

Effect of Single Parenting on Personality Development of Female Undergraduates of Oou, Ago-Iwoye

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the experience of female undergraduates (based on their personality development in terms interpersonal relationship) who were raised by a lone-mother or lone-father in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye Ogun State, Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of single parenting on personality development of female undergraduates. A sample of 189 participants randomly selected from 5 faculties was used. Two valid and reliable instruments were used for data collection. Data analysis involved mean and standard deviation as descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis as inferential statistics. The results showed that single parenting and undergraduates' interpersonal relationship has significant positive relationship with personality factors (.567). Also, the findings revealed the effects of female undergraduates raised by single mothers, female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship and predictor variables (personality dimensions) ($R = 0.427$, $R^2 = 0.182$, $F = 17.489$; $t = 3.346$); and, the effects of female undergraduates raised by single fathers, female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship and predictor variables (personality dimensions) ($R = .501$; $R^2 = .251$; $F = 23.006$; $T = 5.405$). Results suggest that single parenting influenced the personality factors of female undergraduates in relations to their interpersonal relationship. The ability of the custodial single parent to successfully provide a nurturing environment for the children appeared to be affected by personality factors. Female undergraduates from single-parent family are having their personality development affected.

Keywords: Single parenting, personality characteristics, interpersonal relationship, female undergraduates

Introduction

It is a known fact that family plays an important role in supporting and providing resources to family members especially children in terms of incredible growth and learning. And an understanding of the rapid changes in a child's developmental status prepares parents and caregivers to give active and purposeful attention to guide and promote learning from early stage that will serve as the foundation for later learning. Understanding child development (Sprain & Joan, 2000) and personality structure (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2012) is an important part of promoting children's wellbeing.

Developmental change is a basic fact of human existence and each person is developmentally unique. Although there are universally accepted assumptions or principles of human development, no two children are alike. Children differ in physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth patterns. They also differ in the ways they interact with and respond to their environment as well as play, affection, and other factors. Some children may appear to be happy and energetic all the time while other children may not seem as pleasant in personality. Some children are active while others are typically quiet. You may even find that some children are easier to manage and like than others. Having an understanding of the sequence of development prepares us to help and give attention to all of these children (Bowlby & John, 2009).

However, Azuka-Obieke (2012) sees single parenting is a situation in which one of the two individuals (i.e., mother or father) involved in the conception of the child becomes solely responsible for the upbringing of the child. Single parenthood arises when either the male or female parent decides to produce and raise a child or children outside of wedlock. It could also come about as a result of divorce, separation of various kinds or death of any of the spouses. Thus, it means leaving the responsibility of raising the children to the 'surviving' partner.

In the last few decades, attempts have been made by scholars, psychologists, educationists, counsellors and students of child psychology to determine the nature and extent of the influence of single parenting on the educational attainment of the child, as well as learning behaviour. Most of these studies have focussed more on adolescents and teenagers raised by female single parents. Not much effort has been put into adopting a more holistic approach to evaluating comprehensively the totality of relationship between the single parenting and personality development of female children raised by single parents. Although, there is paucity of data on single parent families in Nigeria, empirical studies, behavioural statistics of school children and even newspaper reports show a growing incidence of the phenomenon of single parents and delinquent school children from such homes.

Empirical evidence has equally shown that children from intact-homes will be well taken care of and better socialised (Azuka-Obieke, 2012). This is due to the fact that the process of socialisation depends on both parents playing complimentary roles in raising such children; which will definitely impact positively on the later

during school years. On the other hand children from single parent homes are likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-socio impact on them. Studies have equally shown that children from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviours and poor academic records (Ayodele, 2003; Azuka-Obieke, 2012).

However, the increase of single-parent families caused by divorce or separation has produced increasingly more children who are being raised in one-parent families and more likely in single-mother families, in Nigeria. The experience of female undergraduates who were raised by a lone-mother or lone-father and their personality development in terms interpersonal relationship was the major focus of this study.

Personality Development

Personality was seen by Pevin and John, (2001) as a set of psychological traits and mechanism within the individual which was organized, relatively endured and influenced his or her interaction with the adaptation to the environment. It consists of dynamic organization traits that determine how a person adjust himself uniquely to those environment includes seven categories; biophysical, biosocial, unique, integrative, adjustment, differentiate essential and omnibus (Alport, 1961 cited by Nawi, Redzuan, & Hamsan, 2012).

Personality usually refers to that, which is unique about a person, the characteristics that distinguish people. Therefore, thoughts, emotions, and behaviours as such do not constitute a personality, but rather, the dispositions that underlie these elements (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2012). Personality implies predictability about how a person will act or react under different circumstances (Owoseni, 2011). This includes “social (e.g., extraversion and impulsiveness)”, “perceptual (e.g., openness)”, and “cognitive (e.g., neuroticism) characteristics” (Mount & Barrick, 2002).

In recent years, researchers like Ayodele and Nwosu (2011); Lee-Bagley, Preece and DeLongis, (2005); Mount & Barrick, (2002) have agreed on a widely-accepted taxonomy for organizing personality traits, known as the Big Five which has helped shed light on the relationship between personality and individual differences. The Big Five is the commonly used term for the model of personality which describes the five fundamental factors (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience) of our personality. It combines the emotion, attitude and behaviour of the people. It was defined as consistent pattern of thought, feelings or actions that distinguish people from one another (Huffman, 2007).

The identified personality elements are

	Personality Elements	Meaning
1	Agreeableness (A)	A tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others.
2	Conscientiousness (C)	A tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement.
3	Extraversion (E)	Energy, urgency and the tendency to seek stimulation and the company of others.
4	Neuroticism (N)	A tendency to easily experience unpleasant emotions such as anger, anxiety, depression, vulnerability, hostility and impulsiveness
5	Openness (O)	Appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual idea, imagination and curiosity

Personality characteristics can be considered as an intrinsic factor that can affect individual’s overall development, motivation, emotional consistency, learning and intra and interpersonal relationship (Ayodele & Nwosu, 2011; Ayodele. 2014; Rashedi & Abolmaali, 2014; Lounsbury; Tatum, Gibson, Park, Sundstorm, Hamrick & Wilburn, 2003).

Relationship quality, Single Parenting home and Personality Development

Relationship quality is a key indicator of individual psychosocial adjustment. The nature of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship among individuals especially in our educational institutions varied as the individual members themselves. Also, numerous other factors such as personality, attitudes and environment factors affect the totality of one’s relationship (intra and inter) in many ways. At one extreme, these relationships can be personal and positive. This is the case when individual interact meaningfully, share mutual friendship and be personal and negative. This happens when individual dislike one another, create tension and crisis for one another or try to humiliate the personality of one another (Limber, 2002; Rigby, 2002; Ayodele & Bello, 2008).

Studies on single-parent families (Ayodele, 2003, Manning & Lamb 2003; Amato & Cheadle 2005) focused on the impacts of well-being of children living in single-parent families. A substantial amount of

research found the absence of one parent in a family likely to have a series of negative consequences on the well-being of children, growing up with a lone parent. Compared to two parent families, Ayodele (2003) reported that children living in single-parent households are likely to have personality problems and develop antisocial behavioural tendencies. Research also found that children who did not live with two biological parents were roughly twice as likely to be poor, to have children outside of marriage, and to have psychological and behavioral problems (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994).

A lack of time and parent involvement in children's lives increases the likelihood of them being engaged in problematic behaviors (Park 2007). Studies also revealed that many who witnessed violence between parents are likely to experience social and emotional difficulties due to feelings of loneliness, fear and anger (Amato and Keith 1991; Biblarz and Gottainer 2000).

However, personality of an individual is seen as a collection of emotional, thought and behavioural patterns unique to a person that is consistent overtime (Camilus, 2011 citing Denga, 2002). Ayodele, Aladenusi, and Akinlana (2013) confirm that personality can also include an individual's thoughts, behaviour, feelings, emotions, attitudes, physique adjustment, unique learning history response patterns, habits and general poise. Therefore, the relationship between personality development of an individual and parenting has been one of the controversial issues. In a meta-analysis study by Ghapanchi, Khajavy, Asadpour (2011) and O'Connor and Paunonen (2007), it has been suggested that behavioural tendencies reflected in personality traits affect certain habits that can have an influence on individual success including academic success. Also, study by O'Connor and Paunonen (2007) found that personality predictors can account for variance in academic performance beyond that accounted for by measures of cognitive ability.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between personality characteristics female undergraduates raised from single home and their interpersonal relationships?
2. Personality characteristics will not significantly predict interpersonal relationships of female undergraduates raised from single home (either by father and mother)?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study adopted survey research design of an ex post facto type where questionnaire instruments were used to collect data from the respondents on the studied variables.

Participants: A sample of 200 female undergraduates was selected purposive sampling technique. This was so because the researcher is interested in female undergraduates from single parenting home. To achieve this, stratified random sampling technique was used to stratify the faculties of Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago – Iwoye in Ogun State, Nigeria, into four – Arts, Education, Management Sciences, and Social Sciences. From each of the faculty, fifty (50) female undergraduates from single parenting home were selected. The age range of the participants was between 17 and 27, while the mean age was 22.6 years with a standard deviation of 7.48.

Measures

1. **The Big Five Inventory (BFI):** The BFI is a multi-items inventory of 50 items developed by John and Srivastava (1999), sub-divided into 5 traits namely Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The items included "Make plans and stick to them," "Have a vivid imagination," Respondents indicate how they generally feel by rating the degree of their feelings on a six-point scale where 1="extremely disagreed", 2="very disagreed", 3="somewhat disagreed", 4="somewhat agreed", 5="very agreed", and 6="extremely agreed". The BFI is reported to have overall alpha of 0.84 while the neuroticism scale = .82; extraversion = 0.86; openness to experience = 0.82; agreeableness = 0.86 and conscientiousness = 0.87. BFI has been used among Nigerian subjects and reported valid and not culturally biased (Ayodele & Adenuga, 2012; Ayodele & Nwosu, 2011; Idowu & Oledikwa, 2003).
2. **Single Parenting and Interpersonal Relationship Scale (SPIR):** This is a 10 - items self-developed scale. It was designed to elicit data about one's interpersonal and intellectual competencies based on single parenting home one come from. The items are scored on a four – point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). Using the Cronbach's alpha model, the reliability coefficient for the 10-items was .73.

Procedure: A set of questionnaires for assessing the variables of the study were administered on the sample through the assistance of four (4) postgraduate students who were already tutored on the purpose of the study

and trained in the administration of questionnaire. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 189 were found useable for the data analysis. Thus, 94.5% questionnaire administration success was ensured

Data Analysis: CS – Pro was used for the data entry while analysis was done using SPSS 21.0. The data analysis based on earlier set hypotheses involved the use of descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, and Pearson correlation coefficients.

Results

Two hundred 189 female undergraduates' data was available for statistical analysis (11 students who did not fill their instruments well or failed to submit were not included in the analyses). Results presented in Table 1 below indicate significant positive relationship between the variables of the study. In specific terms, single parenting and undergraduates' interpersonal relationship has significant positive relationship with personality factors (.567). In other words, single parenting is likely to be influenced by personality factors.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix among the variables of the study

Variables	Mean	SD	PF	SPIR
Personality Factor (PF) Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	50.889	11.262	1 189	.567 .103 189
Single Parenting and Interpersonal Relationship Sig. (2-tailed) SPIR N	28.174	9.403	.567 .103 189	1 189

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 below shows the multivariate correlation coefficient (R) between the effects of female undergraduates raised by single mothers, female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship and predictor variables (personality dimensions) in the total sample is equal to $R = 0.427$, $R^2 = 0.182$. The variance of single parenting on female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship could be explained by personality characteristics, which equals 18.2% in the total sample. Also, based on ANOVA test results, there is a meaningful relationship between a weighted linear combination of independent and dependent variables ($F = 17.489$; $t = 3.346$).

Table 2: Prediction of personality characteristics of female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship raised by single mothers

Female undergraduates raised by single mothers (N = 132)					
Predictors		B	B	T	Sig
Personality Characteristics	Agreeableness	.012	.027	1.231	.046
	Conscientiousness	.100	.149	3.007	.000
	Extraversion	.060	.103	1.911	.010
	Neuroticism	-.009	-.076	-1.583	.037
	Openness	.073	.087	3.200	.000
Multiple R = .427; Multiple R² = .182; Stand error estimate = 6.111; F = 17.489; T = 3.346					

Going by the result presented in Table 3 below, all the personality characteristics when put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .501 and a multiple correlation square of .251. This shows that 25.1% of the total variance in the effect of single parenting on female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship is accounted for by the personality characteristics. The table also indicates that the analysis of variance of the multiple regression data produced an F-ratio value (23.006) and T-value (5.405) significant at 0.05 level.

Table 3: Prediction of personality characteristics of female undergraduates' interpersonal relationship raised by single fathers

female undergraduates raised by single fathers (N = 57)					
Predictors		B	B	T	Sig
Personality Characteristics	Agreeableness	.063	.059	1.391	.019
	Conscientiousness	.200	.276	4.003	.002
	Extraversion	.157	.073	.527	.076
	Neuroticism	-.031	-.031	-.562	.342
	Openness	.076	.063	1.211	.015
Multiple R = .501; Multiple R² = .251; Stand error estimate = 5.990; F = 23.006; T = 5.405					

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the experience of female undergraduates who were raised by a lone-mother or lone-father and their personality development in terms interpersonal relationship. This study further explored the relationship between personality characteristics and female undergraduates who were raised by a lone-mother or lone-father based on their interpersonal relationships. Results of this study have shown that single parenting and undergraduates' interpersonal relationship has significant positive relationship with personality factors (.567). The implication of this result is that single parenting is likely to influence the personality factors of female undergraduates in relations to their interpersonal relationship. This result is in line with findings of Skiffington (2003), Ayodele (2011), Ayodele, (2013) who observed that quality and healthy interpersonal relationship have their foundation in effective interpersonal skill established from home especially between parents and their children.

The outcome of this study further revealed that personality characteristics will significantly predict interpersonal relationships of female undergraduates raised from single home (either by father and mother). The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that personality characteristics are potent predictors of interpersonal relationships of female undergraduates raised from single home (either by father and mother). The magnitude of the prediction for female undergraduates raised by single mothers was 18.2% while those raised by single fathers was 25.1%. The implication of this finding is that a student may be expected to carry a simple project in his undergraduate programme but at the graduate level, he is expected to show more initiative, originality and creativity in conducting a research project successfully. The study further found that conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience and extraversion are potent personality factors to the prediction of interpersonal relationship. It is not surprising to find conscientiousness to be the most potent predictor than other predictor variables.

Personality characteristics have been found to significantly predict interpersonal relationships of female undergraduates raised from single home. This finding is in tandem with that of Adenuga and Ayodele (2010) and Azeez, (2007) that relationship (social interaction) has been found to evoke certain affective responses within individuals. Also, this finding lend credence from the findings of Saulsman and Page (2004); Barrick and Mount (1991) who found the predictive value of the Big Five across a wide range of behaviours. Also, a neurotic person has the tendency to easily experience unpleasant emotions such as anger, anxiety, depression, vulnerability, hostility and impulsiveness (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2012; Rashedi & Abolmaali 2014).

Conclusion

Results suggest that single parenting influenced the personality factors of female undergraduates in relations to their interpersonal relationship. The ability of the custodial single parent to successfully provide a nurturing environment for the children appeared to be affected by personality factors. Female undergraduates from single-parent family are having their personality development affected. Also, parents and guardians should binge-up the communication gaps between them and their youngsters so as to understand and appreciate their nature, aspirations and yearnings. This will help in accommodating them and assist them in channelling their behaviour. Parents should also serve as good models by keeping their marriages and are to the needs of the youngsters.

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