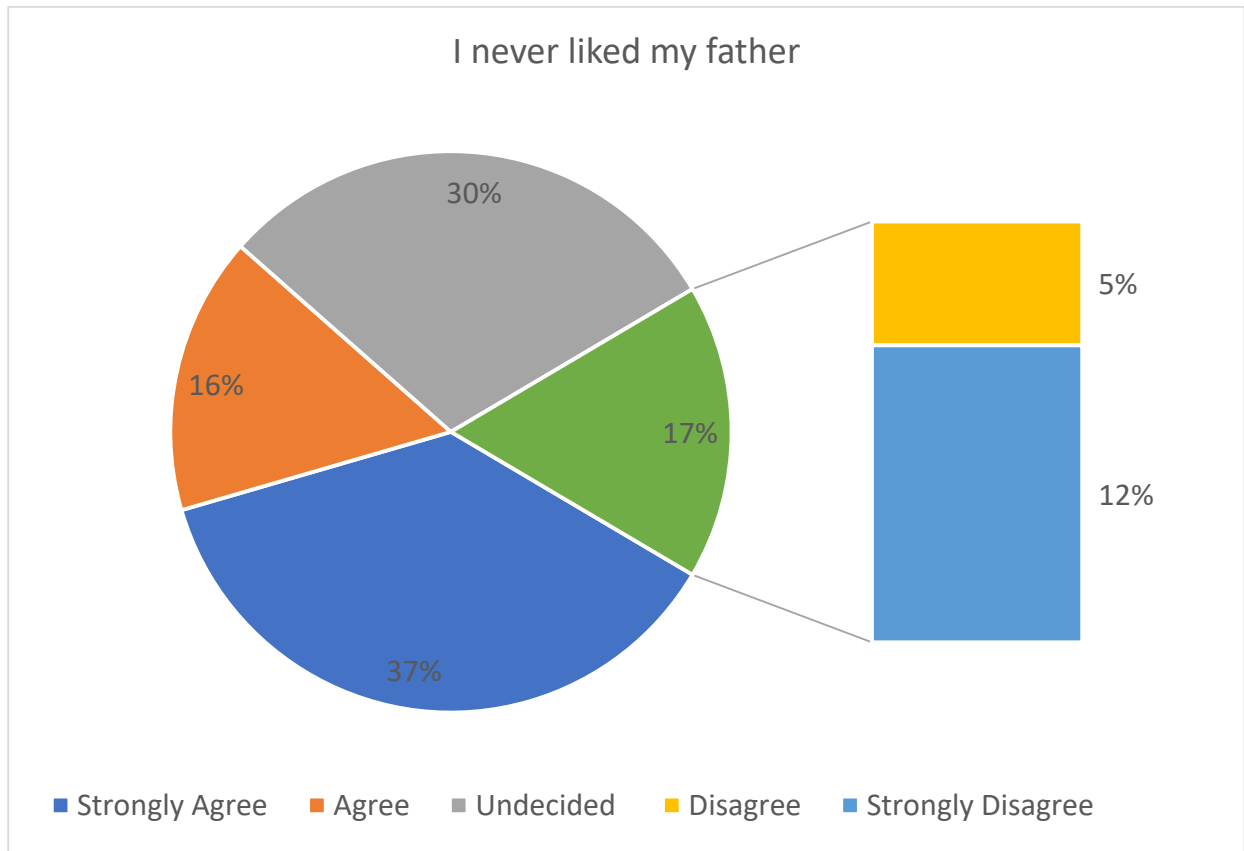
Symbolic interactionism is functional in explaining this finding, mainly from the point of view of the concept of the self, which is central to the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. For these single mothers, the development of the self comes from the relationships they had with their mothers as children. They witnessed the struggles their mothers faced, and this gave them the ability to imagine themselves from the perspective of their mothers, which communicated a symbolic level in them. Considering that a single mother develops a sense of self through reflective role-playing, Cooley's concept of the 'looking-glass self' is pertinent. When they imagine themselves in their mothers' position, they decide that being single mothers for the remainder of their lives would be preferable to going through the same struggles their mothers did. They were influenced by their mothers' perceived evaluations of them as children in this way, which affected their sense of self-worth. They continue to hang onto this sense of self for a very long time, and it only appears in particular social contexts.

6.3.3. Hatred towards their fathers

As supported by the data below which was gathered from this study, a majority of woman grow up into unmarried single mothers, represented by 53% that never liked their fathers, and this is due mainly to the fact that, they experienced difficult situations as daughters of single mothers, as well

as the socialization process they passed through in the course of growing up. This can be narrowed to their experiences at the home front, and in a bid to protect the interest of their mothers, being of the same gender, their aggression is transferred to the fathers.

Figure 6.11. I never liked my father



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

In addition, 30% were undecided whether they liked their fathers or not. This has implications for the emotional ties they have with their fathers; and this is consistent with symbolic interactionist theory which claims that facts are based on, and directed by symbols and meanings, and that the behaviour and dislike of these girls towards their fathers was based on the meanings that emerged from the reciprocal interaction their fathers have with their mothers at the home front while growing up. That is, they developed their attitudes towards their fathers and events that they experienced according to the meanings that these their fathers' behavioural tendencies proposed to them. This strained relationship and dislike between fathers and unmarried single mothers is not

uncommon today; based on the finding from the qualitative study, it starts from childhood and continues into adulthood.

Some of the responses of single mothers in this regard, to confirm this are as follows:

“My father never regarded my mum, though we lived in the house. He was married to three wives because we practiced Islam. We felt so neglected that my mother struggled through pains to pay for me school fees while growing up. It was as if my mother was married but living single, because my father never cared if we existed or not. If not, my life would have been better than this. Till now, I don’t think I can forgive him” (Interviewee 3, January, 2022)

“I can say categorically say that I detest my father. He is very irresponsible and not different from the men out there on our streets. Reason being that, my father abandoned us because of one other lady, forgetting the fact that my mother was the breadwinner of the home. He sold her property afterwards without her knowledge and threw us out. I can never forget this incident. And If not for the sake of posterity, I never wanted to have any child, but thank God I have two lovely kids, though as a single mother and I am happy with that” (Interviewee 11, January, 2022)

“It can be confusing to feel angry, distant and have a deep sense of resentment towards my father. In fact, from the stories my mum usually tells me about him, and from the experiences I have also had with other men, I decided to just settle with my kids all alone. I do not want to die before my time” (Interviewee 12, January, 2022)

“I love my mother so much that anyone who takes her as an enemy automatically is my enemy. I saw her go through pains from my father, and this did not make me have anything to do with him. I think this affected my decision to just have kids, but never to get married, because men are scum” (Interviewee 25, February, 2022)

...and

“My mother is my life, she is caring and supportive, even till my adulthood. My father maltreated her right under our noses as children, and I’ll do everything to protect her” (Interviewee 16, February, 2022)

Humans are aware of the critical role played by families in a child's development in the context of the conventional family system. More than other caretakers, parents serve as a child's first teacher. The majority of a child's learning begins and takes place with their families, according to Ardita and Rabije (2016). Thus, providing a setting where a child may develop the necessary abilities and values as well as learn how to interact with others and feel comfortable builds a strong foundation for a child's development. As explicitly stated in this study, most unmarried single mothers, due to what they saw their mothers going through, feel disconnected from their fathers, leading them to develop negative feelings towards their fathers, especially when they become adults. Much like Livingston (2018) pointed out further, these unmarried single women needed both of their parents to work together to be present and play a part in parenting their children when they were younger. When a father falls short in this area, the child feels betrayed and begins to have negative feelings against him.

Similar to what Gezova (2015) said, society expects mothers to raise their children emotionally while males are expected to be more pragmatic. The same society anticipates that fathers should act as both suppliers and enforcers of rules. It's crucial for the children to believe that both parents are actively involved in raising them, regardless of how society views the roles of each parent. As a result, the kids need should be able to connect with their father. However, due to the unpalatable experiences they saw their mothers go through, they fall short of this. Hence, such children grow up not seeing the need or necessity for the role of a husband figure in the family.

According to the women's accounts, their upbringing with their parents had a significant impact on the course of their lives. This result is consistent with Castetter's (2020) claim that children of absent fathers' experience sentiments of neglect that can affect their lives. Findings from this study also support the suggestions by other authors (Skurat, 2020; Warner, 2020; Shumaila and Sarmad, 2019). The latter cite unmarried single mothers as being protective of their mothers, and since their fathers hurt the feelings of their mothers, these fathers appear as enemies to them. These mothers

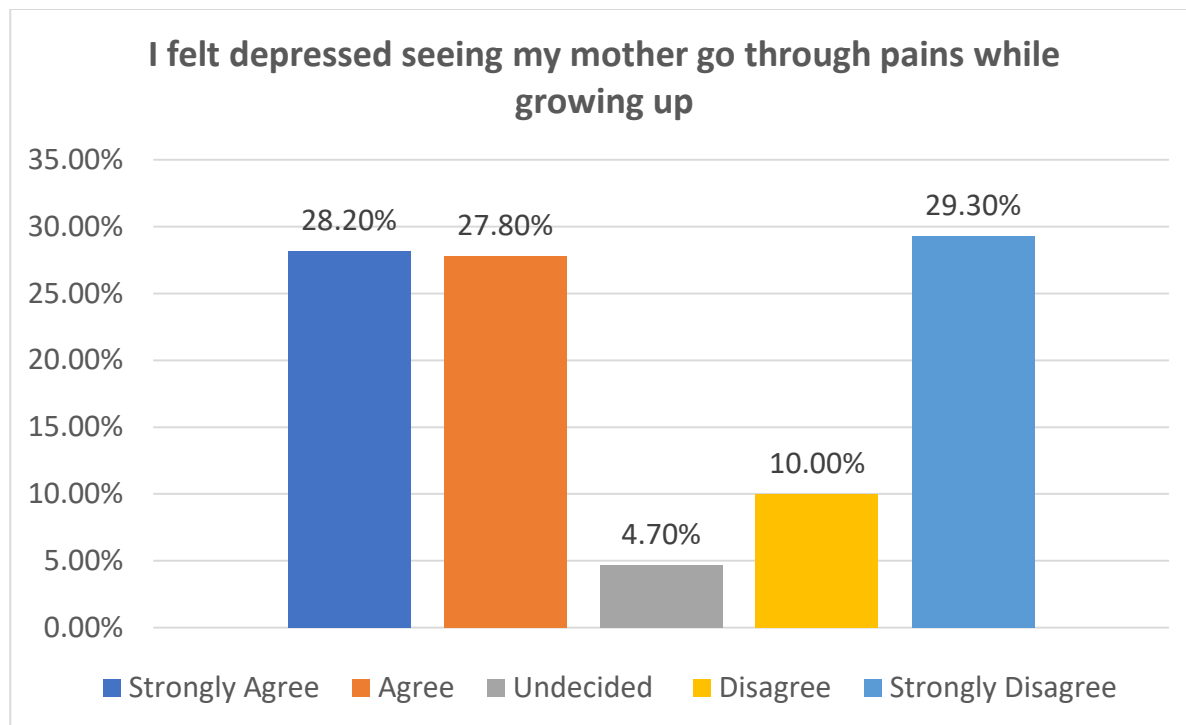
grew up by nursing hateful tendencies, not only at childhood, but also into adulthood. As a result, this hate is transferred to the male gender, which in turn leads to the decision to never get married.

The interactionist perspective of Meads (1932) explains the reciprocal significance, values and aid of the symbols in single moms' minds, could be used to focus on these findings. It is conceivable to harbor ill will against one's father, and this usually manifests in early life. These youngsters, who grow up to be single mothers, are attentive and intensely aware of relationship patterns among their major caregivers since their relationship with their fathers and mothers is also symbolic. Children get protective and may perceive their father as a danger to their own safety when their father is violent against their mother. As they develop, these imprint a mental image that leads them to adopt the single-parent family structure. Children who witness their mother being mistreated by their father experience a deterioration in their relationship with him, and also shift into parent-like roles where they take on an unwarranted level of responsibility, not only to defend their mothers but also to emulate the type of family structure she chose (viz, single parent family).

6.3.4. Depression emanating from dissatisfaction experience in single mother families

This is apparent in figure 6.12. below, where about 56% of single mothers felt depressed seeing their mothers going through painful and challenging experiences of single mothers. While 4.7% felt undecided, 29.3% disagreed to the fact that they felt depressed seeing their mothers go through pains while growing up.

Figure 6.12. I felt depressed seeing my mother go through pains while growing up



Source: Fieldwork (2022)

This quantitative study was consistent with the findings from the qualitative study with the responses below.

“When the pain was too much for my mum, we had to leave the house for my dad. I really felt for her; in fact, my two younger brothers and I were affected and depressed to the extent that it affected our academic performance.” (Interview 12, January 2022)

...and

“My father never had a conscience; my mum, despite the fact that she was the breadwinner of the family, still maltreated her by having serious affairs with other women. That was what led to her death. I never recovered from that incident not until a few years back.” (Interview 6, February 2022).

The results of this study support previous research by Daryanai et al. (2016) and Jones et al. (2017) that suggested that single mothers are significantly more likely than two-parent families to engage in psychologically controlling parenting behaviors, which are associated with an increase in depressive symptoms in children. Interestingly, girls grow up to take these feelings into adulthood, which then also psychologically controls their decisions into developing their own single-mother families. On the other hand, while 10.0% disagreed and 29.30% strongly disagreed that they felt depressed seeing their mothers go through pains while growing up. By implication, there seems to have been an intervention deployed by these mothers to encourage and aid a positive socialisation process. Despite what these children saw, their mothers were right on ground to change their mentalities, and not to be carried away with what their fathers were doing to their mothers. This was supported in the works of Blair and Raver (2012), and Christopher et al., (2013) who argued that an essential component of parent-supported social development is parents helping their kids develop the practical skills they'll need to adjust to their environment's shifting needs and control their impulses and reactions to upsetting situations like when dads beat up their wives in front of the kids. By engaging in constructive social interaction with their kids and providing them with opportunities to engage with others, parents may also help their kids build friendships; hence, not allowing them to be bothered about the conditions between their fathers and mothers at home.

Single mothers react in a similar manner as when their fathers hurt their mother, as the latter is considered a 'significant other' as in Symbolic Interactionist theory, and the father's role as a significant other is reduced to non-significance or even hatred, depending on the circumstances that these single mothers had to bear as children. It is interesting to note that such a shift of meaning of a primary agent of socialization (the father) shifts to the background as a negative significant other rather than a positive significant other. This gives the theory a new import and has implications for theories of family, in relation to its structure and workings, particularly the oft quoted western form of the nuclear family with its structure of authority located in the father. Children rarely feel safe when they see their mothers being abused by their fathers, according to Leventhal and Gaither (2012). They are hurt because their fathers fail to live up to their roles while growing up. Children raised by one biological parent do worse than people who were raised by both biological parents on a variety of social and economic indicators. According to Mariani et al (2017), single parent family background has been demonstrated to have long-lasting impacts on certain children into adulthood, including into marriage and into the lives of their own children.

These mothers who are affected by the negative effects of single motherhood do continue with their everyday lives. The negative ideas of relationships they have developed as a result of seeing their family disputes as children may have long-term repercussions on them as adults and are almost certainly passed on to their children.

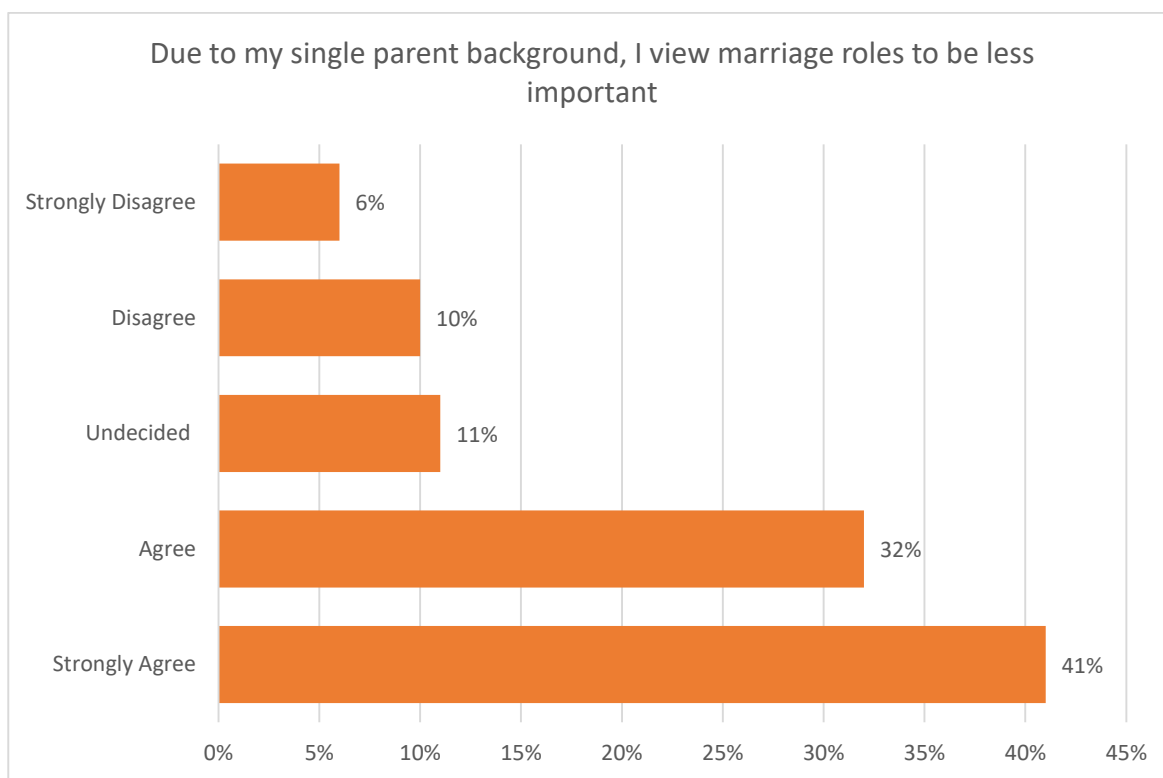
Abankwa (2013) found that adults who can recollect having had a lot of parental conflicts as children are more likely to report having psychiatric and marital issues in their own lives. Many of these kids grow up to be single mothers, yet they still suffer from symptoms of sadness and anxiety, as well as a general sense of discontent with their lives. The missing significant other of the father has untold repercussions into the life of the child that stretches into adulthood, with symbolic references, in terms of negative identifications with that of the absent or abusive father, of unrequited love, support and early child dependence represented by the symbol of the father that is particularly important in African (traditional) culture to say the least.

6.3.5. Individual preference and single parenting

Single parenting by choice has gained relevance in modern Nigerian society. The transition to this kind of family takes different forms, as shown and described by unmarried single mothers in this study. This was why a majority (73.0%) of unmarried single mothers, as shown in figure 6.13. below, viewed marriage to be less important; compared to 11% who were undecided and 16% who disagreed to this fact. To this end, a majority argued that a two-parent family reflects some or other crisis, as it imposed too many challenges. These included domestic violence, abusive partners and financial constraints, among others. However, single parenting by choice or preference has changed this perspective, enabling single mothers to successfully manage reintegrating their personal and social roles devoid of the challenges their mothers encountered while growing up. Again, within a symbolic interactionist view, the notion of family is not as in the western nuclear family, but rather is transformed into a single (female) sex headed household, with its short and long-term ramifications. Some such ramifications include the reassertion of the female role in the upkeep of the family in what has been a patriarchal family structure within the African family system. Single unmarried mothers evoke a feminine principal as the elan vital of the contemporary single family in Nigeria, at least within the ambit of the participants of this study. Marriage, which is an ancient universal tradition is turned on its head, and its sanctity is foresaken for the sake of

the young children and for the dignity of women funding themselves forced to choose a single mother family, with a mother-father figure as its head, earning, struggling and making ends meet and negotiating its own sexual and love practices, sometimes to overturn male chauvinism, disdain and malpractice.

Figure 6.13. Due to my single parent background, I view marriage roles to be less important.



Source: Field work (2022)

The following interview responses are consistent with the quantitative study:

“What is marriage and how important is it? Those of us who jumped into it before now, where are they now? You see, marriage is just so overrated. Once I have my kids, I am settled” (Interviewee No 6, January, 2022)

“I do not see marriage as something important. It did not help my mother. So, how would it help me? I am just interested in raising kids, and if their father, wherever

he is can be supportive, fine. Otherwise, I move on, and this is what I have been doing” (Interviewee No 29, February, 2022)

“My mother was a single mother till she died. She enjoyed her life. Who says I cannot be a single mother and enjoy life? Yes, I have a man friend, who is just there mainly for sex, because I need to be serviced. In addition to this, I have three kids who I chose to adopt, and this is just fine by me” (Interviewee No 17, February, 2022).

...and

“It’s no more men’s world but females. How I wish we women can know and understand the power we carry. I have two kids and I am contented with them. I had sperms donated for me, and I have moved on. I don’t want to hear the word marriage anywhere around me. I am a free woman. Free like a bird. I decide what I want with my life. I have a good business. I have my children and I am doing fine. To hell with men and marriage” (Interviewee No 26, February, 2022)

Parenthood transitions have shifted from being viewed as a crisis to being viewed as a socially constructed normative occurrence that takes place within the life course, as can be seen from the graph and statements above. In other words, despite the praise given to marriage, single parenting is now becoming relevant and accepted as a new type of family system. The social and normative framework that pressures people to become parents at a given stage of their lives should be taken into consideration while analyzing single parenting by choice. Singles eventually reach the stage where they wish to start a family and must decide how to do it since they are not following in their mothers footsteps. In the course of this research, clinical fertilization—in which conception is achieved through in-vitro methods and an anonymous sperm donor—was identified as one route among unmarried single mothers (though not adopted by many in Nigeria).

In other words, unmarried single mothers utilize sperm donations in order to become pregnant which is also consistent with the findings of Pasch and Holley (2015). Some single mothers got pregnant when they were in a relationship, which resulted in an unintended pregnancy. Some of them quit their relationships before the "abortion deadline" has passed since the pregnancy poses

a threat to it. This is significant because, despite being unmarried, these people chose to keep the child even though they had the option to have it terminated. According to some of the interviewees, they had to decide whether to end the pregnancy in order to keep the relationship together or to end the relationship and raise their child alone. This decision to continue with the pregnancy was so significant to some of the single parents we spoke with that they described it as single motherhood by choice. In some cases, some employ adoption as supported by McCubbin and Figley (2014). As opposed to the usual function of bearing and raising biological children, single parenting in this instance entails parenting a child with whom a single individual assumes what is known as a social parenting role. In this case having a child through artificial insemination or though the use of a sexual partner is not on the table, and thus sex seems to become secondary. Biological needs are secondary, and this is one of the bases of the nuclear family. What is primary is that the family continues as a unit in a different form, albeit headed by a single mother.

This empirical finding which identified how family background plays a role in determining single parenting can also be validated with the hypothesis tested. The first hypothesis which captured the first research objective is stated thus:

H₀: There is no relationship between family background and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between family background and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Table 6.2. A Chi-Square test on the relationship between family background and single parenting

		I feel contented with being a single mother					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
With my background from a single parent family, I view marriage roles to be less important	Strongly Agree	52 (11.6%)	14 (3.1%)	7 (1.6%)	7 (1.6%)	23 (5.1%)	103 (22.9%)
	Agree	7 (1.6%)	50 (11.1%)	12 (2.7%)	16 (3.6%)	6 (1.3%)	91 (20.2%)
	Undecided	2 (0.4%)	12 (2.7%)	39 (8.7%)	23 (5.1%)	3 (0.7%)	79 (17.6%)
	Disagree	3 (0.7%)	24 (5.3%)	14 (3.1%)	85 (18.9%)	9 (2.0%)	135 (30.0%)
	Strongly Disagree	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (2.0%)	32 (7.1%)	42 (9.3%)
	Total	64 (14.2%)	101 (22.4%)	72 (16.0%)	140 (31.1%)	73 (16.2%)	450 (100.0%)
	X²= 438.78; df= 16; Sig= <0.01						

The Chi-Square table 6.2 above shows the test between family background and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Family background (Independent variable) was measured using the question – “...with my background from a single parent family, I view marriage as less important” while single parenting (dependent variable) was measured by the question – “...I feel contented with being a single mother”. Therefore, if this value is equal to or less than the set alpha level, the outcome is significant (normally .05). Since the p-value (0.01) in this case is less than the standard alpha value, and the Chi-Square value is 438.78, and the degree of freedom (df) is 16, we rejected the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, which states that there is a relationship between family background and single parenting among unmarried mothers.

Simply put, the outcome is important, and some participants prefer to continue being single mothers as a result of their experiences as children in their respective families. Some women do not wish to be under the control of men because their mothers’ experiences were not motivating for them to follow. This is consistent with the explanation provided by symbolic interactionism, which holds that investigating the actors' experiences and interpretations is necessary to comprehending human behavior. People are viewed as active creators of their own behavior, interpreting, evaluating, defining, and planning their own behavior (Milliken & Schreiber, 2012, Shirley, 2011). Some of the women in this scenario have made decisions based on their personal experiences about what they desire, regardless of what society says. Their decision to continue

living as single people and to continue choosing to have children could not be affected by outside factors. This finding supports the argument of Adejoh et al. (2019) that many young people prefer single parenting because of the negative attitude of relationships that has been ingrained due to the bad childhood exposure to the bad exposure in their childhood. The findings are in line with other others such as Golombok & Badger (2010), Diez et al. (2021), De la Rosa et al. (2021) and Rayn (2021) that single motherhood is emerging as a result of individual choice, where women choose to adopt or have children without marrying, through insemination. The following section discussed empirical findings on age on single parenting

6.4. Age on Single Parenting

In Nigeria, a woman's age upon marriage determines both her entry into new family responsibilities and her likelihood of having children (Marphatia et al., 2017). The wider health and social ramifications of variation in women's marriage ages for public health, however, have received insufficient attention. Basically, with regards to age on single parenting, findings from this study show how cases of underage pregnancy, rejection or denial of pregnancy and over age pregnancy, delayed childbirth have impact on single parenting. All these themes were articulated in the following section, as shown in the table 6.3 below.

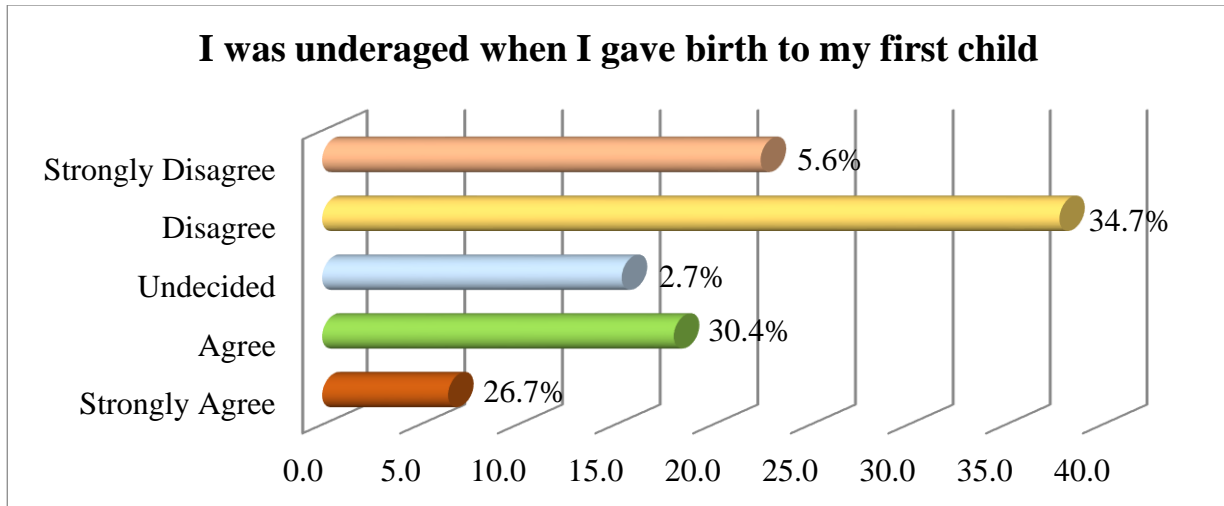
Table 6.3. Identification of themes from responses

Objective	Sub-Theme for Analysis
Age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Underage pregnancy and single parenting
	Unplanned pregnancy, rejection or denial, and single parenting
	Over age, delayed childbirth, and single parenting

6.4.1. Underage pregnancy and single parenting

Findings from the graph below reveal that these unmarried single mothers were under-aged when they gave birth to their first child. Most of the research participants (34.7%) disagreed and 5.6% also strongly disagreed with the notion that they were underaged when they gave birth to their first child. However, a majority of 57.11% of the research participants agreed and strongly agreed that they were underaged when they had their first child.

Figure 6.14. I was underaged when I first gave birth to my child



Source: Field work (2022)

These results show that majority of the single mothers were underaged when they had their first child. In line with these above-mentioned findings, the World Health Organization (2020) describes someone as underage when he or she is between ages 10 and 19. In developing countries, about 20 million females between the ages of 15 and 19 become pregnant each year, and an estimated 12 million of them give birth (Saha, 2020). In developing nations also, there are at least 770,000 births of young girls under the age of 15. (UNFPA, 2013). Peer pressure, sexual assault and rape, social media impact, poverty, inadequate access to contraceptives, and lack of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health are some of the variables that contribute to this (Ochiogu et al., 2011; Ahmed et al., 2017; Alabi et al., 2018). This was expressed in the responses provided by single mothers in this study.

“I was twelve when I had my first child. It was my first because a friend set me up. The guy invited me to his house after asking me out. He forcefully imposed himself on me and the result was my first pregnancy. I never knew what contraceptive was by then, but I had to carry it because I came from a Christian background that frowned against abortion”
(Interviewee No 3, January 2022)

“My life would have been better than this if I knew about the use of contraceptives. I would say I have a high libido, and you will not believe that I had my first sex at age 8. I was so

active, and at age 13, I had my first pregnancy. Surprising, right? (Interviewee No 22, February 2022).

“I lost my parents as a result of the crisis in the north. As a result, I was moved to Lagos at age 10. And for about 4 years while I was staying with my aunty, I was maltreated and because I was looking for an escape route. I felt pressured to have a boyfriend hoping to get married soon. He deceived me in the process because I was so naïve. I later got pregnant. He never accepted it and till today, I am bearing the brunt” (Interviewee No 19, February, 2022)

...and

“I was raped at the age of thirteen by a group of three boys in school. The way it happened was that, at night, while going to the dormitory, I was accosted, with my face tied. (It was...) not until the fifth month that I realized I was pregnant. How do you want me to know them because I was so young? I have lived with this child since then.” (Interviewee No 12, January, 2022)

Results from the aforementioned interview extracts suggest that teen pregnancy has become a serious issue, especially in Nigeria, where over 10% of girls become mothers by the time they are 16 years old, giving them the highest proportion in Africa (Sagalova et al., 2021). According to WHO (2022) findings, teenage girls in some Nigerian communities are under pressure to get married and have children early. Similar to this, the World Bank reports that in Nigeria, over 36% of girls marry before the age of 18, and 12% before the age of 15. The age at which a first pregnancy can occur is largely determined by the misconceptions that these young girls have about using contraceptives, as well as by the fact that they are unable to access them because of their age, marital status, or financial limitations.

Having established the above patterns, the question at this juncture is: what role does underage pregnancy have on single parenting? As previously mentioned, underage sexual activity is a significant societal concern in Nigeria. Despite trend statistics showing a decline in the rates of initiating sexual contact and sexual risk behaviors among teenagers in recent years (Eaton et al. 2011, a significant percentage of youth participate in risky behavior of various kinds). In addition,

a lot of young girls lack correct information about sexual activities and the health dangers they pose.

Well over half of the women in this study were under the age of 15 when they had their debut child, which was proven to be a major predictor of single motherhood. It is safe to conclude that age and single parenting have a significant relationship. By implication, early initiation of sex increases the probability of becoming a single mother because it leads to premarital childbirth and underage pregnancies. These could be justified by the following responses provided by some single mothers who participated in this study.

“To be honest with you, while growing up, I think it is right to say I enjoyed my youth. You know about youthful exuberance? It was a definition of me. I had several sex partners, and God caught me, I got pregnant at the age 14. I gave birth to twins, and in the process of recovering, growing and taking care of my kids, I lost it. And look at me now, I have 2 more kids, making a total of four, with three different fathers. As a result, I think marriage is not necessary. Let me just take care of my kids; that’s the ultimate” (Interviewee No 16, February 2022).

“My mother was a single mother, and due to little supervision, I got pregnant at age 15. In fact, I did not believe it, not until a nurse confirmed it after a test. I dropped out of school as a result and till now, at 25 I am still single and unmarried. Though it pays off, my concern is my business and my son” (Interviewee No 12, January 2022).

... and

“I found out I was pregnant when it was six months. Actually, I thought it was some form of infection that was making feel uneasy. Then I was just 14 years, and it was as if the whole should come down. I was so foolish that I still allow this same guy to impregnate me the second and third time. I felt it was love. Now I am thirty, and unfortunately, he is now married to another woman. What more do I need marriage for, after three children? My brother, life goes on” (Interviewee No 28, February 2022).

The aforementioned excerpts demonstrate that premarital childbirth increases women's likelihood of becoming single, unmarried mothers. This result is consistent with past studies that have demonstrated that single parenting would become prevalent when premarital fertility is high (Palamuleni and Adebawale, 2014; Smith-Greenaway and Shelley, 2020; Poulin et al., 2021). The findings also show that the number of surviving children and the age of first birth were reliable indicators of single parenthood. According to the research, women who have their first child when they are mature and older are less likely to be single mothers than women who have their first child when they are younger. According to the intersectional feminism hypothesis, young girls' overlapping identities and early fertility can result in a number of negative effects, including early pregnancy.

Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory of self-control supported this as well. According to this framework, a person's ability to self-regulate influences has a big impact on their behaviour. According to this argument, we would anticipate that these teenage girls' impulsivity and lack of self-control would be a strong indicator of an earlier age at first intercourse and early pregnancy. Furthermore, we would anticipate that among people who have better impulse control (less impulsivity) than those who are more impulsive, the link between early sex and early pregnancy would be smaller. This is further elaborated in the next section which attempts to capture unplanned pregnancy, rejection/denial and single parenting.

6.4.2. Unplanned pregnancy, rejection or denial and single parenting

As shown in table 6.4. below, when asked if they ever were victims of denials of their pregnancies by any man; 64.7% of single mothers were in the affirmative, which indicates that they once had pregnancy denials. On the other hand, findings show that only 33% of the participants disagreed with the notion that denial of pregnancy led to single parenting. In other words, most of the participants revealed that they were solely left to take care of their children.

Table 6.4. Denial of pregnancy which led to taking care of children alone

I once had denial of my pregnancy by my boyfriend of which I had to take the sole responsibility	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	106	23.6
Agree	185	41.1
Undecided	12	2.7
Disagree	133	29.6
Strongly Disagree	14	3.1
Total	450	100.0

Source: Field work (2022)

The above is consistent with the qualitative findings of this study, as the following excerpts show:

“I was just 6 months into a relationship when I got pregnant. It was unplanned and a complete shock when my partner said he was not sure he was the father. We argued this till the ninth month and because of my sanity, I left him alone. However, I decided to keep the baby. I really wanted to be a mom” (Interviewee No 18, January, 2022)

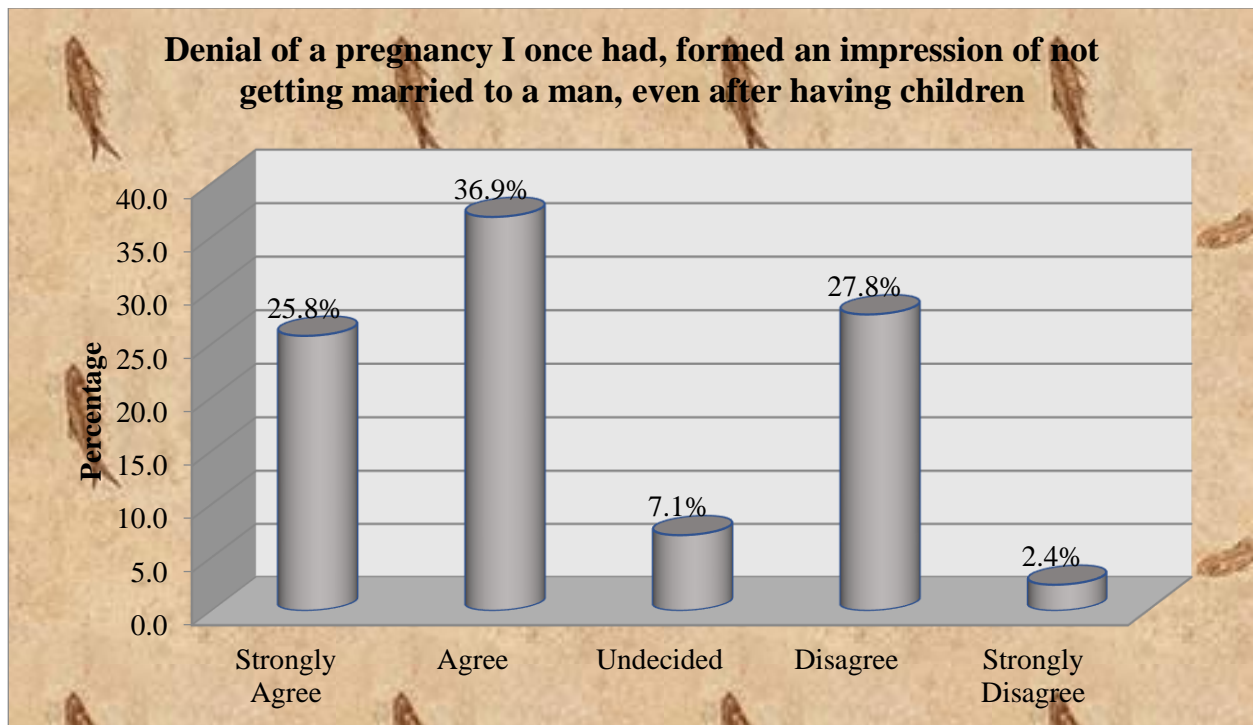
...and

“The father of my baby and I were opposites. He actually values his own space and time, and enjoys spending time on his own. This compounded the problems when I told him I was pregnant. He threatened me and said he was not the father, not until the child was 4 years. He later accepted when he saw the child looked so much like him. Upon all this, I never allowed him access to this child and that has been the situation. That has been the only child I have since then, and I am okay” (Interviewee No 30, February, 2022)

Denial of pregnancy is more common than may be thought today, and this is traced largely to the puzzle on ‘who owns the baby?’, whether prior to its delivery or after its delivery. This basically encompasses pregnancies that are unwanted or mistimed, that is, it occurred when no child was desired in the course of the sexual union or in the friendship process. Evidence from single mothers in this study shows how rejection and denial of pregnancies led to these women taking sole care of their children. As a result of the experiences of pregnancy denial and rejection encountered by

single mothers, a majority of such mothers have resorted to raising their children on their own: hence, they adapted to single parenting as shown in the next section. This was evident in this study too, as shown in figure 6.15 (below), where a majority (62.7%) of unmarried single mothers who have been victims of pregnancy denial by their boyfriends had decided never to get married to any man even after having children. While 7.1% were undecided, 30.2% did not agree that they once formed an impression of not getting married to a man even after having children, as a result of pregnancy denial. What this clearly means is that, the shock, pain and agony these women passed through in the course of their pregnancies made them resort to not needing the assistance of any man; which then later also engendered single parenting.

Figure 6.15. Denial of pregnancy creating an impression of not getting married



Source: Source: Field work (2022)

To corroborate these, the following were extracted from single mothers who participated in the study.

“My trust was broken; my confidence was ruined. And in the end, he left me for another woman, because he felt I was cheating, and that he was not sure if he was the father of my

son. It left me feeling alone, rejected and abandoned, and to this end, I vowed never to get married to any useless man” (Interviewer No 15, January 2020)

“When I missed my period, I told my boyfriend. I was still quite young then, and the first this he said was that, if I could not abort the pregnancy, I should forget about him being the father. I tested positive initially, and after informing him, he said the same thing, even after several pleas. His parents did not even help matters because they took sides with him. I felt so rejected and abandoned, and this affected my attitude towards the child. I have moved on though, but I can’t make a mistake, saying I want to settle down with a man. Never!!” (Interviewer No 19, February, 2020).

...and

“Exactly...10 weeks into the pregnancy, the father of my child left me because he doubted the eligibility of the child. It was unexpected, and he took it seriously that he had to even relocate to the U.S. without informing me. You won’t believe that till now, he has never asked of the child, and I am not interested to talk to him about it. Unfortunately, my mother also experienced this” (Interviewee No 19, February, 2022)

Drawing from the foregoing, an increasing body of research demonstrates that unwanted births result in substantial repercussions for denying the child, which, as this study's findings reveal, largely leads to single parenting. Prior studies from Vinh and Tuan (2015); Ngo et al. (2014) and Gray et al. (2013) show that unplanned pregnancy is not a reliable path to strong partner unions, most especially among young people who fear starting a new life. This pessimism could be due to fears regarding finances, or to the need to be committed to one partner only. The new findings given in this research clearly demonstrate that girls who become pregnant unintentionally are more likely to experience rejection or denial, which makes them completely responsible for raising their children, a responsibility that can grow as they get older.

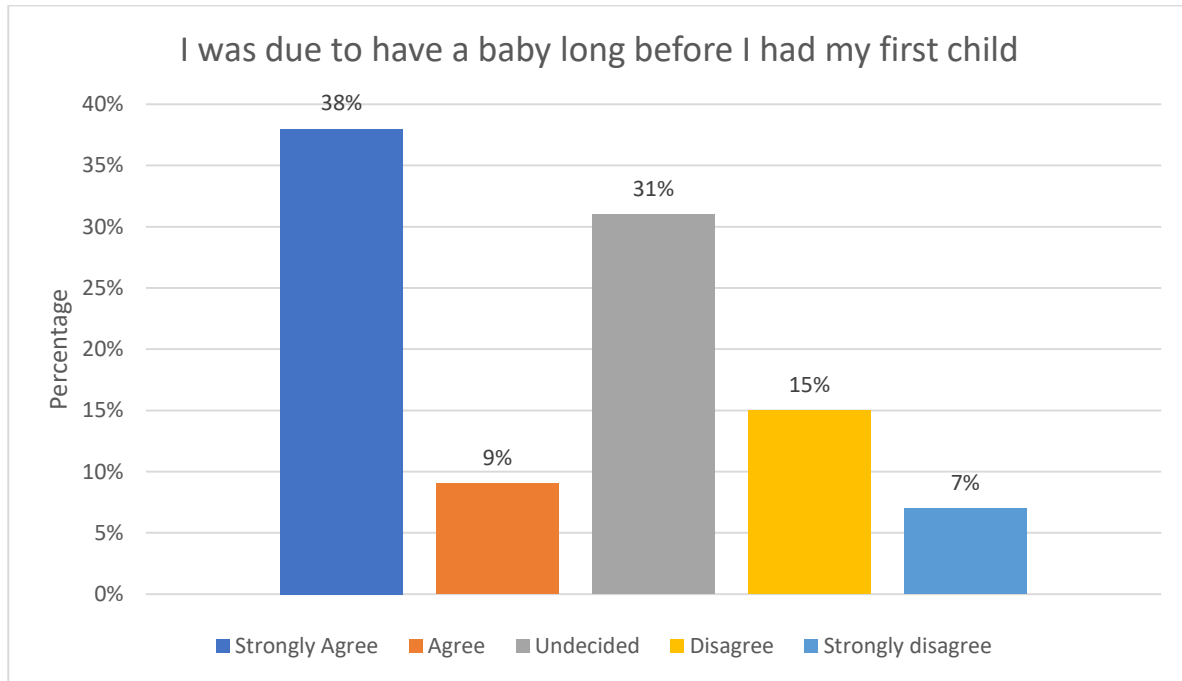
The results of this study are supported by studies from Alley et al (2021) and Sara (et al., 2021). They state that partners who experience birth as a consequence of an unanticipated pregnancy are more likely to go through intense levels of interpersonal conflict as a result of the pregnancy's rejection. It was further discovered that they are less likely to report relationship happiness due to the fact that the male partner might not be in tune with keeping the pregnancy and are more likely to report symptoms of depression and anger by the female partner, when compared to partners who have a planned pregnancy. This major effect of pregnancy rejection and denial is linked to the diminished wellbeing of the child since the woman may experience some anguish of regret that would ultimately be passed on to the child. It also has a negative impact on the woman's mental and physical health.

With the fact that majority of single mothers who participated in the study had pregnancies which was denied by some sexual partners, they were able to keep the babies, hence, nurturing them alone, or with the assistance of their family members. This choice of keeping these babies is a reflection of the principles of the social exchange theory (Homans, 1961); because single mothers weigh the potential benefits and risks of either keeping the child or aborting same. When the risks and consequences of keeping their children outweigh the rewards, they terminate or abandon the relationship and then decide to move through the care giving all alone. This, to a greater extent, informs their choice to become single mothers.

6.5. Over age, delayed childbirth and single parenting

Marriage is a significant indicator of adulthood in Nigeria (Obidoa et al., 2019). Prolonged non-marriage is essentially frowned upon in any Nigerian situation, and permanent non-marriage for women has no place in the country's socio-cultural system—with the exception of nuns and monks, who are religious celibates or adhere to a particular religion or spiritual path. In addition to this, the majority of people decide to become single parents because they believe that their window of opportunity to conceive naturally is closing and that they have no available partners. This decision is therefore intentional, as all available options are considered before beginning the process to become a single parent.

Figure 6.16. I was due to have a baby long before the first child was born



Source: Source: Field work (2022)

This was reflected in the case of unmarried single mothers who participated in this study. As shown in figure 6.16 above, many more respondents (47%) were expected to have had their babies long before they had their first child. While 31% were undecided, 22% disagreed to the fact that they were due to have a baby long before they had their first child. Based on the responses of majority, it shows that they had gone past the recommended age of child birth, and with the fear or apprehension of losing out of the motherhood bracket, they resorted to getting pregnant by all means and through any deliberate avenue.

In line with this argument, the following interview excerpts show some consistency:

“Sometimes men are intimidated or overwhelmed by women’s status or even things as simple or trivial as women’s poise or self-confidence” (Interviewee No 8, January, 2022)

“Some men are looking for working class women who will help them. I think most men, most especially in Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja want women who will contribute financially; they even prefer a fifty-fifty thing, that is, a contractual agreement. They enjoy it, and that was why I decided not to venture into marriage. These men nearly sucked me and my finances dry. If I then marry them, what will become of me?” (Interviewee No 14, January 2022).

“I cannot see a man that is not working and he says he wants to marry me and I will agree, because I know I won’t cope. He must be doing something to earn a living. He must be doing something that can feed him and me” (Interviewee No 16, February 2022).

“Merely looking at other people’s marriage; in fact, let me be frank with I won’t marry. I always ask God to bless me so that I will continue to be financially secure; I will be OK without a man” (Interviewee No 10, January, 2022).

... and

“We had been together for two years when I got pregnant. I was still working and I became pregnant unexpectedly. It led to conflict with my partner. That made me think... what do I want? I was 36 years old back then and I was thinking what do I want in life? Do I want to have children or don’t I? What has to change in my life? The only thing that had to change was my relationship, which was troubled anyway, and my work. So, I made up my mind about all that. I thought, if I don’t do it now, perhaps I won’t have children for the rest of my life, so I kept the baby” (Interviewer No 2, January, 2022).

The respondents’ narratives gave a general overview of why women who are over age, get pregnant and decide to go the single parent way, and according to the findings of this study, they are a function of economic resource possession and mate selection preference. Regarding the possession of financial resources by women, real or perceived great economic performance restricted the respondents' ability to get married because of ingrained cultural stereotypes about wealthy women in Nigeria. In consonance with the social exchange theory that was supported in

Emerson and Cook (1976) and McDoneil et al. (2006), over age women are often seen as unmarriageable, arrogant and too independent. Additionally, several of the respondents who experienced economic empowerment expressed a desire for an ideal match and were hesitant to wed individuals who were either jobless or earning less money. To put it another way, some women have the idea that they should only get married to wealthy men who would be able to support their families. But based on the results of this investigation, this looks to be quite difficult to locate. Some people, nevertheless, would settle for remaining single. As a result, some of the women's desire to pursue marriage for financial reasons decreased after achieving financial independence.

Apart from the possession of economic resources leading to being overaged for marriage, the study also identified the role of *mate selection preference*. Numerous unmarried women turned down marriage proposals from males who did not fit their ideal personal, financial, age, academic, ethnicity or social, physical, and religious criteria. Faith in God, love, care, honesty and hard work were the respondents' top preferences for personal qualities in a potential partner. One discussant made a statement emphasizing the justification for self-selection based on emotion and personal aspirations. This position was supported by other people who participated in this study's interviews.

“I think the reason why some women these days don't get married on time is because we realize that in the time past our parents lived unfulfilled lives ... but now, we understand that marriage can only make or destroy you as a woman. There are so many women out there whose lives are in shambles by reason of marriage. When you get close to them you find out that they are supposed to be great women in different areas of life but because of marriage, every vision, every gift is shattered. So now, people are marrying based on you help me as a man I help you as a woman, and when this does not fall in place, they prefer to stay single. I am indeed a living example” (Interviewee No 28, February, 2022).

Age and single parenting among mothers who are not married are significantly correlated, according to data from the survey and interviews. This was established from the hypothesis below:

H₀: There is no relationship between age and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between age and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Table 6.5. Chi-Square test on the relationship between age and single parenting

		I feel contented with being a single mother					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
I feel there is an age bracket for women to give birth	Strongly Agree	42	18	16	18	33	127
		9.3%	4.0%	3.6%	4.0%	7.3%	28.2%
	Agree	9	39	27	79	23	177
		2.0%	8.7%	6.0%	17.6%	5.1%	39.3%
	Undecided	0	12	17	18	5	52
		0.0%	2.7%	3.8%	4.0%	1.1%	11.6%
	Disagree	10	32	12	19	6	79
		2.2%	7.1%	2.7%	4.2%	1.3%	17.6%
Strongly Disagree	3	0	0	6	6	15	
	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	3.3%	
Total	64	101	72	140	73	450	
	14.2%	22.4%	16.0%	31.1%	16.2%	100.0%	

X²= 124.025; df= 16; Sig=<.000

The Chi-Square table 6.5 above show the test between age and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Age (Independent variable) was measured using the question – “...I feel there is an age bracket for women to give birth” while single parenting (dependent variable) was measured by the question – “...I feel contented with being a single mother”. Therefore, if this value is similar to or lower than the set alpha level, the outcome is significant (normally .05). With a Chi-Square value of 124.025 and a degree of freedom (df) of 16, we may rule out the null hypothesis in this situation and accept the alternative, which states that there is a connection between age and single parenting among unmarried mothers.

Based on these, the two main factors that influence the present rate of single parenting made possible by advanced age are economic empowerment and partner preference. Other predictors identified during the course of the investigation include other women's marriage experiences as well as cultural behaviours and attitudes. In several societies, comparable results were discovered in earlier investigations. Modernity-driven economic empowerment and education of women are closely linked to postponement in first marriage in many societies (Blake et al., 2020; Gammage, 2020; Jocelyn, 2021; Dhyani, 2021). Finding or being discovered in the marriage market is strongly influenced by personal choices. Those whose choices align with their local marriage

market wed, while those whose desires don't align with the resources accessible market resources either compromise their expected resources or stay single (Pierre-Andre, 2020; Sean and Brooke, 2022).

The experiences of single mothers' in this study in relation to partner preferences support the idea that modernism, feminism, and individualism have an impact on women's personal life decisions. This can be largely linked with the symbolic interactionist theory, which speaks to the construction of meaning in social interactions: the negative meaning of a nuclear family, despite its universality, is brought to the fore and discarded as it remains dysfunctional to a free and independent lifestyle. That is, they see positive meaning in choosing what they want as single mothers, in terms of being fully independent economically, or they succumb to the desire of a man who wants to marry them. Those who go for the former, stay single until they are overaged for marriage ('out of the market' so to speak). Although tradition still has a role in their worldview, its influence is dwindling quickly. Individual values, benefits, and ambitions are now prioritized over community and kindred aspirations, quickly replacing them as the main factors in choosing a partner. In accordance with Giddens' (2006) structuration theory, modernism is exemplified by greater reflexivity in all facets of life, including selecting a spouse. According to him, decision-making in the modern world will be driven by personal preferences and benefits rather than by societal norms (Giddens, 2006), and the mother who has never been married, appears to be following this line of reasoning. The findings about the impact of women's economic possession in Nigeria reflect the country's rising urbanization and city life. This is consistent with past research that link an increase in older single women to urban life (Awoloye et al., 2018; Sanni et al., 2018).

6.7. Conclusion

This study offers empirical evidence to support the claim that nuclear marriage is in danger of becoming universal in Nigeria. According to the Nigeria Health Watch (2021), the disruption of traditional patterns of mate preferences and norms of early and universal marriage, increased female education, migration, and social emancipation are to blame for the change in Nigeria's rising female age at marriage. The causes of singleness identified in this study support this finding, suggesting that Nigeria's historical pattern of early and widespread marriage would continue to break down as the cases of singlehood increase.

CHAPTER SEVEN
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: EDUCATION AND PERCEIVED ECONOMIC BENEFITS ON SINGLE PARENTING

7.1. Introduction

This section examined the various events and experiences of single mothers from the point of view of education and perceived economic benefits that facilitated the growth and adoption of single parenting in Nigeria. Education is an important aspect of the society because it significantly inculcates useful skills, values and attitude into individuals. Sociologically, it is useful in ensuring survival. As a backdrop to this study, this variable was used to address the first research question in this section:

1. What is the role of education as a factor in determining single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?
2. How, if at all, does perceived economic or other benefits contribute to single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria?

In addition, this section considered issues on perceived economic benefits and how it plays a role in determining single parenting. Basically, this was utilised in understanding various streams of income owned by unmarried mothers to also survive. Hence the following research question:

7.2. Educational qualification on Single Parenting

The educational and reproductive aspirations of young people in the developing world have undergone enormous change in recent years: educational levels are rising worldwide (Reher, 2019; Sas et al., 2020), while fertility trends are sloping lower (viz. early fertility and fertility in general). To this end, the level at which educational qualification impacts single parenting are presented in this section. The themes developed are presented in table 7.1 below.

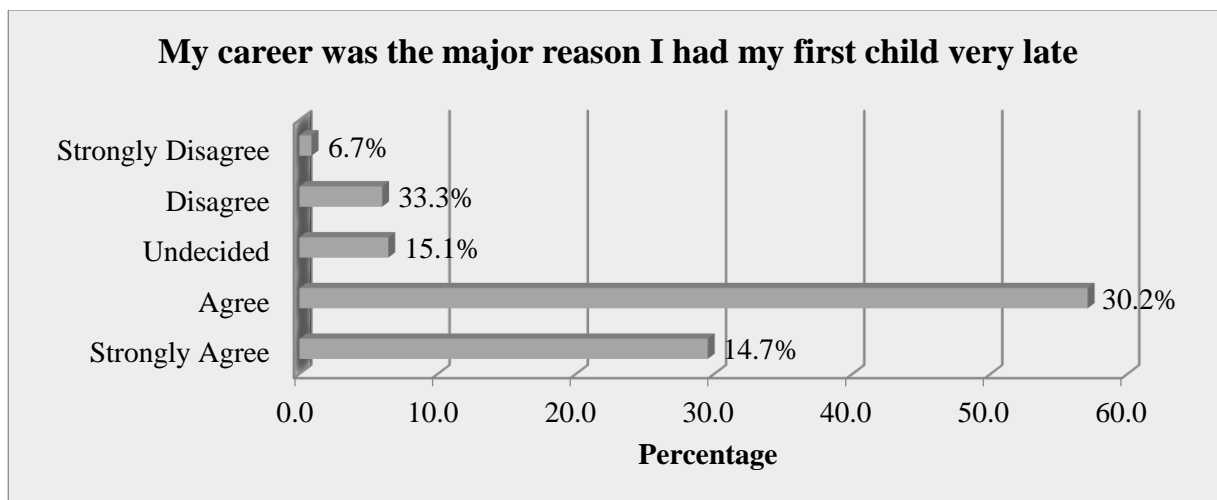
Table 7.1. Identification of themes from responses

Objective	Sub-Theme for Analysis
Education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Education, career and age at first childbirth
	Education, contraceptive use and single parenting

7.2.1. Education, career, and age at first childbirth

Lower educational attainment is one of a number of negative maternal outcomes linked to early conception in women. The timing of significant events in women's lives, such as when they start having children and taking on marital obligations, is significantly influenced by education. On a fundamental level, girls who are in school are typically not married, and vice versa (Marphatia, et al. 2020). Therefore, women are more likely to marry later in life the more education they possess. As a result, decades of demographic study have shown a high correlation between education and family formation at the individual level. In particular, it has long been known from a number of micro-level studies (Wodon et al., 2017; Sekine and Hodgkin, 2017; Bongaarts et al., 2017) that women with more education start having children later in life than those with less education.

Figure 7.1. Career as the major reason for late childbirth



Source: Source: Field work (2022)

This was evident in this study as shown in figure 7.1 above, where a larger proportion of the respondents (45%) agreed that their career was the major reason they had their first child very late compared to 41% who disagreed with the notion that their career was the reason they had their first child late. 15% of the participants were undecided. These findings reveal that while some, due to the length of time it takes to acquire education, inevitably postpone marriage; but for others, it was based on the need to build an effective career path that would sustain their future income level, and when the family sets in, there could be a distortion of this career goal. This was also expressed in some of the qualitative responses that were obtained from the key informant interviews.

“If we say let us marry, our husbands will train us in school, it’s a lie...By the time we give birth to one, two, three children, education is finished...By the time we enter marital union, ‘honey’ and ‘sweetie’ will end, and I will not go to school again” (Interviewee No 25, February, 2022)

“Whereas women are getting educated and their values and preferences are improving, the cultural ideals of early marriage and traditional mate selection preference are fading away at a slower pace. For instance, I was 35 when I had my first child. I had my baby for a married man. Of course, it pays me like that because my career is still intact” (Interviewee No 21, February, 2022).

... and

“When a woman is too educated, it limits the number of men who will come around her because men have ego. They want a woman they can control, a woman they are more than, not a woman that will seem to rule over them” (Interviewee No 18, February, 2022).

Findings from both the interviews and survey show that, for many women, their career is a cornerstone to their world and who they are. They do a trade-off between the options of a family or a career choice. While holding onto the latter, they build prospects which would hold them on for the future (Durante, 2022). This mostly relies on economic theory, which highlights certain

fundamental ways in which postponed parenthood and marriage may be linked to single parenting among mothers who are not married. These pathways include increased interpersonal or partnership stability as well as rewards on both human and financial capital (Lazzari, 2022). It's significant that these pathways have also been linked to socio-economic differences in the educational progression of women. According to this economic hypothesis, having children comes with significant opportunity costs for women. When women have children, they frequently leave the workforce, at least temporarily, which results in a loss of experience and income. Delaying childbirth or fertility, however, can cause these losses to occur at a more affordable time, such as after a woman has gathered a lot of work experience, has a more stable job, and can afford the high expense of child care. Their decision to be single mothers would mostly depend on how long they put off getting married. If they accept this trade-off, they may end up becoming single parents since they are too old to get married. Nevertheless, not everyone may be able to take advantage of these advantages of delayed fertility. Instead, they are based on the general situation of women in the labor market, which is heavily dependent on their educational attainment.

The planned behavior theory of Ajzen (1991) is helpful in explaining the effects of schooling on solitary parenting among unmarried moms. It contends that intentions are the most direct predictor of the associated behavior and has some overlap with the social exchange theory. This theory states that three groups of factors have an immediate impact on intentions: (a) personal positive and negative attitudes toward the behavior, such as getting married and having children; (b) subjective norms, such as perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in the behavior; and (c) perceived behavioural control, such as the ability to perform the behavior, which may rely heavily, for example, on the availability of housing, income, or other factors. Significantly, whereas perceived behavioural control is more important in the decision to have a child, the move to single parenting is mostly driven by the existing subjective norm and individual beliefs toward marriage. It is reasonable to infer that the perception of behavioural control has a favourable impact on the intentions of single, highly educated women to become pregnant (Testa and Grilli, 2006). In summary, highly educated women frequently choose status and education over marriage. Since marriage makes it easier to have children and raise them, which they view as being time-consuming, an increase in wage rates has a negative substitution effect on the desire for marriage, which has led to an increase in single parenting.

This implies that, in addition to the fact that lack of awareness about the use of contraceptives mediates as a factor to single parenting, it has also been found that education delays marriage and childbirth by increasing the autonomy of women, allowing them more power over marriage decisions and, through employment before marriage, greater control over resources (Marphatia et al., 2020; Wajim, 2020). Similar to how knowledge autonomy, decision-making autonomy, physical autonomy and interaction with the outside world, emotional autonomy, economic and social autonomy, and self-reliance are all influenced by education and are particularly significant for fertility decisions, this current study and related literature have identified five separate but interdependent elements of autonomy. Nevertheless, by applying the same reasoning, these increases in autonomy ought to provide girls more influence over how long they spend in school, giving them more exposure to the educational factors that have an impact on these demographic processes.

7.2.2. Education, Contraceptive use and single parenting

As shown in table 7.2 below, it was found that a majority of unmarried single mothers (56%), agreed that women with higher educational attainment are less likely to be single mothers because of their knowledge of contraceptive use, whilst 23.1% disagreed, 3.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed with this notion.

Table 7.2. Higher educational attainment and single parenting

Women with higher educational attainment are likely to be single mothers because of their knowledge of contraceptive use, which will not make them experience early child birth	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	119	26.4
Agree	133	29.6
Undecided	79	17.6
Disagree	104	23.1
Strongly Disagree	15	3.3
Total	450	100.0

Source: Field work (2022)

Some respondents also mentioned that their inability or failure to utilize contraception resulted in their unintended pregnancies. They concurred that their failure to use contraceptives such condoms

during sex or tablets prior to or following sex was the cause of their pregnancy. This was also in line with the qualitative findings; when asked about this, some of them had this to say.

“Would I say I was raped at the age of 17? Well, it was my neighbor who forcefully had sex with me. It was not even long, however, if he had either used a condom, or if I had used pills, I would not have been a single mother now. That time, I was not too exposed nor educated compared to what I know now” **(Interviewee No 9, January, 2022).**

...and

“I was meant to use contraceptives, a drug which I failed to use within 72 hours of sexual intercourse. I got pregnant at 22 years of age, and I am left to cater for the child alone since the father is still a student. I dropped out of school to cater for this child” **(Interviewee No 17, February, 2022).**

The implication of this is that, although health facilities have increased significantly and rapidly in modern societies, women now have the opportunity to make certain health decisions and choices, like surrogacy and assisted reproduction, among others (Alemayehu and Meskele, 2017). However, little effort has been made towards the use of contraceptives because some women see this routinely as a private matter.

In a nutshell, this study establishes that education is a correlate of single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. When compared to women who are illiterate, mothers who are educated are more inclined to be single mothers, and as these women's educational attainment increases, marriage becomes less likely (Torr, 2011). Professional single women have given a variety of reasons for not getting married, including the need for independence and difficulty finding the perfect mate. The marriage market for educated women is impacted because these ladies want to marry intelligent men, whereas educated men typically marry women who are less educated than them. Another obstacle to marriage among educated women is bride-wealth payment customs, which are expensive and beyond of reach for them.

Social exchange theory can explain this finding: it is a socio-economic theory that explains contraceptive use and delayed fertility as a result of educational attainment. It also emphasizes the direct and indirect opportunity costs associated with choosing to delay having children (Becker, 1981a). This idea contends that more education and higher labour force involvement lead to greater economic independence for women. By implication, it lessens the benefits of marriage, allowing single parenting among mothers who are not married. In other words, because of their high levels of education, it is considered that women choose not to start families or get married in order to earn more money.

All these findings have been justified from the hypothesis test result conducted using Chi-Square. Basically, table 7.2 below shows a Chi-Square result for the test which examined the relationship between educational qualification and single parenting among unmarried mothers. The statement is presented as:

H₀: There is no relationship between education and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between education and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Table 7.3. Chi-Square test showing the relationship between education and single parenting.

		I feel contented with being a single mother					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
I give priority to my career than marriage	Strongly Agree	35 7.8%	7 7.8%	12 2.7%	7 1.6%	24 5.3%	85 18.9%
	Agree	15 3.3%	73 16.2%	21 4.7%	52 11.6%	12 2.7%	173 38.4%
	Undecided	2 0.4%	6 1.3%	17 3.8%	42 9.3%	21 4.7%	88 19.6%
		Disagree	8 1.8%	14 3.1%	15 3.3%	33 7.3%	16 3.6%
	Strongly Disagree	4 0.9%	1 0.2%	7 1.6%	6 1.3%	0 0.0%	18 4.0%
	Total	64 14.2%	101 22.4%	72 16.0%	140 31.1%	73 16.2%	450 100.0%
		X ² = 164.527; df= 16; Sig=<.000					

From this test presented in table 7.3 above, Educational qualification (Independent variable) was measured using the question – “...I gave priority to my career than marriage” while single parenting (dependent variable) was measured by the question – “...I feel contented with being a single mother”. Therefore, if this value is similar to or lower than the set alpha level, the outcome is significant (normally .05). We will reject the null hypothesis in this situation because the degree of freedom (df) is 16 and the Chi-Square value is 164.527; the p-value (0.00) is less than the standard alpha value; therefore, we accepted the alternative, which stated that there is a connection between education and single parenting among unmarried mothers.

The evidence confirms what has already been shown in the body of literature that educated women delay having children and getting married, are more likely to use contemporary contraception as a result, and eventually have lower fertility rates than do less educated women (Some et al., 2021; Karaoglan and Saracoglu, 2021). In the literature on economics, this is illustrated by a decreased demand for children as a result of higher opportunity costs associated with parenting among highly educated women who typically have more options on the job market. Yaya et al. (2018) and Adedini et al. (2019) also demonstrated a substantial relationship between education level and chance of taking a certain form of contraception. Further, it was reported by Orlanes and Cuarteros (2020) and Goedele (2020) that the projected probability of using contraceptives were significantly greater for employees and self-employed women.

By implication, education appears to increase women's knowledge of family planning and the usage of contraceptives. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to use contraceptive techniques than women with lower levels of education, as has already been shown in this study. Women with higher levels of education have had more exposure to information on contraception and are more knowledgeable about their role in controlling fertility. Education also indirectly contributes to their higher use of contraceptives: while attending school does not always result in literacy, time spent in a classroom may improve literacy abilities, enabling women to comprehend decontextualized language and influencing behavior (Levine, et al., 2012; Pazol et al., 2015).

The mother's time is heavily invested in child-rearing tasks. Due to its time commitment, education also decreases women's want or desire for children while increasing their need for contraception. As a result, highly educated women are more inclined to put off having children while continuing their studies. Women with higher levels of education demand fewer children once they complete their schooling and enter the workforce than women with lower levels of education. The higher cost of lost income is the cause of this. Therefore, educated women are more likely than their less educated colleagues to use contraceptive techniques throughout their productive years in the workforce.

7.3. Perceived Economic Benefits and Single Parenting

Another reason why some women may decide to continue living single lives while having children is the perceived economic rewards by some participants. According to empirical findings, some of the female respondents admitted financial benefits from their current living situation, in which they gather some cash and material goods for their child's or children's upkeep and so profit from such resources. These are presented in this section with the following themes (Table 7.4).

Table 7.4. Identification of themes from responses

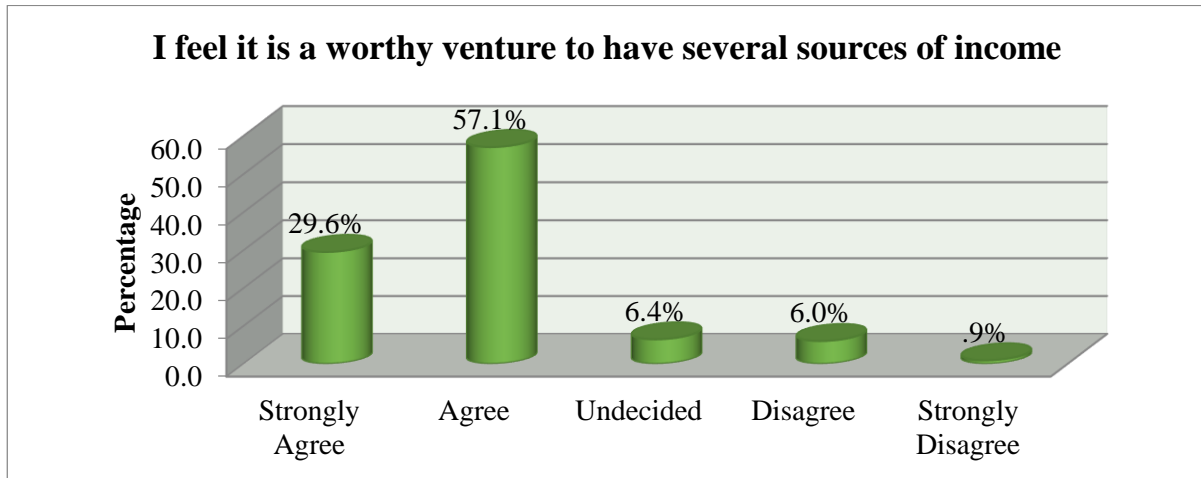
Objective	Sub-Theme for Analysis
Perceived economic benefits on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Single parenting, dating multiple partners, and numerous income possibilities
	Dating multiple partners for economic gains

7.3.1. Single parenting, dating multiple partners and numerous income possibilities

Due to the constrained economic situation of Nigeria, there has been the need for seeking multiple streams of income to cushion this effect. Most people employ various means to sustain their families, and single mothers are not left out. This was supported by single mothers when asked if it was a worthy venture to have several sources or streams of income. Basically, majority, representing 86.7% agreed to this fact because it enables single mothers to achieve financial independence and have the capacity to cater for their needs and that of their children if the need arises (see Figure 7.2 below). Results are in line with Leyes (2020) who argues that utilising

numerous streams of income enables greater stability and safety for single mothers, and ultimately, ensuring a fulfilled life.

Figure 7.2. The worthiness of having several streams of income



Source: Field work (2022)

Against this backdrop on the need to have multiple sources of income, some single mothers who participated in this study, expressed it as follows:

“I am a teacher, and there are other avenues where I get money to fend for my kids. I know there is no support from the fathers of my kids, so I had to come to my senses” (Interviewee No 14, January, 2022)

...and

“Going by the economic realities of Nigeria, depending on one’s source of income would lead to (...a...) heart attack, because your take home pay is not capable of taking you home. Tell me, how do you survive? Best thing is to look for side hustles to complement what you do. I am a living example of this” (Interviewee No 26, February, 2022).

As noted by the respondents, A reward that comes in the form of money or other financial advantages is called an economic benefit. They also held the opinion that financial advantages encourage women to have only one child. This is explained by the idea that because people are rational beings, they engage in and interact with other people in society for their own private gain.

Based on the research, some mothers made the decision to stay at home with their children just in order to receive financial and material benefits from the husbands. Even if this philosophy is only held by a small number of participants, those who supported this action said:

“Men are not worth suffering for. I have three children from three different men who provide financial assistance to me and their various children. As a single mother, it pays me, because I have access to this money collected for my children and I can use it as I like. Well, it is stigmatizing, but I don’t care what people say. I am happy as I am” (Interviewee No 4, January, 2022)

“My desire was to have children for a man who is so rich and I don’t have to be married to him. All I wanted was for him to take care of my children and pump more money to my account. I have achieved this, and I am presently living alone with my children and their father has been a responsible man. I don’t care what anyone feels about my status, because I am very happy” (Interviewee No 19, February, 2022)

...and

“The father of my children was very rich at the time I met him, so his wealth attracted me to him. I got pregnant for him, just to tie him down. I had a baby boy for him and he was very happy. Little did I know that he has a family abroad. He relocated back to his family in London. He called me from there that he won’t be returning to Nigeria. He sent money a few times and finally stopped sending us money. I had to carry my cross alone. My boy is 15years now; I really regret this lifestyle” (Interviewee No 21, February, 2022).

Based on these findings, we can clearly comprehend how and why families behave in the way that they do, thanks to symbolic interactionism which investigates how women are now accepting single parenting due to the changing meanings associated with family. According to symbolic interactionists (Schadler, 2014; Few-Demo, 2014), mutually understood meanings are the foundation of marital and family relationships, and sharing common interests promotes emotional ties. In connection to the meanings of symbols, it focuses on the analysis of interpersonal

communication, interpretation and adjustment patterns. This focus on symbolic interactionism's negotiated meaning, negotiated symbols, and the building of society draw attention to the roles that individuals play in society. For instance, a nuclear family has a father, a mother, and children, all of whom have distinct responsibilities (Lurcyk, 2013), these roles are essential tools for helping people grasp the viewpoint of another person and the importance of specific actions from that person's point of view. However, these roles have become less important in modern society, which has forced women to turn to single parenting as a result of their increasing independence. Apart from the fact that, this was evident in this study, as responses from the interviews show that women have children for more than two men; it was also shown that single mothers have the capabilities to take care of their children without the presence of any man.

As much as this existed before now, it extended to the era of COVID-19, where women were subjected to cater for their kids solely during lockdowns. For instance, as discovered in this study (see table 7.5 below), a majority of single mothers (48.9%) rely on themselves for childcare during COVID-19. This is followed by 12.9% and 10.2% who relied on the supports of grandparents and daycare or day school, respectively for childcare. However, a little fraction of single mothers rely on neighbours (7.1%); childcare providers who come home (8.4%) and In-laws (4.4%). The study also recorded a combination of grandparents and self (5.8%) as well as daycare/school and self (2.2%).

Table 7.5. Reliance for childcare during COVID-19

During Covid-19, who did you rely for childcare	Frequency	Percent
Daycare/School	46	10.2
Childcare providers who came to my home	38	8.4
Grandparents	58	12.9
Neighbours	32	7.1
Self	220	48.9
In-laws	20	4.4
Grandparents and self	26	5.8
Daycare/school and self	10	2.2
Total	450	100.0

Source: Field Work (2022)

his implies that, rather than leveraging support from home, mostly from their spouses, as it would be in any normal circumstances, their status as single mothers has left a vacuum which they alone

would need to fill, inclusive of their roles at home. This was evident in some responses provided by these unmarried single mothers, as the following shows.

“During the lockdown, I nearly passed out, me alone with three grown up boys. It was just God that saved me. Though it was fun and a time to bond well, but it was not easy at all”
(Interviewee No 18, February, 2022).

... and

“Unfortunately, I have twins, and before COVID-19 lockdown, I had a nanny who usually came to help out with the chores. In the wake of the lockdown when there were restrictions, I was all alone with my kids, and the work was just too much for me alone. There was no help because of the fear of contracting the virus” **(Interviewee 12, January, 2022).**

It is evident from the survey and the interviews that most women tend to have more roles and responsibility in all areas of life, such as raising children, taking care of the home and elderly relatives, and making other contributions to the community. This is consistent with earlier research by Farré et al. (2020), McLaren, Wong, Nguyen, and Mahamadachchi (2020), Yavorsky, Qian, and Sargent, as well as other studies (2021). It is more difficult for unmarried single mothers in Nigeria to manage everything on their own because they also need to manage employment, childcare, domestic responsibilities, and caring for other family members. The mental health of single mothers is also impacted by these tasks (Kallitsoglou & Topalli, 2021; Hertz, Mattes, & Shook, 2020; Kallitsoglou & Topalli, 2021).

In addition to being overrepresented in the care industry, women also perform the majority of unpaid labour at home. ILO (2018) found that on average, women spend 12 hours more a day on unpaid labour than males. There are usually sizable gender disparities in unpaid work in emerging and developing nations (ILO, 2016); a sizable number of women's unpaid work time is allocated to child care. The burden of unpaid work for unmarried single mothers grew as a result of COVID-19. For instance, the frequent closing of schools and daycare facilities increased not only the number of hours they needed to spend on childcare and child supervision but also forced many to oversee or manage homeschooling. Similar to the previous point, any increases in the amount of time spent at home due to constraint are likely to be followed by an increase in routine housekeeping, such as cooking and cleaning. Many single mothers may find it challenging to meet

these requirements, especially those who must continue working; that is, combine work and family life.

During COVID-19, in addition to the difficult issue of child and household care, many unmarried single mothers experienced a greater stress due to the loss of their jobs and money. The consequence is that COVID 19 increased the unpaid work responsibilities of unmarried single mothers in Nigeria. This was also in line with the results of Farré et al. (2020) and Malik & Naeem (2020). For instance, the widespread closure of daycare centers and schools increased not just the number of hours that these moms had to spend caring for their children and supervising them, but also many of them were compelled to oversee or manage to homeschool. Compared to those who received the support of their spouses during the lockdown, single mothers bore a disproportionately large share of this added strain.

As a result, the nuclear family symbol which the symbolic interactionist perspective argued is gradually fading away; hence, paving the way for two-fathered or three-fathered family structure, albeit it being a temporary arrangement. Therefore, symbolic interactionists are helpful in describing how the meanings associated with family have changed over time. They contend that family connections and marriage are founded on negotiated meanings and that engaging in common activities together helps to strengthen emotional bonds between family members. In terms of the experiences that such single mothers and their children are exposed to in the presence or absence of a biological father, this explanation of these meanings is intertwined with the assertion of the mothers' right to be independent as well as escape from violent and aggressive patriarchal males and the toxic culture that resides therein.

7.3.2 Dating multiple partners for economic gains

Findings from table 7.6 below show that 55% of the respondents reported that they dated multiple partners for economic gains. While 10.4% were undecided, 34.7% disagreed to the notion that they currently have more than one partner. This shares boundary with the economic benefits this objective (relationship between single parenting and perceived economic benefits) attempt to explain, because as they are entangled with different men at the same time, they not only benefit financially, but they also meet their emotional needs which is lacking because of their status (single mothers).

Table 7.6. Single mothers having more than one partner

I currently have more than one partner	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	89	19.8
Agree	158	35.1
Undecided	47	10.4
Disagree	125	27.8
Strongly Disagree	31	6.9
Total	450	100.0

Source: Field work (2022)

Some responses that were captured to validate this are:

“I cannot kill myself because of any useless man. I have two kids from a man, for the past six months, he has not sent any upkeep for his children, and he will be enjoying with his wife. Well, I had to talk to my senses by having some men friends who are quite generous to give me money to fend for myself and my kids” (Interviewee No 8, January 2022).

“It is not easy having to depend on one man. How much is my salary and Nigeria is not even helping matters. If you go abroad, there are numerous social care programs and child support platforms that single mothers’ benefit from. What did I do, of course, I am still in my mid-30s, so, I have both single and married guys who pursue after me? Though not all of them crave for sex, at least we hang out and they give me money” (Interviewee No 12, January, 2022).

“I do not see anything bad in have more than one. To be honest, I am sexually active, and I have like 3 married men I date. We have nothing to lose, it’s just fun and I use them as a means to survive” (Interviewee No 13, January, 2022) --- VIST 2

... and

“I am just a civil servant earning minimum wage which cannot cater for just my transportation, talk less of feeding and the upkeep of my three children. Yes, I have three kids for two different men, they have both been so useless that they hardly send money for their children’s school fees. I don’t know how men are just so useless like this? Let me be honest with you, I am still marketable, so I have men friend, most especially politicians

that I date and they assist and support me financially” (Interviewee No 19, February, 2022).

However, there was a deviation to the assertion of unmarried single mothers as discovered in this study. For instance, Khazan (2018) linked this approach of getting multiple partners for economic benefits with the socialization process. That instance, some unmarried, single mothers had mothers who had several partners while they were young, and as a result, they developed their mothers' romantic past. People are more likely to live with several love partners or have multiple marriages if their mothers have done so. Some single mothers who have several partners may find that this makes them completely content even though they have no wish to wed. Similar to this, studies by Kamp et al. (2018) and Brown et al. (2015) have demonstrated that children of single mothers who engage in multiple partnering experiences are more likely to do the same because they have a tendency to imitate their parents and enter into relationships with lower levels of commitment.

This has already been established in the economic hardship theory; by implication, as unmarried single mother partners with several men, economic resources increase (Matsudaira, 2016; Gray et al., 2016), therefore, exiting the poverty bracket and their initial level of being poor (Carlson and VanOrman, 2017). Currently, the majority of unmarried single mothers in Nigeria, as reflective from this study are young, making it possible for them to have increased opportunity for multiple partnerships to build and drive their economic conditions. These findings that people utilize economic principles when analyzing interactions, either consciously or unconsciously, cost-benefit analysis while simultaneously comparing alternatives, are adequately explained by the social exchange theory.

This result was also justified in the Chi-Square test conducted to examine the relationship between perceived economic benefits and single parenting among unmarried mothers. This hypothetical statement used are:

H₀: There is no relationship between perceived economic benefits and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

H₁: There is a relationship between perceived economic benefits and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria

Table 7.7. Chi-Square result showing the relationship between perceived economic benefits and single parenting

		I feel contented with being a single mother					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Apart from financial gains, there are numerous benefits I get from being a single parent	Strongly Agree	34	8	7	14	25	88
		7.6%	1.8%	1.6%	3.1%	5.6%	19.6%
	Agree	22	59	24	40	18	163
		4.9%	13.1%	5.3%	8.9%	4.0%	36.2%
	Undecided	3	7	26	37	20	93
		0.7%	1.6%	5.8%	8.2%	4.4%	20.7%
	Disagree	3	21	14	44	7	89
		0.7%	4.7%	3.1%	9.8%	1.6%	19.8%
Strongly Disagree	2	6	1	5	3	17	
	0.4%	1.3%	0.2%	1.1%	0.7%	3.8%	
Total	64	101	72	140	73	450	
	14.2%	22.4%	16.0%	31.1%	16.2%	100.0%	

$X^2= 133.544$; $df= 16$; $Sig=<.000$

The Chi-Square table 7.7 above show the test between perceived economic benefits and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. perceived economic benefits (Independent variable) was measured using the question – “...apart from financial gains, there are numerous benefits I get from being a single parent” while single parenting (dependent variable) was measured by the question – “...I feel contented with being a single mother”. Therefore, if this value is similar to or lower than the set alpha level, the result is significant (normally .05). With a Chi-Square value of 133.544 and a degree of freedom (df) of 16, we can rule out the null hypothesis in this situation and accept the alternative, which states that there is a connection between unmarried mothers' perceptions of economic benefits and their decision to raise their children alone.

Economic hardship for mother-only families is the most severe result of single parenting, particularly when they are less educated and exclusively reliant on resources. However, in Nigeria, child support is non-existent (Ntoimo, 2021), and if at all, money is being paid by the noncustodial parent (father) to the custodial parent (mother) toward the support of their children: but it is either not done on a regular basis or it does not offset the economic deprivation experienced by these single mothers. Worse still, they constitute a majority of the poor and are often the poorest of the poor (Bureau of International Information Program, 2022). They are also socially disadvantaged and face inequality as women, which shapes their experience of poverty differently from that of

men. With the fact that these single mothers retain custody in the majority of cases, in a bid to survive, they would go for multiple partners (Livingston, 2018). This phenomenon is explained in the next section.

7.4. Composite score and the most impactful socio-economic factor that influences single parenting

Having established individual factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria, findings from the quantitative results (univariate and bivariate analysis), including the qualitative results (interviews) showed that all four variables (family background, education, age and perceived economic benefits) have a significant relationship with single parenting. This has been further justified and explained using theories and literature. However, this study took a step further in examining the variable which had more relationship with single parenting. Hence, the need for composite scoring and reliability. This was accomplished by calculating the weighted average score by multiplying each individual score by the factor loading score that corresponded to it. The outcome is depicted in table 7.8 below and was determined using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Table 7.8. Composite score of al factors influencing single parenting

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Family_background	450	46.0089	13.59926
Age_factor	450	44.9778	14.14401
Education	450	28.0978	8.00107
Perceived_economic benefits	450	29.0222	8.77785
Valid N (listwise)	450		

Based on the mean of the composite score as shown in the table 7.8 above, family background plays the greater role in determining single parenting. Being the highest with 46.0089 as the mean, compared to age (44.9778) perceived economic benefits (29.0222) and education (28.0978). By implication, family background is the most impactful variable because it is the bedrock of the society. It is the social unit that plays an important role in nurturing individuals, and this is the first point of call. Members of society learn from actors within this family system, and this shapes their orientation to the outside world. In the context of this research, this translates to women opting to

be single mothers, based on what they have experienced from their homes while growing up, but with all the complexities that follow with that as explained above and what comes to follow.

But one cannot ignore the other variables: education is the least impactful variable going by the score presented in the table above. Education is a key factor in society because it inculcates the requisite skills for humans to survive. From the findings herein, educated women seem to act differently, that is, they are expected to know and use contraceptives to guide against unplanned pregnancies.

7.5. Multivariate analysis of factors influencing single parenting

7.5.1. Multiple regression analysis

This section examines the relationship among multiple variables, at the same time; and in the light of this study, single parenting (dependent variable) was used as the outcome or phenomenon of interest, while other variables like family background, age, educational level, and perceived economic benefits (independent variables) were used as the predictors. While the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to develop the model, this test attempted to examine how the independent variables could be used to predict the outcome which comes in form of single parenting. To assess each predictor's impact on the dependent variable while holding other predictors constant, the coefficient for each independent variable and its statistical significance was determined.

Table 7.9: Model summary table

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.648 ^a	.420	.415	1.009	.420	80.693	4	445	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived_economic benefit, Age factor, Family_background, EDu_factor

b. Dependent Variable: I feel contented with being a single mother

Table 7.9 above is the first table of interest in the course of predicting the outcome for single parenting from the predictors (family background, age, educational level, and perceived economic benefits). The R, R2, adjusted R2, and standard error of the estimate are all included in the model summary and can be used to assess how well the regression model fits the data. The "R" column displays the value of R, and multiple correlation R can be viewed as one metric for the accuracy of the dependent variable's prediction (single parenting). In the table above, a number of 0.648 denotes a high level of prediction. The R2 number, also known as the coefficient of

determination, is shown in the "R Square" column and indicates the percentage of variance in the dependent variable (single parenting) that can be described by the independent factors (family background, age, educational level, and perceived economic benefits). Technically speaking, it is the percentage of variation that the regression model, in addition to the mean model, can account for. The figure of 0.420 in the table of the regression result above demonstrates how the independent variables—family background, age, educational attainment, and perceived economic benefits—explain 42.0% of the variation in the chances of women being single moms.

Table 7.10: ANOVA Table – Statistical significance

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	328.661	4	82.165	80.693	.000 ^b
	Residual	453.119	445	1.018		
	Total	781.780	449			

a. Dependent Variable: I feel contented with being a single mother

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived economic benefit, Age factor, Family background, EDu_factor

The F-ratio in the Anova analysis, which is displayed in Table 7.10 above, evaluates how well the data match the entire regression model. The table demonstrates that the dependent variable is statistically significantly predicted by the independent factors (family background, age, educational attainment, and perceived economic benefits), $F(4, 445) = 80.693, p .0005$. (i.e., the regression model is a good fit for the data). According to the F statistics and the significant level (p-value), there is a regression relationship because the p-value is lower than any accepted level of significance.

Table 7.11: Estimated model coefficients

		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.698	.196		8.669	.000		
	Family_background (X1)	.87	.005	.892	15.976	.000	.418	2.393
	Age_factor (X2)	-.34	.004	-.360	-7.696	.000	.595	1.680
	EDu_factor (X3)	-.37	.009	-.226	-4.037	.000	.415	2.409
	Perceived_econbenefit (X4)	.23	.009	.001	.017	.987	.333	3.005

a. Dependent Variable: I feel contented with being a single mother

The general form of the equation to predict single parenting from family background, age, educational level, and perceived economic benefits is given with this equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = Single parenting (dependent variable)

β = regression coefficient, it also shows the amount of change in the dependent variable, corresponding to the change in the independent variable

X_1 = Independent/predictive variable 1: Family background

X_2 = Independent/predictive variable 2: Age

X_3 = Independent/predictive variable 3: Educational level

X₄ = Independent/predictive variable 4: Perceived economic benefits

ε= Error term; the difference between actual and predicted values in regression model.

Therefore, the equation model is given as:

$$Y = 1.698 + (0.87) - (0.34) - (0.37) + (0.23)$$

This information was derived from coefficients table 7.11 above and indicates that the t-values are statistically significant at a level of 0.05 because their accompanying p-values (sig) are less than 0.05. Therefore, Family background (X₁), Age (X₂), Educational level (X₃) and Perceived economic benefits (X₄) are individually useful and significant in the prediction of Y (single parenting). The unstandardized coefficients show how much the dependent variable varies with the independent variables while all other independent variables are held constant, which lends support to this assertion.

For **family background (β_{1X1})**, the regression coefficient is 0.87. This shows that family background contributes more to single parenting; that is, 87 percent of cases of unmarried women opting for a single-parent family system in Nigeria are determined by the type of family they come from. This constitutes more, compared to other predictive variables like **age (β_{2X2})** with a regression coefficient of 0.34; and by implication, the ages women in Nigeria acquire their first child contributes to 34 percent of the decision they make to be single mothers.

The case of educational level (**β_{3X3}**) is also relevant. A coefficient of 0.37 implies that 37 percent of cases of single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria are determined largely by their level of education. Similarly, **perceived economic and other benefits (β_{4X4})**, with a regression coefficient of 0.23 implies that 23 percent of the cases of unmarried single mothers in Nigeria opting for single parent family system are facilitated by the economic and other benefits they would derive from such.

Against this backdrop, the regression model has shown that the combinations of family background, age, educational level, and perceived economic and other benefits have a relationship and statistical significance with single parenting. This can be further supported by the intersectional feminist theory, a paradigm that emphasizes the importance of taking social positional heterogeneity into account in order to comprehend the various combinations of experiences that women go through prior to deciding to become single mothers.

As mentioned in this study and supported by the regression model mentioned above, intersectionality is the theory that claims that social positions on a system of social power are not independent but instead jointly impact the human experience. By implication, family background, age, education, and perceived economic benefits jointly and significantly shape the experiences of women to become single mothers. Borrowing from the contributions of the pioneer of this theory, Crenshaw (1991) noted that it is necessary to choose single parenting because social positions intersect at the individual level and experiences at those intersections are influenced by larger interpersonal and structural oppressive systems. Examples include unpleasant childhood experiences, unwelcome or unplanned pregnancies, and late marriage. Similarly, Mouzon (2015) noted that an intersectional lens reveals a given issue and thereby creates a connection around shared experiences. These experiences include roles as caregivers, homemakers, breadwinners and producers of children. The combination of these would expose them to domestic and sexual violence, divorce, and poor family upbringing, all of which would lead them to what is described as 'single parenting'.

7.5.2. Binary logistic regression

Table 7.12. Logistics regression table

Variable		Odds Ratio	p>z	95% Conf.	Interval
Family background	Grew up with both parents	1			
	Grew up with a single parent	1.450348	0.047	1.005511	2.09198
Age	Below 25 years	1			
	26-35 years	0.267926	0.623	0.4919789	3.267695
	36-45 years	1.247064	0.643	0.4895936	3.176449
	46 years above	1.721991	0.439	0.4350897	6.815271
Educational level	Primary	1			
	Secondary	0.226107	0.297	0.8356329	1.799041
	Tertiary	1.291213	0.5	0.6142245	2.714367
Perceived economic benefits	Receive social security	1			
	Does not receive social security	1.8903278	0.535	0.6167527	1.285254

The logistics regression table 7.12 above revealed the adjusted odds ratios of the selected independent variables on single parenting. Girls who grew up with single mothers and in single-parent homes are 45% with 95% confidence (1.005511 to 2.09198) more likely to become single mothers, compared to those who grew up with both parents, holding age, educational level, and perceived economic benefits constant. Overall, findings from the study indicated that female children who grew up in single-parent families, also turn out to be single mothers. With a 95% confidence level, it was shown that these girls are 45% more likely to be single mothers compared to those who lived with both parents while growing up. This finding was in tandem with Ben-Willie et al. (2019) who gave a sociological explanation of primary socialization as the process of acquiring the values and principles which sets the foundation and groundwork for subsequent socialization. By implication, as these grow and socialize into this type of family, they tend to live with the ideology of a single mother, which they take through their adulthood. sometimes, these learnings might not be from their immediate families, it could also be engendered through

secondary socialization agents (Warunee, 2002), like someone they know, or some members of their immediate or extended families.

Females who are between ages 26 to 35 years are 74% with 95% confidence (0.4919789 to 3.267695) less likely to become single mothers compared to those who are less than 25 years old. While 24% with 95% confidence (0.4895936 to 3.176449) of those between 36 to 45 years are more likely to become single mothers, compared to those females who are below 25 years old. In addition, 72% with 95% confidence (0.4350897 to 6.815271) of those who are 46 years above are more likely to be single mothers, compared to those who are less than 25 years; holding family background, educational level, and perceived economic benefits constant. The study shows that age is a significant determinant of single parenting, most especially for women who are older, compared to those women who are younger. The model presented above shows that, women between ages 26 to 35 years are less likely to become single mothers, while those of older ages (36 to 45 and 46 years above) are more likely to become single mothers when compared to those who are younger. Similar findings were also reported in Boustani et al. (2015) who documented that aged women face strong pressure which pushes them to seek for alternatives to marriage impregnation, in order to save face from shame. This is facilitated by the perception that, with advancement in age fertility is reduced, hence, showing an inverse relationship between age and fertility. This was corroborated in the study conducted by Rezeenah, Daleen and Jacobus (2021) on single parenting and raising children. It was discovered that the anxiety of not getting married in due time also drives single parenting. The study also revealed that women go the extra mile of giving their bodies to any man in a bid to have a child at all costs. This shows the value attached to child bearing most especially in Africa. For Ray (et al., 2021), questions are being asked in African communities when an aged woman of marriageable age does not get to acquire either a husband or at least a child.

Women who have a secondary education are 77% with 95% confidence (0.8356329 to 1.799041) are less likely to become single mothers, compared to those who had primary education. While those who have had tertiary education are 29% with 95% confidence (0.6142245 to 2.714367) more likely to become single mothers, compared to those who had primary education; holding family background, age, and perceived economic benefits constant. This result shows that higher attainment of education (university or college degrees) for women is significant in influencing

single parenting, compared to those who have primary or secondary degrees. This was shown as those with secondary education are 77% less at 95% confidence less likely to become single mothers. The more the educational attainment, the more the desire to get placements in the labour market in order to boost and drive social and economic empowerment. For instance, as women seek education and career mobility, they tend to neglect the need for marriage until they are older, and this leads them to choose to be a single mother as they age.

The finding that women with a Master's degree or higher are more interested in professional development prospects and career stability than their less educated counterparts and prefer to hold steady jobs in the public sector has been supported by earlier research (Liu & Hu, 2018). According to Du's (2008) research, highly educated women are more assured of their ability to compete than less educated women. Female respondents with postgraduate degrees are typically expressive, communicative, and laid-back, according to a Beijing poll (Zhang, 2014). They typically possessed a strong sense of identity and were certain of their long-term goals. They exercise self-control, feel independent, exude confidence, and value themselves, all of which may influence how they choose to have children.

It can also be shown from this table that women who did not receive any form of social security or benefits are 89% with 95% confidence (0.6167527 to 1.285254) are more likely to be single mothers, compared to women who receive social security/benefits; holding family background, age, and educational level constant. Social benefits in Nigeria exists, but only on the pages of newspapers; that is, there are plans put in place for these, but they are never implemented due to the level of inefficiency of the government and lack of accurate data to capture single mothers and other vulnerable groups in Nigeria. Ideally, the vulnerable groups should have an effective social register with the government, and single mothers should be beneficiaries, and this support can take various forms. While this system has not been adequate enough, some social outlets like religious institutions and NGOs have taken up this responsibility to provide social security and benefits to single mothers. This study shows that when single mothers do not have opportunities to get social security, there is a higher likelihood that they will opt for several partners because of the feeling of being independent. As a result, they get multiple streams of income to continuously cater for themselves and their children.

7.6. Conclusion

This section provided empirical evidence on the roles of education and perceived economic benefits on single parenting. Largely, education plays a vital role in marital choice, most especially for the highly educated women who place priority on the development of their careers. In other words, as women focus on their educational and career advancements, it has implication on their family needs; hence, making this to suffer. The study also identified a good number of uneducated women who turned to single mothers because of no knowledge about contraceptives usage and the need to have protected sex. This led to pregnancy denial, making them to soely take responsibilities of their children.

CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction

This chapter's primary objective is to provide an overview of the important findings and to deliver an appropriate conclusion. Examining the socio-economic factors that have an impact on solitary parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria was the main goal of this study. In Nigeria, marriage is a significant social indicator of adulthood, and extended singleness is essentially viewed by society with disdain. For instance, a woman's pride and joy are her children, and in order to have children, she needs to be married. However, both at the macro and micro levels, changes are continuing to be made that are altering this typical nuptial behavior; this is why the focus of this study is single parenting. Fundamentally, the family serves as the foundation for early development and a channel for the dissemination of socio-cultural traditions, both of which have an impact on all family members' social and economic behavior (WHO, 2019). However, there has been a growth in the dissolution of the traditional family unit and the prevalence of single parenthood (Lee and Payne, 2010; Furtado et al, 2013; Yu and Xie, 2015; Cherlin, 2017; Mo, 2017).

In this context of culture, religion, and social standards, having children outside of marriage is seen as a grave violation of socio-cultural norms and religious teachings. Both divorce and separation are viewed as fitting into the same mold. In the former, the woman is judged to be immoral and a disgrace to decent parenting for engaging in premarital sex and allowing it to result in an unmarried child. In the latter case, the wife is viewed as haughty, argumentative, unsubmitive to her husband.

Given the above, it is critical to look into the factors that contribute to single motherhood, especially in Nigeria. Nigeria, with its large population and ethnic diversity, becomes a significant case study. More than 200 million people live in the nation, with 400 million expected by 2050. (United Nations, 2019). According to this, Nigeria would be home to one in every twenty-five individuals on the planet in the ensuing three decades. Therefore, achieving those goals in Nigeria is inextricably linked to achieving the global sustainable development targets on maternal and

child health, gender equality, and all forms of bias against women. More than 370 ethnic groups make up Nigeria, which also exhibits the sociocultural variety with a spatial component (Adewoyin et al., 2020). Religion, reproductive patterns, educational attainment, the degree to which deviant behaviour is accepted culturally, and gender roles all contribute to the variety among ethnic clusters. The variety may have an effect on the factors and perception in addition to the prevalence of single parenting in each ethnic cluster.

Although the practice of single parenting is not new in Nigeria, little is known and recorded about single mothers who were never married. This study explored their experiences with specific reference to why they did not marry, and yet they became mothers. To achieve this, the study attempted to explore some research objectives which were built on the role of family background, age, educational qualifications, and perceived economic benefits on single parenting.

This study, on the factors that influence single parenting in Nigeria is important for several reasons. Besides the fact that sub-Saharan Africa, where Nigeria plays a significant role, has the highest rate of child mortality—one in every thirteen children dies well before age of five—but the continent also performs poorly in terms of maternal mortality. In sub-Saharan Africa, there are 533 maternal fatalities for every 100,000 live births, or an estimated 200,000 maternal deaths annually, based on a World Health Organization (WHO) research (WHO, 2019). Studies have demonstrated that these fatalities are caused, among other things, by the negative health impacts of a disorganized family and single parenthood (Clark and Hamplova, 2013; Ntoimo and Odimegwu, 2014; Hank and Steinbach, 2018; Akinyemi and Wandera, 2020).

8.2. Research contributions

Research contributions embellish and create an understanding beyond what has already been known; hence what makes the research interesting. As part of the contributions deduced from this study, this thesis identified three major contributions. These are:

1. Theoretical contributions
2. Methodological contributions
3. Practical contributions

8.2.1. Theoretical contributions and Implication for existing Theories

The major contribution of the theories was how there exists a connection between the interactionist approach and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. The interactionist approach brings a point of convergence among the theories used for the study. This is based on how humans give meaning to themselves and to the world around them. In essence, it demonstrates and clarifies how human behavior and interactions shape social reality. Its focus is not only on the ways single mothers act, but also, on how they make conscious choices regarding their family setup because of how they interpret situations they find themselves.

These contributions suggest that social 'actors', as in the case of women in this study, carry out actions to pursue goals (to become single mothers). Their values and their perception of the situations (family background, age, educational level, and perceived economic benefits) influence their choice of goals and the selection of the means to achieve them.

These theories also contributed to the fact that the presence of various types of marriage is functional to the survival of society; as a result, paving way for a social order which emerges from shared meanings. By implication, if individuals identify circumstances as real, then their consequences are also real. As a result, it teaches sociologists to adopt the social positions of those individuals and develop an empathic understanding in order to learn the meanings and interpretations of individuals engaged in social action.

In addition, sociology is a scientific and systematic study of humans in their societies; hence, there is the applicability of theories and constructs to different aspects of society. This study is not an exemption, as the identified and utilized theories have been implied and applied to single parenting. Thus, from both the qualitative and quantitative studies, twelve themes were identified across the four specific objectives. Each theme inspired a specific meaning by which single parenting among unmarried mothers can be explained.

Table 8.1. Themes/concepts and the meanings revolving around single mothers

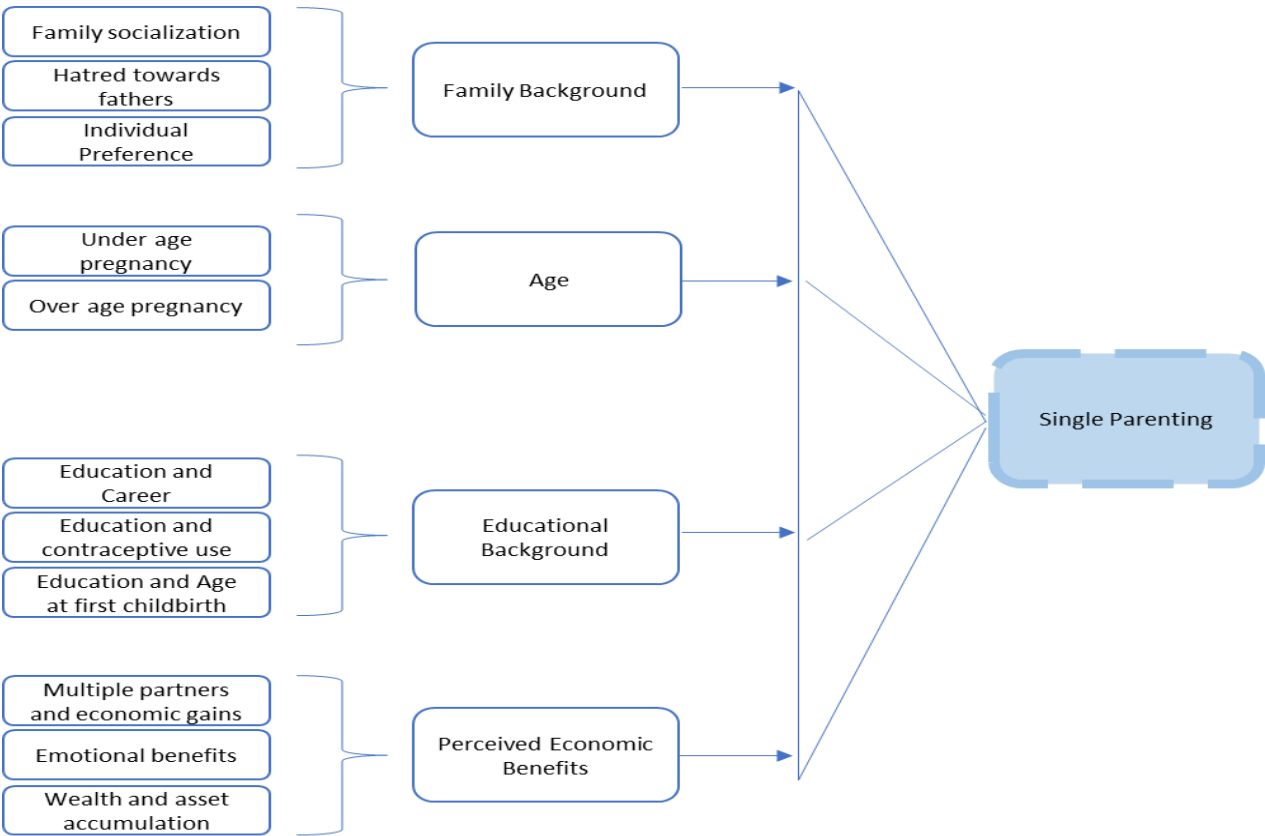
Research Objectives	Concepts	Theoretical Foundation
	<i>Family socialization –</i>	Symbolic Interactionism

Family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Single parenting is formed as a result of family background and the learnings acquired from mothers while growing up	
	Girl child Eye-witness – This implies the adoption of single parenting as a result of experiential learning from the family. That is, single mothers, learn the act of single motherhood by seeing and growing through a harsh patriarchal system.	Symbolic Interactionism
	Hatred towards fathers (Fatherhood contempt) – This concept depicts that, as girls grow up with either their single mothers or a harsh family climate, marriage is a turn-off for them; as a result, they resort to single parenting.	Symbolic Interactionism
	Single mother depression – As girls chart their lives with a single mother or problematic father, they get depressed alongside their mothers	Symbolic Interactionism
	Individual preference/Choice – This signifies the desire to become single mothers, based on the experiences of girls with their mothers while growing up	Symbolic Interactionism
Age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Underage pregnancy – This represents when a girl, who is less than 15 years gives birth to a child. This might have been a result of rape or ignorance of the usage of contraceptives.	Intersectional Feminism
	Overage parenting- This involves embracing single parenting as a result of giving more attention to education and career. Women here tend to adopt child/ren or get pregnant for men without getting married to them.	Social exchange
Education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria	Education and age at first childbirth- Women resort to single parenting as a result of limited or lack of knowledge of the use of contraceptives. They get into traps of early pregnancies, hence, leading to pregnancy denials. This is common among underage girls	Social exchange and Theory of planned behaviour
	Contraceptive use and single parenting- This implies that, in a bid to build career and drive the desired level of education, women use contraceptives to delay pregnancies; and this is common among overage women	Social exchange

Perceived Economic Benefits and Single Parenting	Single parenting and multiple sexual partners – This shows that single mothers, as a result of modernity and independence, they have the liberty to date as many men as they want; hence, deciding to have kids and not get married to any of them.	Intersectional Feminism
	Multiple sexual partners and economic gains – Women see having multiple sexual partners as a route to economic gains. This is due to the fact that they enjoy multiple streams of income through a contributory system made by the men in this circle.	Economic hardship

Against this backdrop, the researchers developed the interactionist model of single parenting as presented in figure 8.1 below.

Figure 8.1 The Interactionist model of single parenting



Source: Researchers (2022)

As deduced from this study, this above model or theory was developed to explain, not only the relationship between socio-economic factors and single parenting, but also, the roles each variable play in the determination of this type of family system in Nigeria. In addition, the model reflects the products of the findings gathered from this study, and how family socialisation and experiences at the home front lead to not only hatred towards fathers, but also, personal preference for single parenting. In addition, the model shows how cases of being under aged or over age engenders single parenting. Likewise, for educational background of single mothers, the model shows how some educated single mothers give priority to their career in place of marriage; it also shows how single parenting can be as a result of failure to use contraceptive. Lastly, having multiple partners for economic gains, emotional benefits and wealth accumulation benefits facilitate single parenting. This model is called the interactionist model of single parenting because it explains how single mothers have responded to elements in their environments. Family background, age, educational qualification and perceived economic benefits translate to these elements which result into single parenting.

8.2.2. Methodological contributions and implication for existing methodologies

The major methodological contribution was anchored on the adoption of a mixed research method, which allowed for the validation of the quantitative study with the qualitative study. This was achieved using the 'explanatory sequential research design' which has not been employed before in most studies conducted on single parenting. In this, the quantitative data were collected first, and then qualitative data was used to explain certain quantitative results. This gave richness to the results, as it both validated and expanded on further aspects as to the findings from the quantitative results.

The significance of fieldwork for a study like this one, which has a qualitative focus, is that it enables immersive contact with respondents in their own environment. Social science researchers have subsequently been able to respond to key questions about the social world by using in-person procedures, including participant observation, surveys, and interviews in various field settings. However, some bottlenecks were encountered during the global pandemic – COVID 19, part of which was to avoid physical contact and social gatherings, except with some precautions. Thus, mediated techniques like videoconferencing are particularly helpful for data collecting as an

alternative to, or replacement for, traditional face-to-face or person-to-person processes for gathering data. Thus, this study moved away from the normative (traditional) approach of research to using a top-down approach; hence, employing an online tool like Facebook in recruiting and administering the questionnaire, while WhatsApp and Skype were used to interview respondents.

This largely shows that in conducting research, interactions between researchers and respondents are not only possible through physical contact, but during globalization and growing usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), valid and objective research is possible using online tools and platforms. In this study, technology was a very helpful tool for social contact and research both during and after the COVID-19 epidemic, and it has since grown even more crucial as a means of connecting with others. Although not all social research projects, or even all types of social research, lend themselves to online work, digital communication tools like Zoom, Skype, and Facebook have made it possible for many researchers to carry out their research remotely.

Researchers can access verbal and nonverbal signs via technology like a video conferencing service, which offers an experience that is just as genuine as conducting in-person interviews. Additionally, because digital technology have made it possible to access the field from a distance, gathering data online is therefore no different from other types of social research methodologies.

Part of what is enjoyed about utilizing technology and digital platforms for research purposes is that participants were noticeably more comfortable. Furthermore, because of the pandemic, these people had flexible work schedules, thus the interviews were held both within and outside of regular business hours. This prompted them to provide details for the questions that were asked because they were not intimidated or ashamed, which may have been the case if it were done through physical contact or in-person conversations.

8.2.3. Practical contributions and implications for existing policies

The study practically contributes to research on single parenting because its findings were used to inform parenting-related laws and regulations. This would be achieved by informing policymakers of the need to sensitize women on the use of contraceptives as well as embracing a two-parent family system that society preaches.

The study has also contributed to the understanding that a girl's future is determined by the experiences encountered on the home front while growing up. That is, what comprises the father and mother's love and affection for each other; and how they both care for, and carry out their responsibilities to the child. In other words, the study practically shows the need to maintain marriages among couples in order to eradicate problems of single parenting among women.

The study has further shown how education plays a significant role in determining single parenting; hence, the need to adequately sensitize parents, as well as the government on the need to provide quality education for girls. This would save them the problem of early and unplanned pregnancies, through an adequate understanding of contraceptive usage or engaging in protected sex. The result of this research, therefore, would inspire appropriate authority figures such as teachers and educational instructors, as well as parents, guardians, counselors, and the government on how to improve learning for children, most especially the girl child in embracing education; and for those who embrace it, they should not be carried away with their careers which might delay them from getting married.

8.3. Implications for existing theories

Symbolic Interactionism, Social Exchange, Economic Hardship Theory and Intersectional Feminism were used for this study. All of them speak to the interactionist approach's main tenet, which is founded on the notion that as people interact with one another, they confer meaning on one another, themselves, and the environment. They make decisions in their daily lives based on such meanings. Apart from this, they are also built on some micro sociological theories which explains the actions of individuals within their social space. The primary importance of these theories is that single parenting is based on gender because it is more common for moms to be single parents, who consequently face discrimination based on gender and uneven opportunities. First of all, the interactionist method is predicated on the notion that people employ the meanings they assign to themselves, others, and the world around them in the course of their interactions with one another to guide their daily decision-making. This connection fosters the idea that society, culture, and our individual identities emerge from long-term patterns of contact and conduct. They are educational in addressing the major concerns and arguments surrounding single-parent

households; rather than advancing a single viewpoint, they present a variety of opposing viewpoints without taking a side. In order to do this, Economic Hardship Theory, Social Exchange, Symbolic Interactionism, and Intersectional Feminism were all used.

The descriptive meanings that humans have ascribed to objects, events, and behaviors are used by symbolic interactionists to analyze society (Bijak, 2021). The understanding people have about specific events that have been identified in the literature predisposes them to single parenting. This is stimulated by their belief that single parenting arises from social interaction with others and their society. Single mothers tend to conceive single parenting because of their experiences as it is reflected from their family background. It could also result from what they experience, which they take after as they get older, such as mothers' maltreatment by fathers. According to the economic hardship model, interparental interactions have an impact on children's results because of poverty and other financial strains. The mental health of parents is impacted by poverty or economic hardship, which can lead to parental conflict and parenting challenges.

The economic hardship theory is instructive in explaining the financial challenges of the female gender in Nigeria, most especially from the point of view of a gender gap which represents a major issue, as it affects females in a major way in the country. Nigeria has a significant gender gap since it has the most people living in extreme poverty anywhere in the globe (Nwaka et al., 2020). Given the ongoing difficulties and problems women experience financially, this has repercussions for them. Financial exclusion affects 36% of women and 24% of men, which is not surprising (Taiwo et al., 2021). Nigeria is below its peers in terms of the relative gender gap linked to financial inclusion. Women's exclusion has decreased since 2012, but the gender gap has widened, showing that men's inclusion has advanced more quickly than women.

According to the sociological theory of social exchange, which has economic undertones, people evaluate relationships using economic principles either consciously or unconsciously, undertaking cost-benefit analyses and weighing their options. Social exchange theory explains how people decide how much they are willing to give up marriage in exchange for a specific gain that they want to receive, with particular reference to single parenting. This could be having multiple

partners to get multiple streams of income, or having the independence to live their lives the way they want.

Lastly, an intersectional feminist perspective on single parenting emphasizes how experience is greatly influenced by the historical and cultural context in which single mothers are present, in addition to how the intersection of social categories produces lived experiences about their preference of family patterns. Through the composite score conducted in the study, it was revealed that a combination of family background, age, education, economic and other benefits have significant impact on single parenting, though the level at which they all play this role varies.

8.4. Implications for existing methodologies

The study utilized a non-experimental mixed research method in investigating the role of socio-economic factors on single parenting in Nigeria. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used, and the essence of this was for validation and to capture areas that the quantitative method was not able to capture. Facebook was the tool used to reach out to gather quantitative data from 450 respondents. Skype and WhatsApp were also used to gather qualitative data among 30 single mothers who served as participants. As a result of the spread of single mothers across Nigeria, the Facebook survey allowed respondents to be drawn from a large geographical space of Nigeria, through a hub that addresses issues with single mothers (Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge) with about 10,000 members. This was aided with the use of the Raosoft Sample size calculator as well as the random number generator, to show and select respondents for the quantitative study. Furthermore, a convenience sampling method was employed for the qualitative study; that is, the first 30 respondents among those who participated in the quantitative study, and who showed an interest for further interviews, were selected. The following section will discuss the core argument of this study.

8.5. Core Argument

The main argument advanced by this thesis is that both voluntary and involuntary factors can lead single parenting amongst women who have never been married in Nigeria. Unmarried mothers in Nigeria who choose to parent alone do so for voluntarily motivated reasons—reasons they

consciously considered and put into practice. Aside from the financial advantages of receiving a monthly stipend from the child's father, if and when one is forthcoming, which in some cases the women utilize for purposes other than the child or children, other motivations include avoiding the terrible experiences of their own mothers while growing up as children with parents. Some women purposefully chose to have children without being married due to being over age and a desire to avoid menopause. A victim of rape and being underage are examples of the involuntary elements. Being too old might be seen in the context of single mothers juggling their financial and social needs. The methods relied on that were discovered in this investigation were those applied before to childbirth. It entailed expanding both social and economic resources (such as one's place on the labor market) (by moving closer to people in their network and strengthening social ties).

1. The results show that some people are capable of going through such a parental change independently. They have the power to alter their situation so that they are as prepared as possible to raise a child alone. This transition is facilitated through what this study identified; these are:

The family background where the single mothers come from is instrumental in driving single parenting. This is instrumental through socialisation and the experiential learning that these women passed through. Results of the study showed that the family is a primary agent of socialization, being inculcative of the right attitudes and values needed to survive in society, but also for the development of personality in children. These are learnt from their parents or the closest people around them. The data shows that some unmarried single mothers decided not to remain with a man due to their experiences as children as well as the fact that they had at some point experienced male abuse and molestation. Therefore, the experiences they had while growing up with their parents strongly influenced their life path. Single mothers have been able to react to the manners their fathers hurt their mother who they consider important to them; hence, unmarried single mothers in Nigeria by choice might have remained single due to this given circumstance.

2. Age is also a major determinant from the point of view of being under aged or over aged. The former, as a result of inexperience in handling issues like rape and the use of contraceptives. This led to some denial of pregnancies, making these women to have nursed their children all alone. The latter engenders single parenting from the point of view of delaying marriage or choice of partners. As noted in this study, these women have no choice than to give birth to kids or adopt

children; because they have passed their prime in terms of fertility. The survey demonstrated that older single women are becoming more prevalent in Nigeria, particularly among highly educated and independent metropolitan women. Demographers, family scholars, and other researchers have identified a number of demographic and non-demographic factors as drivers of single parenting. The rising opposition to marriage among single women in Nigeria is correlated with socio-economic change and the individualism ingrained in modernism. This is supported by Isiugo (2000) Abanihe's finding that social change, economic progress, and social transformation are structurally related to the propensity to reject marriage. Because they believe that they can take care of themselves and their children, women in Nigeria reject marriage for many reasons, according to the report, including the globalization of women's economic empowerment. Economic freedom and opportunity lessen women's desire to marry for financial gain, particularly if they have a reliable and steady source of income. Less desire to marry boosts one's likelihood of staying single (Dykstra and Poortman, 2010).

A further finding of this study was that economic empowerment, which is fueled by individualism and education, is known to boost women's expectations and needs for a desired spouse. Their likelihood of getting married is lowered by high expectations for marriage and their potential spouse. Idealized notions of marriage, a compatible spouse, and a refusal to embrace compromise as a relationship-building tactic are important contributors to singledom. If this ideal is strictly adhered to, the waiting period for the perfect man is prolonged, which wastes time and prolongs the single mother's single parenthood. They become pregnant in an effort to avoid falling into the menopause trap. Some people who were unable to wed on time would choose to just date a man and become pregnant in order to give birth to a child without going through the official rites and rituals of being married. Many of these single mothers consciously choose to be single parents when they become aware that they are older. This is also because others were so preoccupied with advancing their careers that they paid little attention to creating stable marriage relationships. This supports the claims made by Part et al. (2013) that being a single mother who has never been married is a result of circumstances that surround an individual and can be either accidental or intentional. The results of this study confirm Palamueni's (2010) findings that a higher age at marriage has been linked to a higher likelihood of being a single mother.

The study also found that the relationship between age and single motherhood in Nigeria can also be viewed in terms of being under-age for conception. This occurs for single mothers who were raped, with some not understanding how to use contraceptives. The resultant pregnancy rejection by their sexual partners, made such single mothers to carry and bear the burden of bringing up these kids alone. Hence, the result is single parenting. Some single mothers in Nigeria were victims of rape when they were under age and thus are bound by the circumstances. Some women became pregnant while still dating their boyfriends, and the man virtually always rejected the pregnancy. Due to this circumstance, some women had to care for the infant on their own, with some of them receiving little assistance from some of their significant others. Underage pregnancy may result from rape, inexperienced behavior on the part of the woman, such as miscalculating her menstrual cycle or failing to utilize the proper contraceptive method. The study also showed that single parenthood is largely determined by age.

3. The level of education was also noted a significant factor that contributes to single parenting. This study identified two sets of women. First, those who had limited or no form of education education were neither exposed to contraceptive use, nor were they opportune to get into paid employment; hence, early pregnancies, which also led to single parenting. Secondly, those who were educated, mostly secondary to tertiary levels. They are actively involved in the employment and labour market, making them to seek for career advancement in order to improve their social and economic lives. They do this at the expense of establishing a family, and this led them to be single mothers, because they have passed certain age by which they are attractive to men for marriage.

This study has shown that single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria reflects both the educated and uneducated. The educated mothers from this study were single moms who had completed primary education at the least, and who have adequate knowledge about the use of contraceptives. This study revealed that single mothers with lesser educational background, that resulted in unemployment or low paying jobs, would end up as single mothers. Because, it is either that they do not know the right type of contraceptives to use, or that they are poor and financially constrained to buy contraceptives, or that they lack the needed skills to monitor their ovulation cycle.

In the case of educated unmarried single mothers in Nigeria, with the need to catch up with career goals, they lost track of their most fertile period, biologically speaking. They have greater despair as a result of their isolation and the stress of caring for one or more children, which also causes them to make irrational judgments. Most older women preferred having children above being married, it was found.

In addition to this, the survey found that some women did prefer to stay single mothers over getting married. The main argument put forth was that they were unable to withstand the suffering and sorrow that other women experienced under the authority of their men, particularly those who abused and molested their wives. Because they don't want to be manipulated by males or have to deal with any emotional upheaval, some participants felt that solo parenting was preferable. Since they have the required skills, they have been able to get themselves empowered in order to raise substantial income for themselves and their kids.

4. Perceived economic benefits fell out as a result of the independence single mothers have to get more than one partner. They are responsible for these women's wellbeing, and they get not only financial benefits, but also, emotional, social and accumulation of wealth. These attractive ventures made some women to opt to be single mothers in Nigeria. Another reason why some women may choose to stay as single mothers and never get married is the perceived economic rewards by some participants. Some of the women agreed that their current living situation, in which they gather some cash and materials for the upkeep of the child or children and profit from such resources, provides them with economic benefits. In Nigeria, the number of single others is increasing; and as they lack second providers, their earnings are low. This is in addition to the demands from the home front and the need to take care of their children. This put these single mothers in a position with an increased risk of being exposed to the conditions of poverty

Since humans are interested in surviving and ensuring they make ends meet, one finds instances of single mothers dating multiple partners. The main aim in such cases was to get as many funds as possible to cater for their immediate needs and that of their children. Apart from the financial and economic benefits derived, the study also reported other forms of benefits like emotional benefits which are more in tune with meeting the emotional and sexual needs of these single mothers. By indications, despite the fact that they are single mothers, they also have the social

need to love and to be loved. This cannot only be expressed towards their children; they need these emotional benefits in order to confide in a partner.

Addition to this is asset accumulation which these single mothers see as a way out of poverty or an enabler of increased welfare outcomes. These are acquired these assets from their partners as gifts, while some personally use them as a store of wealth and value. For example, stocks, life insurance, and bonds among others. Nigeria, though operational on a patrilineal system, women are still opportune to acquire wealth because they play an important role in reducing vulnerability which is an important dimension of poverty.

Another form of benefits deduced from this study is child security and maintenance which comes as upkeep for the children of single mothers. Though Nigeria has a social register where the indigent can be tracked in order to grant them supports, this has not been effectively executed due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and misappropriation of public funds. However, there are other outlets who have replaced this government function of providing for the indigent population. A good example is religious institution like churches or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who cater for the needs of vulnerable groups, like widows and single mothers among others. These supports could come in form of cash, food stuffs, payment of children's tuition among others. Therefore, this serves as an avenue for single mothers to improve their income generating outlets

In summary, the findings from this study are:

1. Family background significantly influence single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. This is done through the socialization process these women pass through in the course of growing up in the respective families.
2. Age has an important role to play in determining single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. This could be caused as a result of placing value on education and career development over marriage or the choice of a husband on the one hand. On the other hand, being under aged for conception, which is facilitated through rape, unplanned pregnancy and lack of contraceptive use led to single parenting.
3. There is a significant relationship between educational qualification and single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Uneducated women who do not know much on contraceptive use experienced unwanted pregnancies which led to single parenting. Also,

women who are gave more time for education, neglecting the need to find a spouse for marriage opted for childbearing without getting marriage because of the fear of losing track of their fertile period.

4. Perceived economic benefits also contributes to single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Single mothers have different avenues and outlets where they get supports from, aside the responsibility of the fathers of their children and what they get from their lovers. Financial aids are common in terms of these benefits, but the study identified other benefits like assets (land, buildings, etc), romance which make them fulfil their love needs and child care supports).

8.6. Recommendations

Moving away from the conventional culture of early and universal marriage is single parenting. Understanding the reasons why unmarried mothers choose to raise their children alone gives us a crucial glimpse into the state of marriage in Nigeria as a whole, especially given the country's high concentration of ethnic groupings. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge about single parenting that is essential for developing more appropriate population policies. Fertility and demographic growth rates are significantly influenced by marital patterns. As a result, the study recommends the following:

- ❖ The report suggests that purposeful policies and programs be implemented to teach young women how to prevent rape and sexual assault. Social workers and other members of the helping professions should identify those who had been the victims of domestic violence, either directly or indirectly, and carry out the necessary interventions. This can erase the choice of venturing into single parenting by girls and women alike.
- ❖ Furthermore, it was discovered that major determinants of single parenting in Nigeria included occupation and educational attainment. The findings imply that programs should promote the use of contraceptives to avoid unintended pregnancies, as these have been linked to teen and adolescent premarital childbearing, which has the impact of resulting in single parenting. To reduce poverty and other detrimental health effects linked with such

family configurations, government policies, initiatives, and interventions should also emphasize strengthening single mothers and their children.

- ❖ This study also found that the lack of government support for single mothers makes it more difficult for single parents and their children to deal with their circumstances. Every girl child needs to be encouraged to pursue education, earn credentials, and develop life skills in order to increase her chances of getting married and having children because girls are the ones who suffer the most from single parenting...
- ❖ The study also revealed that many single mothers' income levels were insufficient to cover their necessities because the men who bore their children were uncooperative. As a result, they take on several partners who look after their needs and provide for them. Therefore, it is advised that the governments of Nigeria develop greater employment options for women in order to lessen their financial burden. Additionally, governments should implement mentoring programs to provide opportunities for single mothers to grow and engage in business.
- ❖ Despite having a registration for residents who are in need, Nigeria does not offer child grants, which are intended to help single moms financially. Therefore, it is advised that single moms be granted a child grant to help them care for their children, precisely like it is done in developed nations. This needs to be closely watched to ensure that the child grant is not abused or used as an excuse to become a single mother.
- ❖ The study suggests creating awareness campaigns about the value of marriage as a social institution, which is gravely undervalued by many young adult women and single mothers in Nigeria. Their focus shifted to encouraging marital fertility rather than premarital fertility as a result of this.

8.7. Conclusion

Having established how some socio-economic factors (family background, age, educational qualification and perceived economic benefits) lead to single parenting, this chapter has provided a summary, conclusion and recommendations on the nexus between them. Studies that distinguish

and contrast the health, educational, and life outcomes of children from single mother families with those from two parent homes will be of utmost significance to the field's expanding body of research in the future. This research findings of this study contribute in determining the level of the effects or influence of a child's family type.

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Appendices

Research Instrument 1 – Questionnaire



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING SINGLE PARENTING AMONG
UNMARRIED WOMEN IN NIGERIA**

TEMITOPE OWOLABI

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY, MAFINKENG CAMPUS, SOUTH AFRICA**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Ma,

My name is Temitope Owolabi, and I am a doctoral candidate in the sociology department of the aforementioned university. I'm researching on the socioeconomic factors that influence single parenting unmarried women in Nigeria. This study serves as a component of the Doctor of Philosophy (PH. D) in Social Sciences degree.

You have indicated your willingness to participate in the study, you are therefore, invited to complete this questionnaire. You are however assured of utmost confidentiality as only aggregate statistics derived from responses given will be used. To further assure your anonymity, you will not be required to write your name.

Thank you for your time

Yours faithfully,

Temitope Owolabi

SECTION A: SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Please tick as appropriate

- 1. Age: Below 25 years ()
 26-35 years ()
 36-45 years ()
 46 years above ()

- 2. Religion: Christianity () Islam () Traditional () Others ()

- 3. Ethnic Group: Yoruba () Igbo () Hausa () Others ()

- 4. Highest educational qualification: None () Primary () Secondary () Tertiary ()

- 5. Level of monthly income: Less than N99, 000 ()
 N100,000-N149,000 ()
 N150,000-N199,000 ()
 N200,000-N249,000 ()
 N250,000 above ()

- 6. Employment status Unemployed ()
 Employed ()
 Self-employed()

- 7. How many children do you currently have? 1 ()
 2 ()
 3 ()
 Above 4 ()

Please tick as appropriate

Key: SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; U- Undecided; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree

SECTION B: FAMILY BACKGROUND ON SINGLE PARENTING		SA	A	U	D	SD
8	While growing up, I lived solely with my Mother					
9	While growing up, I lived solely with my Father					
10	I saw my mother going through pains while growing up					
11	I never liked my father					
12	My mother never liked my father					

13	Atimes, I felt depressed seeing my mother go through pains while growing up					
14	While growing up, my mother usually talked me through her negative experience with my father					
15	While growing up, I saw my father maltreat and abusive to my mother always					
16	The experience I saw my mother go through has made me not to stay under the same room with a man.					
17	I feel contented with being a single mother					
18	I might initiate being a single parent to my female children					
19	Because we were raised in a single-parent household, there are conflicts between my siblings and I?					
20	With my background from a single parent family, I view marriage roles to be less important?					
21	In my opinion, being a mother is more significant than being a wife?					
22	Witnessing physical violence between my father and mother affected my social and emotional adjustment					
SECTION C: AGE ON SINGLE PARENTING		SA	A	U	D	SD
23	I was underaged when I gave birth to my first child					
24	After having my first child, I believe I shouldn't have been pregnant at that time in my life?					
25	I became a single mother because my partner did not accept the pregnancy					
26	As a single mother, I feel I was inexperienced when I had my first issue					
27	I was due to have a baby long before I had my first child					
28	The pressure of not having a stable partner made me resort to being a single parent					
29	I feel there is an age bracket for women to give birth					
30	I feel that it is risky for women not to give birth at a certain age					
31	Age gaps in marriage posses several marital problems in the home					
32	A younger woman is more likely to be physically assaulted if she declines to have intercourse with an elderly man.?					
33	Child or underaged marriage increases the odds of intimate partner violence?					

34	Variation or differences in cultural values could lead to intimate partner violence?					
35	Some young ladies who married young find it difficult or impossible to pursue their educational goals?					
36	Women who marry young have less decision-making autonomy in the home?					
37	The younger generation in Nigeria respects the older generation?					
38	Intimate partner violence may stem from a lack of respect or subservience?					
39	I had been pregnant before, because i was raped					
40	Because of little or no understanding on the usage of contraceptives by some, I have been pregnant before.					
41	I once had denial of my pregnancy by my boyfriend, and i had to take the sole responsibility.					
42	Denial of a pregnancy I once had, formed an impression of not getting married to a man					
SECTION D: EDUCATION ON SINGLE PARENTING		SA	A	U	D	SD
43	Education is a vital tool in transmitting culture and values to members					
44	Without education, individuals can still survive in the society					
45	I have achieved the highest level of education that I can					
46	I desired to acquire further education when the opportunity comes					
47	My career was the major reason I had my first child very late					
48	I give priority to my career than marriage					
49	Because of their knowledge, women with higher levels of education are less likely to be single parents.					
50	Higher educational attainment engenders single parenting because the increased empowerment of women					
51	Women with low literacy and educational background are more likely to become single parents					
52	I have a good level of education, therefore I tend to put off having children in order to advance my work.					
53	I looked for means to give birth to children because I have marriage delays					
54	Educated women experience less domestic violence					

SECTION E: PERCEIVED ECONOMIC AND OTHER BENEFITS ON SINGLE PARENTING		SA	A	U	D	SD
55	I am not interested in financing the home with a man					
56	I feel it is a worthy venture to have several sources of income					
57	Having several men in my life will increase my monthly income because of the allowance I will be getting from them					
58	Apart from financial gains, there are numerous benefits I get from being a single parent					
59	I feel less depressed as a single parent					
60	There is no better way than to be a single parent					
61	I currently have more than one partner					
62	I currently get allowances from my multiple partners consistently					
63	As a single parent, I have the independence to do whatever I like or go to where ever I want.					
64	Being a single parent makes me free from stress and emotional torture from men.					
65	Assets have a significant impact on what women can accomplish in terms of earning potential and many other areas.					
66	I receive social security benefits as a single mother					
67	I receive social security benefits for my children					

SECTION F: EXPERIENCES OF SINGLE MOTHERS DURING COVID-19

- 68 Which of these is applicable to you? I am a frontline worker
I am not a frontline worker
I am self employed
- 69 Whom did you rely on for child care before Covid-19? ? Day care/School
Childcare providers who came to my home
Grandparents
Neighbours
Self
In-laws
Grandparents
Others (specify)
- 70 My work allowed me work remotely during Covid-19 lockdown Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

71	Even as a single mother, during Covid-19, my home obligations increased	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
72	How challenging did you find it to find time and personal space for yourself throughout Covid-19?	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
73	I spent much more time working during the lockdown than I normally would have.	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
74	School closure during Covid-19 put additional strain and demand on me because I do not have a husband	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
75	During Covid-19, I did not get any financial support	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
76	Covid-19 lockdown made me scared, uncomfortable and sad	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
77	I had someone I went out with, prior to Covid-19	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
78	During Covid-19, my male friends were nowhere to be found	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
79	As a single mother, how often, if at all, in the past 12 months, has a male pushed you, thrown something at you	Often A few times Rarely

- 80 Who perpetrated this act?
 Never
 Male friends
 Neighbor
 Family members
 Customers
 My partner
 All except family members
 colleague
 In-laws
 N/A
 Others (Please specify)
- 81 As a single mother, how often, if at all, in the past 12 months, has a male attempted to touch you without your permission?
 Often
 A few times
 Rarely
 Never
- 82 Who perpetrated this act?
 Male friends
 Neighbor
 Family members
 Customers
 My partner
 All except family members
 colleague
 In-laws
 N/A
 Others (Please specify)
- 83 I talked on the phone to my friends much more than usual during the lockdown.
 Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Undecided
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

Thank you for your time



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING SINGLE PARENTING AMONG
UNMARRIED WOMEN IN NIGERIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY, MAFINKENG CAMPUS, SOUTH AFRICA**

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS.

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your state of origin?
4. What is your ethnic background?
5. What is your religious background?
6. What is your highest educational qualification?
7. What do you do for a living?
8. Do you share the same religious belief with your parents?
9. What is the highest educational qualification of your parents?
10. How many kids do you have right now?

SECTION B: FAMILY BACKGROUND AND SINGLE PARENTING.

11. What do you understand by single parenting? **Probe**
12. What kind of family system did you grow up in?
13. Did you grow up staying with your parents?
14. If not, why? **Probe**
15. Did you at any time experience divorce in your family when growing up?
16. If Yes, how? **Probe**
17. Was it this same experience that influenced you into single parenthood? **Probe**
18. Is child rearing solely done by you, influenced by your background? **Probe**

SECTION C: AGE AND SINGLE PARENTING.

19. How old were you when you had your first child?
20. How old do you think a female should have her first conception.

21. Can a female be said to be under-aged or over-aged for conception?
22. From your viewpoint, can you say you were under-aged or over-aged when you gave birth to your first child?
23. Can being over-aged prompt a woman into single parenthood?
24. What are some of the implications of an under-aged and over-aged single mothers in parenthood?
25. Were you itching to have children due to your old age without considering a marriage? **Probe**
26. From your experience as a single mother, can you say it would be traced to you being underage or overage? **Probe**

SECTION D: EDUCATION AND SINGLE PARENTING.

27. Can you tell me the role(s) education plays in the society?
28. Do you think education is important to you? **Probe**
29. Have you been able to acquire your desired type of education whether formal or informal?
30. Have you been able to get to the peak of your educational goal? **Probe**
31. To what extent has your educational background influenced you into single parenting?
32. Why do think education is a factor that influences single parenting? **Probe**

SECTION E: PERCEIVED ECONOMIC AND OTHER BENEFITS AND SINGLE PARENTING.

33. How can you define economic benefits?
34. Can economic benefit encourage women into single parenthood?
35. Did you at any point decided to engage in single parenting because of some of these benefits?
36. What social and economic benefits do you perceive to get from being a single parent? **Probe.**
Apart from these are there other benefits?

SECTION F: EXPERIENCES OF SINGLE MOTHERS DURING COVID-19

37. On whom did you depend for child care prior to the COVID-19 lockdown event?
38. What kind of working arrangement applied to you during COVID-19 lockdown?
39. How challenging did you find it to carve out time and space for yourself throughout Covid-19?
40. Take me through your routine during COVID-19, how stressful was this?
41. How about financial support; did you or your children get any during COVID-19?
42. Though a single mother, are you involved in any relationships with anyone?
43. As a single mother, how often, if at all, in the past 12 months, has a male pushed you, thrown something at you?

THANK YOU.



NWU Human Subjects Ethics Application Form

Application for ethical approval: Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

Please read the Ethical Clearance Guidelines for Researchers before completing this form. Complete all sections of this form and attach all necessary documents as indicated – incomplete applications will not be reviewed and may delay the approval process. Please feel free to contact the BaSSREC for more information or further assistance and advice in this regard.

Section A: Project / Study Details

Title: Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Women in Nigeria

Date of submission:	Duration of Project/Study	Start Date:	End Date:	Date:
23/08/2021		29/06/2020	29/07/2022	

Details of Primary Investigator, Co-researchers, Research Assistants, Field Workers, etc.

Name	Start Date	End Date
Primary Investigator: Owolabi, Temitope Joshua	29/06/2020	29/07/2022

Section B: Project funding, purpose and research design:

Project Funding:

Is project funding sought / achieved? Yes ____ No X

Additional details regarding any possible conflict of interest on the part of the researchers or funders, as well as appropriate steps taken in consideration of such possible conflict of interest:

No conflict of interest will be encountered on the part of the researcher during the duration of the study.

Provide a brief summary (300 words or less) of the purpose of the research project. Include necessary background information, research questions and motivating factors for conducting this research:

In recent years, the adoption of single-parent families has become common than the conventional nuclear family, comprising a father, mother, and children. Demographic evidences from studies have shown that an overwhelming majority of single parents are women; this is due to the combined effect of an increase in the rate of divorce and separation, and a declining rate of remarriage after having marital issues with their spouses. Similarly, in Africa, the proportion of births outside marriage, often to mothers who have never been married, is increasing. Single parenting in Nigeria may not be a new phenomenon, but little is known and documented about single mothers who never married. This study examines mothers individually, thus, exploring their experiences with specific reference to why they did not marry, yet, they became mothers.

The study's general objective is to examine the socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria. Specifically, the study attempts to:

1. Explore the role of family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
2. Examine the influence of age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
3. Determine the role of education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria
4. Identify the influence of perceived economic benefits on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
5. Determine methodological approaches or paradigms used to explain single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

Provide a description of the research design, including procedures and methodology. Specify the type of data that will be collected, primary outcome measurements and anticipated follow-up processes and actions (Copies of all data collection instruments, such as questionnaires or survey forms, should be attached to this application. Please see the note in section G). Include details on procedures in place to monitor the research, including those by funding agencies, supervisors, etc.:

A non-experimental mixed research method will be used, that is, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The essence of this is for validation and to capture areas that the quantitative method will not be able to. Apart from this, it would enable the researcher to dig deep into the lives and experiences of unmarried mothers. A questionnaire will be utilized for the former, while the latter will use a Key Informant Interview (KII) to collect and explore the views, beliefs and experiences of the respondents on the subject of the research.

The justification for this non-experimental research design is based on the fact that there is no control group, and the unit of analysis is human beings. The general objective of selecting a research design is to minimize possible errors by maximizing the data's reliability and validity. On the other hand, the essence for the utilisation of a mixed method is for validation, and to capture areas that the quantitative method will not be able to capture. Apart from this, it would enable the researcher to dig deep into the lives and experiences of unmarried mothers.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, an online survey will be used for both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Apart from the reduction of risk through physical contacts that the researcher would be exposed to, it eases data gathering and it automates data collection, input and handling

FACEBOOK has been selected for the study, because it is a platform that drives engagement and where wider respondents can be reached, it also allows a researcher to capture a specific target audience regardless of age, gender and socio-economic class among others

Section C – Proposed research subjects:

Provide details of the proposed human subjects to be included in the research, including number of participants, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic level, educational level and any other categorizing details that could impact on this study. Specify the required characteristics of potential human subjects, both for inclusion criteria as well as exclusion criteria.

Motherhood captures several aspects and patterns of womanhood like single mothers, women living with their husbands and divorcees among others. However, the specific characteristics the researcher would be looking for is single mothers who are never married but have at least one child.

For the quantitative study, although the Raosoft sample size calculator suggested 370 samples; in order to make provisions for non-respondents, as well as poorly completed questionnaires, the sample size would be increased to **450**, and this will be selected across Nigeria using an online survey. On the other hand, for the qualitative study, the first **30** respondents who show interest for further interviews will be selected among the respondents who will participate in the online survey. At the end of the questionnaire, the researcher would further ask through a compiled specific informed consent leaflet if they will be willing to be interviewed, and their contact details like Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom will be requested. The most preferred channel for interview will also be sought.

How will prospective subjects be contacted/recruited? Attach copies of planned written text, advertisements, telephone scripts, etc.

Facebook will be used to recruit and select the respondents for the study; and the researcher will be responsible for this. The researcher has identified a group of women on Facebook called Nigerian Single Parent Lounge. It is a community of single mothers alone with over ten thousand active members; it is made up of divorcees, baby mamas and widows. They discuss issues regarding women folks in the social world and how well they can be protected and their rights safe guarded. The specific characteristics that the researcher would be looking for is single mothers who reside in Nigeria (18 years above), who are never married but have at least one child. After contacting the group administrator about the objectives and scope of the study, the researcher has been given the permission to conduct the study, with the approval of the group members (single mothers) on Facebook. A Gatekeeper Approval letter has been issued to this effect. This has been structured in such a way that, the Gatekeeper would add the researcher to the Facebook group where he can have direct access to members

This research will adopt probability sampling technique for the quantitative study, while the non-probability sampling technique will be adopted for the qualitative study. For the former, a multi stage approach will be adopted; this will begin with getting the population of members of Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge Facebook; which is 10000. The next stage will involve scientifically using the Raosoft sample size calculator to determine the sample size (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>). With a margin of error of 5%, confidence level of 95%, 370 was derived. Among other techniques for determining sample size, Raosoft has provisions to determine margin error and confidence level which makes it scientific in nature (Crilly et al, 2017). Although the Raosoft sample size calculator suggested 370 samples; in order to make provisions for non-respondents, as well as poorly completed questionnaires, the sample size would be increased to 450, and this will be selected across Nigeria using an online survey.

An advert would be place on the Facebook group, and members would be allowed to voluntarily signify interest directly to the researcher's contact as provided in the participants recruitment advert. This recruitment exercise would be carried out to identify potential participants who meet the following eligibility criterion:

- i. They are unmarried mothers with at least one child
- ii. They should reside in Nigeria
- iii. They should be more than 18 years

The simple random sampling technique will further be employed to select the 450 respondents from the total number members who voluntarily show interest in participating in the study. In doing this, potential participants will be assigned numbers with the aid of the "random number generator" - <https://stattrek.com/statistics/random-number-generator.aspx#error>. Based on the specifications of the study, it will generate a random number table which will show the respondents that have been selected for the study.

On the other hand, for the qualitative study, the convenience sampling will be employed. The first 30 respondents among those who participated in the quantitative study, and who show interest for further interviews, will be selected. At the end of the questionnaire, the researcher would further ask through a compiled specific informed consent leaflet if they will be willing to be interviewed, and their contact details like Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom will be requested. The most preferred channel for interviews will also be sought.

Detail the requirements of subjects to participate in this research. Specify what they are expected to do, how long their involvement will take and whether the study will require multiple or follow-up activities.

The specific requirement that the researcher would be looking for is single mothers who are never married but have at least one child; they must also be at least, 18 years; and must be residing in Nigeria.

Subjects are expected to complete a participants' recruitment advert to voluntarily indicate interest in participating in the study, given that they meet the eligibility criterion. They will be given seven days (7) from the time the invitation is extended to them. At the end of this, another informed consent form would be shared with the participants if they are interested in participating in the interview which will take about 25 minutes.

Participants will also be required to take part in the study for the duration of data collection process, just in case they need to provide additional information regarding their experiences. Therefore, they may be requested to consider to provide follow-up information

Detail the location of subjects when participating in this research. Specify any potential hazards or risks that could arise from participating in this location.

This study aims to utilize online platform for both quantitative and qualitative studies; hence, the location for this study will be ONLINE. Facebook will be used to recruit participants, and a separate group will be created on TELEGRAM to communicate easily with them. The link to the survey would also be shared with respondents on this platform. In addition, participants who show interest in the qualitative study will also be interviewed online through WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, etc.

Section D – Obtaining free and informed consent:

Have you arranged to obtain clear and informed consent from all human subjects that may be involved in this research? Yes X No

Attach copies of all consent and information forms to this application. Consent information forms should indicate briefly the purpose of the study and specify what would be expected of participants. If measurements will be used, they must be informed of the nature of these; if interviews are held, the questions must be stated; similarly, any other form of data collection must be specified. If recordings of any nature will be made, the participants have to give consent. Note that prospective participants should have consent forms provided in the language they are most familiar with and illiterate subjects will require detailed verbal description of the consent form.

Will deception in any form be practiced against the research subjects during the course of this research?

Yes No X

If so, specify the justifications for such deception and detail how full disclosure and free and informed consent will be achieved before dissemination of the findings of this research:

No deception will be practiced during the study.

Will you be deliberately involving any of the following vulnerable population groups in the research project?

Description of vulnerable group	Yes	No
Very young children (0 – 5 years old)		X
Children (6 – 18 years old)		X
People unfamiliar with the language the research is being conducted in		X
People with physical disabilities		X
People with a cognitive disability		X
People with any other type of disability		X
People suffering from <u>health related</u> problems		X

People in dependent/unequal relationships (in prison or in the military)	X
North-West University students (your own students)	X
University students (not your own)	X
Illiterate people or those with a poor level of formal education	X
People living in vulnerable life circumstances (e.g. poverty or refugee status)	X
People over 65 years of age	X
Any other perceived vulnerability	X

Please provide information justifying and detailing your use of any of the above-mentioned groups in your research, as well as detailing extra precautions taken to protect vulnerable subjects:

NA

Risk mitigation:

Please provide details regarding any risk factors for general subject involvement, including emotional distress, personal or cultural embarrassment, breach of confidentiality, economic harm, legal jeopardy, physical pain or injury, AND the intended method(s) of mitigating such possible risks. In the consent information letter, any possible risk or lack thereof, must be stated, as well as what the benefits of participation would be. Also specify any risks to the researchers themselves and what steps will be taken to protect them:

The study may not induce any risk; however, some potential risks could be foreseen in the course of the study. Firstly, COVID-19 pandemic poses potential risk to the researcher in the course of administering the questionnaire, or interviewing respondents. The mitigating strategy employed is to administer the questionnaires and interviews online in order not to be exposed to COVID-19 virus.

Secondly is the issue of tiredness and discomfort on the path of the respondents during interviews. However, the mitigating strategy employed would be to allow short breaks to enable respondents to cool off. The interview will last for about twenty-five (25) minutes on the average; hence, the researcher has developed the “10-5-10 rule” to guide the interview process. That is, the first ten (10) minutes will be devoted to answering questions on the first three sections from the interview guide, afterwards, there will be five (5) minutes short break. The last ten (10) minutes will be devoted to questions from the last two sections on the interview

Thirdly, due to the nature of the study, there is the possibility of the risk of emotional discomfort among respondents in the course of responding to the questionnaire and interview questions. In a bid to mitigate this risk, a psychological therapist/counsellor has been consulted to assist the researcher in offering some counselling services to single mothers who might experience emotional distress. The counsellor is willing to offer this service, and a written proof of agreement has been given to that effect.

Fourthly, the fear of lack of anonymity could also pose potential risk for the study, because the respondents might feel their privacy would not be respected. This might lead to declining their participation or providing false information which might make the data invalid; however, the mitigating strategy employed would be to discuss how anonymous their identities would be at the onset; which is necessary for obtaining informed consent and building trust and confidence in the researcher.

Apart from the risks that might be associated with the study, the participants would also be informed of the associated benefits. For instance, in the participants' consent form, the researcher will state the direct and indirect benefits. The former being attached to the participants, that is, acknowledging them for the insights provided in the course of the study on single parenting, while the latter is centred on how the study would contribute to knowledge on the factors influencing single parenting.

Compensation:

Will participants be compensated in any way (even by means of tokens of appreciation)?

Who will pay for such expenses?

Participants will not be compensated for taking part in the study, participants will also be required to participate voluntarily. The study will not yield any monetary or economic gains because it is solely for academic purpose. Also, the study would not require participants to travel to another location because it would be strictly conducted online. Since the study would be conducted online, the researcher will request for the mobile number of respondents which will be credited with the data which would be used for the online survey and interviews.

Third party data:

Will data on research subjects be accessed via a third party (e.g. school or other gatekeeper)?

Yes ___ No X

What legal and informed consent arrangements have been made in this regard? Letters of request for such permission and of the gatekeeper's permission, must be submitted.

At the Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge, the gatekeeper will admit the researcher into the Facebook group with the approval of members of the group. The actual data on the research subjects will be accessed directly by the researcher. After being admitted into the group, the researcher will have direct access to participants. Hence, no third party is involved.

Section E – Confidentiality and data storage:

How will the confidentiality of the data collected be protected? What steps will be taken to protect participants against breaches of confidentiality or invasion of privacy? Specify intended plans for storage of data, access by researchers and others to this data and what plans are in place to de-identify and anonymise the data (particularly audio/video recording or photos taken). Specify how long data will be stored and if and how it will be disposed of.

The information provided by the respondents would be kept confidential and no third party will have access to their responses. Before the commencement of the interviews, the researcher will assign pseudonyms, and these would be used to capture the names and identity of respondents. For the purpose of this study, colours would be used as pseudonyms, for example, Ms Yellow, Ms Green, Ms Purple among others. By implication, in the course of the reporting, participants' names or any means of identity will not be included in the final report.

If the participants do not wish to disclose or discuss some delicate issues, the researcher will ensure privacy by not probing further unnecessarily. As a result of this, neither will a translator, transcriber nor a note taker be used in the course of the interview.

At the end of the study, data will be documented in form of a Ph.D. Thesis (hard copy) as well as in an electronic copy; this would be submitted to North West University and some academic book, articles and journals. The general findings of this research will be shared with the participants by e-mail or hard copy if they are interested in getting the report.

Due to the fact that the security and storage of data are critical in ethical considerations, the researcher will ensure that data in both hard (printed) and soft copy electronic are safely locked away and password-protected respectively. This will be done in order not to allow a third party have access to the file, except the researcher and the supervisors where the need arises.

In addition, the data will be stored safely in an electronic form for a period of five years after which, it will be destroyed when the study has been concluded.

Data security for storage and transmission. Select all that will apply to this research:

Electronic data:

Description	Yes	No
Secure network	X	
Data password protected	X	
Data encrypted	X	
Data stored on portable storage device (CD/laptop/flash disk/external drive)	X	

Hardcopy data:

Description	Yes	No
Data de-identified by research team	X	
Locked office		X
Locked filing cabinet	X	
Data coded and master list secured elsewhere	X	

Section F – Data analyses and outcomes:

How will the data be evaluated?

Quantitative data will be analysed with the aid of Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) – version 27. The Univariate and Bivariate analysis would be utilised to analyse quantitative data. The Univariate analysis would be conducted with the use of frequency tables and charts to analyse variables like ages, educational level and number of children ever had among others. For the Bivariate analysis, correlation analysis would be used to understand and infer the relationship that exist between the dependent (single parenting) and the independent variables (Socio-economic factors).

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis will be used to analyze the responses. The data will be transcribed, read through, and responses in line with the research objectives will be discussed. The objectives will be structured in themes and analyzed alongside the quantitative data.

What steps have been/will be taken to ensure the research results are unbiased and fairly disseminated? (Note that steps must be taken to ensure no unfavourable data is ignored or discarded and that the research may be scrutinised publicly).

Section G – Attachments:

Please ensure that the following, relevant documentation is to be included together with this application:

1. Copy of approved research proposal.
2. Copy of letter of approval of research proposal by the Scientific Committee.
3. Copies of all data collection instruments including survey forms, interview questions, etc. (See the note below)
4. Copies of any psychometric or other tests to be used by research subjects. (See note below)
5. Copies of all consent or information forms, including translated forms if needed.
6. Copies of all written text, advertising or script used to recruit subjects.
7. Copies of any third party or sponsorship agreements related to the research.
8. Signed approval from any relevant authorities required for this project, including from other institutions linked to this research.
9. Short CV of research assistants (one page each).
10. Copies of prior ethical clearance or denial (A letter noting revisions made since, may be attached).
11. Any relevant budgetary outlines, resource or equipment lists that may impact on the research.
12. Any other relevant documentation which may impact on the research itself.
13. Short CV of the principal researcher (one page).

Note: If questionnaires and/or interview questions are to be developed after ethics approval have been requested, it must be stated clearly in the application form and requested that conditional approval be granted by the BaSSREC until receipt of the measuring instruments and/or interview protocol. No data gathering may proceed before final approval has been granted. The questionnaires and/or interview protocol have to be submitted to the BaSSREC within three months (for a Master's study) and six months (for a Doctoral study), otherwise conditional approval will be withdrawn.

Section H – Declaration by applicant:

- I certify that all researchers involved in this research project have thoroughly examined the Ethical Clearance Guidelines for Researchers document and have agreed to abide by this code of conduct in their research.

- I am aware of the relevant ethics authority and legal requirements associated with the research to be conducted and will undertake to ensure no illegal activities are engaged in, with regards to this research.
- I declare that all information provided by me in this application is true and honest and that I will abide by the undertakings I have provided in this application.
- I declare that this application has been proof read and/or language edited.
- I agree to keep the relevant ethics committee updated on any changes or adjustments to the research procedures and to obtain written approval before engaging in said changes.
- I will submit progress reports at least annually (for long term research projects) as well as a final report within 30 days of the project completion.

I HAVE READ AND AGREED TO THE ABOVE STIPULATIONS.

Signed by the Applicant: Owolabi, Temitope

Date: 23/08/2021

Participant information leaflet and consent form



Building F13, Room 116
Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)
21081719@nwu.ac.za

DATE: 23/08/2021

BaSSREC Authorization

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT
FORM**

Title of the research project	Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Mothers in Nigeria
Principal investigator	Owolabi, Temitope Joshua
Student number	37216287
Address	Department of Sociology, North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, South Africa
Email address	temitopeowolabi01@gmail.com
Contact number	+2348034624973

Thank you for indicating interest to participate in this study, which is a research project that forms part of my Ph.D. thesis. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this

project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are ethically conducting research.

What is this research study all about?

- ❖ This study will be conducted by Owolabi, Temitope Joshua, and will involve the use of questionnaires and interviews that will add as part of the fieldwork for the research with the aim of investigating the **Socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria**. The research will be carried out to understand how women opt for child bearing without getting married to a partner.
- ❖ The researcher has been trained to use the methods mentioned in the previous sentence.
- ❖ There will be approximately 450 respondents for this study with the use of questionnaires and 30 respondents for the interview. The respondents are accessed through FACEBOOK (Online)
- ❖ The objectives of this research are to:
 - Explore the role of family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
 - Examine the influence of age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

- Determine the role of education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
- Identify the influence of perceived economic and other benefits on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- ❖ You have been invited to participate because you are a member of Nigerian Single Parents' Longe and it has been acknowledged as a relevant source for the study. Your participation will add great value to the study.
- ❖ You have also complied with the inclusion criterion of: being a self-identified unmarried female (unmarried) with at least one child; you reside in Nigeria and you are more than 18 years.
- ❖ You will be excluded if you do not meet the above requirements for participation in the research.

What will your responsibilities be?

- ❖ You will be invited to only respond to the outlined questions in the questionnaire and the interview as an interviewee/respondent in the research that is being conducted by the above-mentioned researcher.
- ❖ You will be requested to complete and sign this informed consent statement before the commencement of the interview as well as the online version before answering the online questionnaire. You have seven (7) days to decide and complete this form before you can participate in the study.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- ❖ The direct benefits for you as a participant will probably be an acknowledgment for being a part of the individuals that have played a role in giving insights into the influence of single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
- ❖ The indirect benefit is that, the study will contribute to knowledge about the factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The possible risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Possible risk	Mitigation strategy
COVID 19 risk during questionnaire administration and face-to-face interviews.	Data gathering will be administered online for both questionnaires and interviews. This make the researcher not to be in direct/physical contact with the respondents; hence, not being exposed to the virus.
Tiredness and discomfort.	During interviews, short breaks will be given to allow respondents to cool off. The researcher has developed the “10-5-10 rule” to guide the interview process. That is, the first ten (10) minutes will be devoted to answering questions on the first three sections from the interview guide, afterwards, there will be five (5) minutes short break. The last ten (10) minutes will be devoted to questions from the last two sections on the interview guide.
Emotional discomfort	A psychological therapist/counsellor has been consulted to assist the researcher in offering some counselling services to single mothers who might experience emotional distress in the course of responding to some questions.
Fear of lack of anonymity	The informed consent form, at the onset, discusses how anonymous the identities of respondents would be; this is necessary in building trust and confidence in the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used on place of respondents’ names. For example, Ms White, Ms Yellow, Ms Pink, etc.

- However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.

- Should we learn, in the course of the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.

Who will have access to the data?

- The *handling, storage, security and analysis of data* is critical in ethical considerations. The researcher will ensure data in both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. Only approved people in my research team (*Researcher and Supervisors*) will have access to the raw data where the need arises. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.
- Ensuring *anonymity*, the researcher will ensure that the personal information of respondents will not be disclosed whether deliberately or accidentally, thus, ensuring that anonymity is guaranteed. To achieve this, each questionnaire will be labelled and coded as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc. This is to ensure that respondents' identities are not made public.
- *Confidentiality* will include the use of pseudonyms for participants, organisations and locations. It involves not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual. For the purpose of this study, colours would be used as pseudonyms, for example, Ms Yellow, Ms Green, Ms Purple among others. By implication, in the course of the reporting, participants' names or any means of identity will not be included in the final report.
- *Privacy* will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters.
- I will not use a *transcriber* for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview. I will be responsible for transcribing the data – no other person will have access to the data.
- I will not use a *translator/interpreter* for the purpose of the interviews/explaining the informed consent, etc.
- The data will be *stored safely in electronic form* for a period of five years after which, it will be destroyed when the study has been concluded.

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways:

Data will be documented in hard copy that will be submitted to North West University for making (Ph.D. thesis) as well as academic journals and book articles.

In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or any other identifiable information). This is a once-off study, so the data will not be re-used

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be financially rewarded or compensated for participating in the study. The study is solely for academic purposes and will not yield any monetary gains. Participants will not be required to travel since the study would take place online that does not require the participants to incur extra data costs.

Since the study would be conducted online, the researcher will request for the mobile number of respondents after indicating interest; where their mobile account will be credited with data which would be used for the online survey and interviews.

How will you know about the findings?

- ❖ The general findings of the research will be shared with you by hard copy or e-mail if you are interested in getting the report.
- ❖ Live sessions on Facebook will also be explored for those who might prefer this platform for the data gathered to be shared.
- ❖ If you would like feedback on your results, then you may respond with a Yes/No so that the researcher will forward you the final document upon completion of the study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Owolabi, Temitope Joshua (the researcher) at +2348034624973 (cell phone number) and temitopeowolabi01@gmail.com (email address) if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.

- You can contact the chair of the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Jacques Rothmann) at **018 299 1595** or **21081719@nwu.ac.za** if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled: “Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Women in Nigeria”.

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I consent to an audio and/or audio-visual recording of the study.
- I am aware of the fact that I may request that the researcher does not continue with said recording if I request it.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

- You may contact me again Yes No
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research Yes No
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed Yes No

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____

Declaration by person obtaining consent (if not the researcher)

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 ____

Signature of person obtaining consent

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of researcher

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher and participant

Personal face-to-face interviews during Covid-19 restrictions

Additional declaration by participant in those instances where the participant requests to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview:

By signing below, I _____, acknowledge the following information related to the required measures regarding Covid-19:

I declare that:

- It is my personal choice and preference to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher.
- This requires that I consent to the following strict measures to safeguard the personal health and safety of myself and that of the researcher/interviewer/primary investigator:
 - I consent to the researcher taking my temperature before the interview using a thermometer. Yes No
 - I confirm that my temperature measured at _____ degrees. Yes No
 - I consent to use the three-ply mask provided by the researcher. Yes No
 - I consent to wear the three-ply mask for the full duration of the interview. Yes No
 - I consent to the researcher 51anitizer51 the interview context using a 51anitizer with an 80% alcohol content before the commencement of the interview. Yes No
 - I consent to the researcher using a 51anitizer with an 80% alcohol content before and during the interview if required. Yes No

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

Counsellor proof of agreement



address: House of Peace, 154, Isolo Road,
Oye Roundabout, Mushin, Lagos.
tel: 08061383644, 08177777801
e-mail: crownbondis@yahoo.com
adebiyicosby@yahoo.com

RC: 810801

Crownbondis Global Resources Nig.Ltd.

4th August 2021

Proof of Agreement as a Counsellor for the Ph.D. Study on "Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Mothers in Nigeria"

I am Adebiyi, Adewale, a certified counsellor who has been in practice for over 10 years. My specialization covers psychological therapy for emotional distress among spouses in marriage, among youths and also encouraging the aforementioned to use their situation to effect positive changes in their lives and that of other people around them.

This letter serves as an agreement to assist Owolabi, Temitope in his data collection process among single mothers in Nigeria.

Where applicable, I will be willing to provide my professional expertise in counselling single mothers who may be emotionally distressed in the course of the interview.

Kind Regards.

Adebiyi, Adewale

MD/ Crownbondis Global Resources Ltd.

Letter to gatekeeper

Temitope Joshua Owolabi
July 30th, 2021

The Administrator,
Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION/PERMISSION TO GATHER DATA

I am Temitope Owolabi, a Doctoral Student from North West University, South Africa. I am currently conducting a study on "**Socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria**".

I have selected your network of women (Nigerian Single Parents' Lounge) on FACEBOOK, which is used to enlighten and empower women in our society. This movement is to make their voices heard rather than to play the role of a second fiddle.

The study will be strictly online, and a link will be sent to them to complete the questionnaire which will not take more than five (5) minutes. I want to assure you that ethical principles of research like anonymity and confidentiality of information will be strictly adhered to, because the study is for research purposes alone.

I look forward to hearing from you soonest

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Yours faithfully,

Temitope Owolabi

Email: temitopeowolabi01@gmail.com

Tel: +2348034624973
+2347080069584

Gatekeeper approval letter



5th of August, 2021

To.

Temitope Joshua Owolabi
Department of Sociology,
North West University,
Mafikeng Campus,
South Africa.

RE: Permission to Conduct Research at Nigerian Single Parent Lounge

Sequel to your request for permission to conduct your study titled “SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING SINGLE PARENTING AMONG UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN NIGERIA” in our single parents’ network, I am pleased to inform you that the objectives of the study are well understood and your request has been approved.

Nigerian Single Parent's Lounge is a non governmental firm registered in Nigeria to facilitate single parents’ solutions. It is a platform to bridge, connect and network single parents across the whole of Nigeria through social media (FACEBOOK), for the purpose of creating new families, rekindle fire of love, heal traumatic experiences and build a formidable team of family within families.

We are pleased to have you on board, and would be happy to be part of the research process. You will be admitted to the ONLINE FACEBOOK group where you will share the link to the survey to members; also, those who wish to be part of the interview will voluntarily show interest.

I can assure you that members of this community will be willing to respond to your research questions; and if you have any further enquiries, you could reach out to me.

Kind Regards

Oladipupo O. Iyowun
Pioneer and Administrator
Nigerian Single Parents’ Lounge
Tel: +234-7033383473, +234-7056655774
Email: info@nspl.com.ng oladipupoiyowun@gmail.com
Web: www.nspl.com.ng

Participant recruitment Advert (Questionnaire)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE IN A PH.D. RESEARCH FOR ONLINE SURVEY

TITLE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING SINGLE PARENTING AMONG UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN NIGERIA

You are invited to **VOLUNTARILY** participate in a PhD. research investigating how socio-economic factors influence single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

It involves a questionnaire and you will be excluded if you do not meet the following requirements for participation in the research

1. You are an unmarried single mother
2. You are more than 18 years
3. You reside in Nigeria

This is the **ONLY** focus of the research and you will be expected to only respond to the outlined questions in the questionnaire not lasting more than 15 minutes

Your responses will be made confidential, and it will not be disclosed (deliberately or accidentally) to any third party because the information you will provide will be strictly utilised for research purposes alone. Your privacy will be respected and the researcher assures you that no emotional or psychological injury will be sustained in the course of your participation in this study.

You will not be financially rewarded or compensated for participating in the study. The study is solely for academic purposes and will not yield any monetary gains; also, you will not be required to travel to any destination as a respondent. However, in completing the questionnaire, the researcher will be responsible for the cost of your data.

Kindly note that you have **SEVEN (7) DAYS**, beginning from today to study this advert and to indicate your interest to participate in this survey.

Contact: Interested volunteers should kindly contact the researcher on WhatsApp to express interest and for further information. Researcher's mobile number is **08034624973**

Name of Researcher: Temitope Owolabi

Supervisors: Dr. Kiran Odhav and Dr Tendayi Garutsa

Thanks for your cooperation.

Participant recruitment advert (Interview)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE IN A PH.D. RESEARCH FOR INTERVIEWS

TITLE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING SINGLE PARENTING AMONG UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN NIGERIA

You have just completed an online survey on the above topic, and for the researcher to understand better some issues in the questionnaire, you are being invited to **VOLUNTARILY** take part in an interview session.

You will be excluded if you do not meet the following requirements for participation in the research

1. You are an unmarried single mother
2. You are more than 18 years
3. You reside in Nigeria

This is the **ONLY** focus of the research and you will be expected to only respond to some related questions, and this will not last more than 25 minutes.

Your identity will be made anonymous, and it will not be disclosed (deliberately or accidentally) to any third party because the information you will provide will be strictly utilised for research purposes alone.

Your privacy will be respected and the researcher assures you that no emotional or psychological injury will be sustained in the course of the interview. You will not be financially rewarded or compensated for participating in the study. The study is solely for academic purposes and will not yield any monetary gains; also, you will not be required to travel to any destination as a respondent. However, in participating in the interview, the researcher will be responsible for the cost of your data.

Kindly note that you have **THREE (3) DAYS**, beginning from today to study this advert and to indicate your interest to participate in the interview

Contact: Interested volunteers should kindly contact the researcher on WhatsApp to express interest and for further information. Researcher's mobile number is **08034624973**

Name of Researcher: Temitope Owolabi

Supervisors: Dr. Kiran Odhav and Dr Tendayi Garutsa

Thanks for your cooperation.

Ethic approval letter



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathl.machine@nwu.ac.za

2 September 2021

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on 28/07/2021, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Women in Nigeria.																															
Study Leaders/Supervisors: Drs. K. Odhav & T. Garutsa.																															
Student/Research Team: T.J. Owalobi (37216287).																															
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td colspan="5">Study Number</td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="5">Status</td></tr></table> <p><small>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</small></p>	N	W	U	-	0	0	6	7	5	-	2	1	-	A	7	Institution			Study Number					Year		Status				
N	W	U	-	0	0	6	7	5	-	2	1	-	A	7																	
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status																					
Application Type: Single Study	Risk: <table border="1"><tr><td>Low</td></tr></table>	Low																													
Low																															
Commencement date: 02/09/2021																															
Expiry date: 02/09/2022																															
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																															

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

<p>General conditions:</p> <p><i>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and</i>- <i>without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.</i>• <i>The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.</i>• <i>Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.</i>• <i>The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.</i>• <i>In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:</i>
--

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via 21081719@nwu.ac.za / 13128388@nwu.ac.za.

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof Jacques Rothmann

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2



Building F13, Room 116
 Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)
 21061719@nwu.ac.za

DATE:

<p>BaSSREC Authorization</p> <p>Prof Jacques Rothmann</p> <p><small>Digitally signed by Prof Jacques Rothmann Date: 2021.09.01 17:38:00 +02'00'</small></p> <p>Approved 1 September 2021</p>

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

Title of the research project	Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Mothers in Nigeria
Principal investigator	Owolabi, Temitope Joshua
Ethics approval number	NWU-00675-21-A7
Student number	37216287
Address	Department of Sociology, North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, South Africa
Email address	temitopeowolabi01@gmail.com
Contact number	+2348034624973

Thank you for indicating interest to participate in this study, which is a research project that forms part of my Ph.D. thesis. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU-00675-21-A7)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are ethically conducting research.

What is this research study all about?

- ❖ This study will be conducted by Owolabi, Temitope Joshua, and will involve the use of questionnaires and interviews that will add as part of the fieldwork for the research with the aim of investigating the **Socio-economic factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria**. The research will be carried out to understand how women opt for child bearing without getting married to a partner.
- ❖ The researcher has been trained to use the methods mentioned in the previous sentence.
- ❖ There will be approximately 450 respondents for this study with the use of questionnaires and 30 respondents for the interview. The respondents are accessed through FACEBOOK (Online)
- ❖ The objectives of this research are to:
 - Explore the role of family background on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
 - Examine the influence of age on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
 - Determine the role of education on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
 - Identify the influence of perceived economic and other benefits on single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- ❖ You have been invited to participate because you are a member of Nigerian Single Parents' Longe and it has been acknowledged as a relevant source for the study. Your participation will add great value to the study.
- ❖ You have also complied with the inclusion criterion of: being a self-identified unmarried female (unmarried) with at least one child; you reside in Nigeria and you are more than 18 years.
- ❖ You will be excluded if you do not meet the above requirements for participation in the research.

What will your responsibilities be?

- ❖ You will be invited to only respond to the outlined questions in the questionnaire and the interview as an interviewee/respondent in the research that is being conducted by the above-mentioned researcher.
- ❖ You will be requested to complete and sign this informed consent statement before the commencement of the interview as well as the online version before answering the online questionnaire.
- ❖ You have seven (7) days to decide and complete this form before you can participate in the study.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- ❖ The direct benefits for you as a participant will probably be an acknowledgment for being a part of the individuals that have played a role in giving insights into the influence of single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.
- ❖ The indirect benefit is that the study will contribute to knowledge about the factors influencing single parenting among unmarried mothers in Nigeria.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The possible risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Possible risk	Mitigation strategy
COVID 19 risk during questionnaire administration and face-to-face interviews.	Data gathering will be administered online for both questionnaires and interviews. This make the researcher not to be in direct/physical contact with the respondents; hence, not being exposed to the virus.
Tiredness and discomfort.	During interviews, short breaks will be given to allow respondents to cool off. The researcher has developed the “10-5-10 rule” to guide the interview process. That is, the first ten (10) minutes will be devoted to answering questions on the first three sections from the interview guide, afterwards, there will be five (5) minutes short break. The last ten (10) minutes will be devoted to questions from the last two sections on the interview guide.

Emotional discomfort	A psychological therapist/counsellor has been consulted to assist the researcher in offering some counselling services to single mothers who might experience emotional distress in the course of responding to some questions.
Fear of lack of anonymity	The informed consent form, at the onset, discusses how anonymous the identities of respondents would be; this is necessary in building trust and confidence in the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used on place of respondents' names. For example, Ms White, Ms Yellow, Ms Pink, etc.

- ❖ However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.
- ❖ Should we learn, in the course of the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.

Who will have access to the data?

- ❖ The *handling, storage, security and analysis of data* is critical in ethical considerations. The researcher will ensure data in both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. Only approved people in my research team (*Researcher and Supervisors*) will have access to the raw data where the need arises. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.
- ❖ Ensuring *anonymity*, the researcher will ensure that the personal information of respondents will not be disclosed whether deliberately or accidentally, thus, ensuring that anonymity is guaranteed. To achieve this, each questionnaire will be labelled and coded as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc. This is to ensure that respondents' identities are not made public.
- ❖ *Confidentiality* will include the use of pseudonyms for participants, organisations and locations. It involves not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual. For the purpose of this study, colours would be used as pseudonyms, for example, Ms Yellow, Ms Green, Ms Purple among others. By implication, in the

course of the reporting, participants' names or any means of identity will not be included in the final report.

- ❖ *Privacy* will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters.
- ❖ I will not use a *transcriber* for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview. I will be responsible for transcribing the data – no other person will have access to the data.
- ❖ I will not use a *translator/interpreter* for the purpose of the interviews/explaining the informed consent, etc.
- ❖ The data will be *stored safely in electronic form* for a period of five years after which, it will be destroyed when the study has been concluded.

What will happen to the data?

- ❖ The data from this study will be reported in the following ways:
 - Data will be documented in hard copy that will be submitted to North West University for making (Ph.D. thesis) as well as academic journals and book articles.
 - In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or any other identifiable information). This is a once-off study, so the data will not be re-used

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be financially rewarded or compensated for participating in the study. The study is solely for academic purposes and will not yield any monetary gains. Participants will not be required to travel since the study would take place online that does not require the participants to incur extra data costs. Since the study will be conducted online, the researcher will request for the mobile number of respondents after indicating interest; where their mobile account will be credited with data which will be used for the online survey and interviews.

How will you know about the findings?

- ❖ The general findings of the research will be shared with you by hard copy or e-mail if you are interested in getting the report.
- ❖ Live sessions on Facebook will also be explored for those who might prefer this platform for the data gathered to be shared.
- ❖ If you would like feedback on your results, then you may respond with a Yes/No so that the researcher will forward you the final document upon completion of the study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Owolabi, Temitope Joshua (the researcher) at +2348034624973 (cell phone number) and temitopeowolabi01@gmail.com (email address) if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Jacques Rothmann) at 018 299 1595 or 21081719@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled:
“Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Single Parenting among Unmarried Women in Nigeria”.

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I consent to an audio and/or audio-visual recording of the study.
- I am aware of the fact that I may request that the researcher does not continue with said recording if I request it.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

- You may contact me again Yes No
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research Yes No
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed Yes No

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____

Declaration by person obtaining consent (if not the researcher)

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 ____

Signature of person obtaining consent

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of researcher

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher and participant

Personal face-to-face interviews during Covid-19 restrictions

Additional declaration by participant in those instances where the participant requests to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview:

By signing below, I _____, acknowledge the following information related to the required measures regarding Covid-19:

I declare that:

- It is my personal choice and preference to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher.
- This requires that I consent to the following strict measures to safeguard the personal health and safety of myself and that of the researcher/interviewer/primary investigator:

- I consent to the researcher taking my temperature before the interview using a thermometer. Yes No
- I confirm that my temperature measured at _____ degrees. Yes No
- I consent to use the three-ply mask provided by the researcher. Yes No
- I consent to wear the three-ply mask for the full duration of the interview. Yes No
- I consent to the researcher sanitising the interview context using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before the commencement of the interview. Yes No
- I consent to the researcher using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before and during the interview if required. Yes No

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 ____

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher