

### Abstract

The purpose of this proposed study is to determine the potential ramifications of parental stress on children growing up with a single-parent rather than children growing up with both parents. A survey will be distributed to parents of a locally owned daycare covering the basis of their parenting status, their upbringing, and the challenges they face due to their particular situation. Data will be collected through a series of demographic questions, rating scales, Likert scales, and open-ended questions. Single parents are predicted to give higher difficulty scores than parents from two-parent households. The findings will be used to determine if being raised by a single parent proves to be more arduous than a dual parent home. The more difficulty single parents face while raising their children, the more these children are subject to adverse effects.

### Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of single parents across America for multiple reasons. (Woessmann, 2015, p44) These reasons include but are not limited to higher divorce rates, war, death, and poverty. This often results in the suffering of children that are left behind from these broken relationships. There are several known negative effects on children that grow up in a home with a single parent. The impacts of this issue are primarily psychological and psychosocial problems that go on to impact them as adults. This also leads to suffering in the form of a lack of social support, which in turn hinders them throughout childhood. (Mabuza, 2014) Parents left solely responsible for taking care of their children are left with the burden of taking on both mother and father's responsibility as if they lived in a two-parent household. Subsequently, this increases the amount of stress on the parent, knowing they are solely responsible for ensuring that all their children's needs and not just the basic needs of food, clothing, and water are met. Some might say that growing up with a single parent can cause children to be goal-driven and more resilient because of this struggle. (Karraker, 1991)

Growing up in a single-parent household has lasting adverse effects that go on to impact the child throughout their adult life. An issue that arises from being raised by a single parent is the amount of support a child is able to receive while they are growing up. Lack of support can lead to risky behaviors from searching for support or belonging in the wrong areas. Children are aware of the struggles their parents may be facing while raising them by themselves. One student from the study stated, "My mother is always stressed, sometimes she shouts at me." (Mabuza, 2014, p2556) Parents get frustrated, too, but when taking out their frustration on the children does nothing but confuse them because they are not guilty of doing anything wrong. Another participant from the study claimed, "Sometimes I have no one to help me with my schoolwork because my mother did not have any good job and had no one to assist her at home this affect me emotionally...when we are given an assignment that requires assistance from my parent." (Mabuza, 2014, p2556). Even though he understands why it still has an effect on him because he needs her, and she is not able to be there.

Findings from researchers Hardelid, Woodman, Harron, Armitage, Ingram, and Lut have found that growing up in a single-parent home not only can psychologically impact children but the circumstances they face have the potential to have a negative impact on their physical health as well. "Children of single parents are at higher risk of living in poverty and deprivation compared with children growing up in a coupled families." (Lut et al., 2021, p1). The archetypal family consists of a mother and a father and can be considered the most natural way to raise a child, so naturally, when one parent has to take on the bearings of both parties suddenly, it is understandable that struggles may occur.

Children who grow up in single-parent households have equal opportunities as children who grow up in two-parent homes. It is hypothesized that children that grow up in single-parent families are more resilient or may be more goal-driven than children that grow up with both parents in the house. "Perhaps father absence frees females from the inhibitions of traditional gender roles stereotypes observed in two-parent families, thus releasing them for higher aspirations." (Karraker, 1991, p7), One male said that "Knowing you cannot have everything you want like other children makes you ambitious and [want] improve your future in every way you can." (Mabuza, 2014, p2556)

In review, children who grow up in single-parent homes are put through trials and tribulations and face obstacles and barriers that negatively impact them as they get older. But to what extent are these outcomes connected to the stress these parents face while trying to overcome the difficulties of raising a child alone. This includes the psychological aspect of the lack of social supports they receive from their parent not being able to be physically or emotionally present with them to financial issues current in the home, to lack of nutritional food to eat. It is hypothesized that if parents face more struggle in an attempt to raise their children, then these children will have a higher chance of being subject to long-term detrimental trauma.



### Predicted Results

It is predicted that weighted scores produced from the survey results will reveal that parents that are in a situation where they are the sole person responsible for providing for their children indeed have more difficulty in the upbringing of their children. A One-Way ANOVA test will then be used to determine the difference between the answers received and the difficulty faced raising a child. Data showing that it is more difficult to raise a child as a single-parent would support our hypothesis. If there was no difference in difficulty between groups or it proved to be more difficult for dual parents an alternative hypothesis would be supported.



### Methods

#### **Participants**

For the proposed study, Participants will be primary care providers whose children are currently enrolled at Water Lily Learning center, a childcare center in Cincinnati, Ohio. The minimum number of participants needed for accurate data will be 30 parents. The participant's age range will be accounted for after data collection. Both males and females will participate in study. Multiple ethnicities will participate in study. The age range of children included in the study will range from five- ten years-old.

#### **Materials and Procedure**

The materials provided for participants will consist of an iPad with an attached keyboard that the survey was to be completed on. The survey that will be used in the study was created on Google survey. Data will be collected in a designated area within the center. Excel will be used to show difference. The questions presented in the survey will be weighted on a scale of 1-10 by the experimenter to determine the difference in difficulty single parents vs. co-parents face while raising children. In the end, an average score will be produced that can be compared. Once completed, the scores from the weighted questions will be used to create a One-Way ANOVA test.

Upon arriving at Water Lily Learning Center, parents will be asked if they are willing to participate in a short survey. Before starting, they will be briefed that the survey takes about 15 minutes to complete, and for participating, they will receive a raffle ticket and be entered for a chance to win a \$15.00 gift card to a local restaurant. Before starting, participants will be taken to a secure area where the survey is to be completed. Participants will have the option to sit down in a chair while data is being collected. There will be two chairs in the designated area and a table that the iPad will be charging on.

Before starting, the participants will be reassured that they will be protected as the results collected will remain completely anonymous. The survey will be curated of 15 questions, 10 of which will be weighted for data collection. Survey questions will consist of demographic questions, rating scales, Likert scales, and open-ended questions. The survey will also automatically proceed to the next question after it has been completed, as well as return to the starting page after the survey has been completed. After the survey has been completed, all weighted scores will be entered into an excel spreadsheet to calculate the One-Way ANOVA between the answers received and the difficulty faced raising a child.

### Discussion

The connection we are looking for is the difficulty parents face impacts the upbringing of the child leading to these adverse effects mentioned. The more difficulty single parents face while raising their children, the more the children are subject to these negative effects mentioned. What we expect to find is that single parents are faced with more difficulties in raising their children than dual parents, subjecting their children to a higher chance of adverse effects. Results of the survey would give an indication of what kind of different problems parents face while raising their children, the answers collected would give insight about predicting potential outcomes of children.

This research is essential to help children that are already put at the disadvantage of not being raised with both parental figures at home. The findings can be used to help determine what be the best options for assisting parents that are in a situation where they have to raise their child alone; rather it is more support from the government, programs put on by the school, community initiatives to ensure that no child is left to fall subject to their circumstance. This research has the potential to help these adults be better parents to their children. Once the parents have a better understanding of some of the challenges their children are facing, they will be able to accommodate the hardships their children are facing as they get older.

With the data collected, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find the connection between single parenting and the potential negative effects it can have on children. It is suggested that in order to decrease the chance of the negative traits, programs be instilled to help the parent and the child.

### References

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