Article Info

Career Women's View of Single Parenthood in Lagos State, Nigeria: Factors and Trends

Omokhabi, Abiola Adiat* and Lawal Sabitiew Taiye**

ABSTRACT

Background. Single female adults with dependent child(ren) make up the majority of lone-parent families, with one person who can make money for the family. The purpose of this study was to assess the factors and trends of career women's view of single parenthood in Lagos state, Nigeria. A descriptive case study was conducted among 25 learners aged 30 years and above with at least a child. Data were collected with a questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean scores.

Results: There were 32.0% (n=8) of respondents between the ages of 40 and 44, which was the age range where single parents were most prevalent. Further supporting their membership in the religious category is the fact that 64% (n=16) of respondents identified as Christians. Public servants (n=17) or 68.0% constituted the largest occupational status group, followed by respondents with one, two, or three children 88.0% (n=22). The results showed that single career women's perceptions of the trend in single parenthood are based on their beliefs that the factors contributing to single parenthood among career women are age of women, choice/personal preference, family background, economic benefits, and family benefits. The results showed that divorce of couples with children, type of residence being in an urban center, work-related activities which can lead to temporary separation, birth to unmarried women or unintended pregnancies, single parent adoption or by choice, wealth status, separated couples ending up divorcing each other, health challenge of husband, age at first birth children ever born, educational status, domestic violence or exposure to violence, desertion ,socioeconomic hurdles, economical barriers, abandonment, the loss of a spouse, parental stress, and lost social are the reasons why working women choose to be single parent.

Conclusions: The survey makes it clear that single parenting is common knowledge and on the rise due to a variety of causes and factors (such as divorce, widowed as well as economic independence and choice). The study recommended that the marriage institutions be strengthened encourage stable family patterns through the provision of social welfare services such as preventive strategies on pertinent information about family life and counseling to adolescent girl children on the need for achieving good family life.

Keywords: Women, Single Parenthood, Education, Children.

1.0 Introduction

Single-parent families became more prevalent from 1970s to 1990s and have remained high today (Child Trends, 2015). Nigeria has reported an increase in single parenthood because of relationship breakdown/increasing divorce rates and birth of children out of wedlock (Falana, Bada & Ayodele, 2012; Anyebe, Lawal, Dodo & Adeniyi, 2017). Sub-Saharan Africa has a greater rate of single motherhood than North America, Australia, Europe, or Asia. The prevalence is 10%, which is second only to Latin America and the Caribbean, where it is 11%. (United Nations Women, 2019). According to Crabtree and Kluch (2020), who cited a Gallup survey, the frequency was highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where it was 32%, and in Latin America, where it was 24%. Their findings support Bhatt (2020) argument in a UN Women news story that there may be a global undercount of single mothers. Due to single mother households' vulnerability to poverty, the considerably greater prevalence in resource-poor Sub-Saharan Africa has repercussions

*Corresponding author; Faculty, Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria (E-mail: adiatomokhabi@gmail.com)

**Faculty, Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria (E-mail: taiwolawalolawuyi@gmail.com)

for the wellbeing and quality of life of women and children in the region (UN Women, 2019).

The United Nations reports that there are 10% more single mothers in sub-Saharan Africa than there are in Nigeria with 9.5%. (UN Women, 2019). According to Adewoyin, Olukemi, Awelewa, Uzoma, & Anazonwu (2021), single motherhood is more common in Nigeria than in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. The incidence ranged from 2.9% in the North-West to 20.3% in the South-South region of Nigeria. Single parent adoption, domestic abuse, the passing of a partner, unexpected pregnancies in married males, unwed births, and rape are a few examples of factors that have been implicated as causes of single parenting (Amato 2000 in Ekpenyong, 2019).

The number of single parents has increased as traditional ways of doing things have changed over time. Compared to the so-called nuclear family, which consists of a mother, father, and children, single-parent families have increased in popularity over the past three decades. The most frequent causes include those that are intentional, like divorce or adoption, as well as those that are unavoidable, like death, child abuse, child neglect, or abandonment. While any parent may be involved, women make up the majority of lone parents (Omokhabi, 2020).

There are many reasons why people become single parents, but according to Adelani, Afolayan, Sanusi, Olubiyi, Ayinla, Ibraheem and Adeniran (2015) in Omokhabi (2020), the most common ones given by women for leaving their partners are adultery, cruelty, battery, desertion, addiction to alcohols and drugs, as well as husband incarceration and death. It may even be argued that a single mother's claim to have a so-called normal family is founded on the capacity to mobilize people so they can earn a living. The community is vital to the single mother's ability to parenting and employment (Hertz, Rivas, & Jociles,2016; Van Gusse & Mortelmans 2020).

From another angle, single parenting can also happen when either a mother or a father becomes the only caretaker of a kid after losing their spouses. One can become a single parent for a variety of reasons, according to Thomas (2018) and Omokhabi (2020), including divorce, separation, abandonment, the death of the other parent, births by a single woman, or single-person adoption. When a woman becomes pregnant out or wedlock and the child's father declines to acknowledge full parental responsibility or paternity, the pregnancy is considered unwanted. It makes sense that some out-of-wedlock births are purposeful while many are inadvertent, as stated by Ojo (2019) in Omokhabi (2020). Society does not recognize unmarried births which frequently lead to single parenting.

Another possibility is that a spouse will leave because they don't want to be responsible for raising the child. If they are not suitable, this could hurt the child or lead to forced marriages which fall apart more commonly than others. Additionally, it could lead to the partners' divorce. For instance, young mothers are often urged to stay with their children and have concubines simply to pay visits occasionally in several communities in Nigeria where single parenthood is prevalent.

Divorce is characterized by scholars like Akanbi (2014) and Omokhabi (2020) as the legal dissolution of the marriage connection that creates the conditions for single parenthood. For a variety of reasons including adultery, abuse, abandonment, alcohol or drug addiction, and husband imprisonment, women may decide to divorce their husbands. Odimegwu, Mutanda, and Mbanefo (2017) found that single moms were more likely to originate from affluent backgrounds.

Single mothers are made more vulnerable financially as a result of having to support numerous children on a single source of income (UN Women, 2019). Odimegwu et al. (2017) and Muthuri, Oyolola, and Faye (2017) discovered that the likelihood of being a single mother increased with the number of children. According to Ntoimo and Mutanda (2020), having a sales job increases the likelihood of being a single mother in Africa. All levels of education increased the likelihood of being single among the Yoruba, the ethnic group with the highest level of education in the nation (NPC and ICF, 2019), where 89% and 92% of single and married moms, respectively, had at least a primary education.

Obviously, education keeps people single and exposes married people to rights and benefits that cause them to leave relationships they felt didn't live up to their expectations. According to this study, living in an urban environment with its more liberal value system and wide range of potential mates has an impact on marriage stability and raises the risk of a woman becoming a single mother (Ntoimo &

Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014; Muthuri et al, 2017). According to a study by Adewoyin, Olukemi, Awelewa, Uzoma, and Anazonwu published in 2021, having more than a primary-level education, being wealthy, having more children overall, and being older at your first birth are sociodemographic characteristics that raise the chances of becoming a single mother.

According to the aforementioned, it doesn't seem that these elements, which have been thought of as universal reasons of single parenthood among all women, are just relevant to general females or to a particular category, such as career women. Based on the participant's perspective of the trend and determinants, this study is being conducted to fill the gap produced by the lack of studies on single parenthood among career women in Lagos state, Nigeria. Particularly, the following research questions served as the study's guiding principles: (1) ascertain career women's view on the single parenting trend among working women and investigate the causes of single parenting among working women.

2.0 Methods

2.1. Study design and setting

Among career single women in Lagos State, Nigeria, a descriptive case study survey was conducted. Lagos State was picked because the state has a long history of economic development and change. The smallest state in Nigeria, Lagos State accounts for more than 60% of all industrial and commercial activities in the country despite only making up 0.4th of the country's total land area. Over 75% of Lagos' revenues are generated without the help of federal grants derived from oil revenue, demonstrating the city's financial viability. Of all the Nigerian states, it produces the most internally generated revenue. Lagos State is the most economically significant state in Nigeria with its long history of economic growth and transformation.

2.2 Population of the study

All career-oriented single women in Apapa Local Government Area, Lagos state, made up the study's population. Apapa was chosen because it is Nigeria's principal seaport. Apapa lies west of Lagos Island and has a significant concentration of public and private organizations and is also a residential neighborhood. The population consists of all single working women in both public and private organizations. The public sector includes government employees working in hospitals, banks, and clinics while the private sector includes company owners. These participant groups were specifically picked because the stigma associated with single parents makes it difficult to find them in local government areas status

2.3. Sample and sampling procedure

Through the personal network, the population was a comprehensive one of career single mothers. Because the study population is concealed and may be challenging to access, a non-probability sampling method utilising the Snowball technique was employed. Snowballing is a referral sampling approach that entails existing subjects finding new subjects among their friends in five communities—Burma Road, Community Hall, Plateau Road, Creek Road, and Payes Crescent—through one of the researcher's single-parent mother.

Single mothers work in large numbers in both public and private organizations in these areas, which are located in the Apapa Local Government Area. Women who are single and come from each of these communities were specifically chosen. Community Hall (8 respondents), Plateau Road (5 respondents), Creek Road (9 respondents), Burma Road (6 respondents), and Payes Crescent (7 respondents) all received responses.

2.4 Data collection instrument

The questionnaire was created after a review of the literature on single parenting and its causes. The following subscales were included in the questionnaire: trend and factors. In this study, a trend was defined as the quick rise in female single motherhood rates as a result of many causes. Religion, region, divorce of couples with children, the type of residence in an urban center, work-related activities that can cause a temporary separation, the birth of an unmarried woman or an unintended pregnancy, single parent adoption or by choice, wealth status, separated couples who end up divorcing each other, and health issues with either spouse were factors that were used to predict whether someone would become a single parent. age at first birth, number of children ever born, educational level, desertion, experience with or exposure to

domestic abuse, socioeconomic hurdles, abandonment, death of a spouse, parental stress and lost social networks.

The term single motherhood in this study refers to female respondents who are working as public servants or operating a business, are not married or in a union, and have at least one child of their own living with them at the time of the survey. No education, primary, and secondary and above were recoded as the educational levels. Career has been recoded as skilled, professional, and entrepreneur. Four categories of age at first birth were recoded: 15, 15-19, 20-24, and 25+.

The Trend Scale component of the survey included five items that measured the trends in single parenting, single parent norms in society, and the importance of fatherhood. Strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) were the four response options used to rate this. The 18 items on the factors subscale which were taken from literary works, were scored on a four-point Likert scale. The participants were asked to reply strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) in order to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements that made up the subscale.

The subject "Single parenthood is by adoption or choice" received responses from the participants as well. Participants' age, educational level, religious affiliation, number of children, and age at which they became single parents were among their sociodemographic variables. At the University of Ibadan, the instrument's content was thoroughly examined by two experts with strong academic backgrounds and professional expertise in the domains of psychology and women's studies. Following a careful evaluation, certain elements deemed irrelevant were eliminated, while others deemed crucial were changed to further the study's objectives. Five career-minded women in Ikeja, Lagos State, who were not involved in the study, pilot tested the instrument. The computation produced a result with an internal consistency of 0.81 for the trend scale and 0.88 for the factors scale.

2.5 Data collection

The data collection method was carried out by the researcher with assistance from two recruited and qualified research assistants, however the administration of the questionnaire was exclusively conducted by the lead researcher. All of the people who took part in the study agreed to the conditions outlined in the participant consent form before being contacted. Participants received enough information about the questionnaires to be asked through consent forms during the field visit. It was only after the participant's voluntary consent and acceptance to a sufficient comprehension of the research aims, procedures, requirements, potential hazards, and rewards has been established that the data collection process started. Participants in the research were treated with respect as required and given the freedom to make their own decisions free from outside interference or influence. In a similar vein, participants were allowed to decline consent or stop taking part in the research project at any moment.

2.6 Data analysis

Frequency counts, percentages, and mean values were used to examine the data. Using frequency counts and percentages, respondents' personal information and perception of single career women on the trend in single parenthood was examined. The mean score was used to determine the factors contributing to single parenting among career women.

3.0 Results

3.1 Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Table 1 reveals that 32.0% (n=8) of the respondents were between the ages of 40 and 44, which was the age range where the majority of single parents were to be found. The fact that 64% (n=16) of the respondents identified as Christians further supports their membership in the religious category. The study's largest occupational status group consisted of respondents who were public servants (n=17), or 68.0%.

The participants' average level of education was 16.0% (n=4) with a second degree, 12.0% (n=3) with a primary education, 12.0% (n=3) with a secondary education, 28.0% (n=7) with an NCE or Diploma or OND, 32.0% (n=8) with a first degree and HND. In addition, 72.0% (n=18) of participants reported monthly incomes between #30,000 and #N70,000. Regarding the number of children born, 88.0% (n=22) of respondents have one, two, or three children.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	**N**	**%**
30-34	2	8.0
35-39	3	12.0
40-44	8	32.0
45-49	5	20.0
50 years and above	7	28.0
Religion		
Christian	16	64.0
Muslim	9	36.0
Occupational type		
Civil servant	17	68.0
Entrepreneur	8	32.0
Educational Attainment		
Primary education	3	12.0
Secondary education	3	12.0
NCE/Diploma/OND	7	28.0
First degree /HND	8	32.0
Second degree	4	16.0
Income		
#30,000 to #N50,000 per month	6	24.0
#51,000 to #N60,000 per month	6	24.0
#61,000 to #N70,000 per month	6	24.0
#N71,000 per month and above	7	28.0
Number of Children		
1	12	48.0
2-3	10	40.0
4 and above	3	12.0

3.2 Perception of Single Career Women on The Trend in Single Parenthood

According to Table 2, 68.0% (n=17) of respondents agreed that the norm in society is leading to an increase in single parenthood, while 32.0% (n=8) disagreed. 60.0%(n=15) of the respondents said that single parenting is trending right now due to personal preference or choice, whereas 40.0% (n=10) disagreed. While 36.0% (n=9) of respondents disagreed with the assertion, 64.0% (n=16) of respondents agreed that family background influences the rise in single parenthood and causes a woman to become a single parent.

While 28.0% (n= 7) of respondents disagreed with the assertion, 72.0% (n= 18) of respondents agreed that economic gains also contribute to the rise

in single parenthood. 64.0% (n=16) of the respondents agreed that the rise in single parenthood is influenced by a woman's age, whereas 36.0% (n=9) of the respondents disagreed with the claim.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' Responses on the Trend of Single Parenting among Career Women

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Norm in society	10 (40.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)	4 (16.0)	2.92
2	Choice/personal preference	6 (24.0)	9 (36.0)	6 (24.0)	4 (16.0)	2.68
3	Family background	9 (36.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)	5 20%	2.80
4	Economic and family benefits	10 (40.0)	8 (32.0)	4 (16.0)	3 (12.0)	3.0
5	Age of women	9 (36.0)	7 (28.0)	6 (24.0)	3 (12.0)	2.88
	Weighted Mean	**2.54**				

The mean scores ranged from 2.68 to 2.92 which is higher than the weighted mean score. The results showed that single career women's perceptions of the trend in single parenthood are based on their beliefs that the factors contributing to single parenthood among career women are age of women, choice/personal preference, family background, economic benefits, and family benefits.

3.3 Factors contributing to single parenting among career women

According to Table 3, 68.0% (n=17) of respondents believe divorce is a factor that contributes to single motherhood, whereas 32.0% (n=8) of respondents disagree. 52.0% (n=13) of the respondents believed that living in an urban area may make it more likely for women to have only one child and become single, while 48.0 (n=12) vehemently disagreed. 60.0% (n=15) of the respondents agreed, whereas 40% (n=10) disagreed, that work-related activities that can cause temporary separation can result in women becoming single parents.52.0% (n=13) of respondents believed that giving birth to an unmarried woman or becoming pregnant unintentionally could result in single parenthood, while 48.0% (n=12) disagreed. While 36.0% (n=9) of respondents disagreed with the assertion, 64.0% of respondents agreed that single parent adoption or by choice.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of the Respondents Responses on Factors Contributing to Single Parenting among Career Women

SN	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Divorce of couples with children	9 (36.0)	8 (32.0)	3 (12.0)	5 (20.0)	2.84
2	Type of Residence being in urban centre	7 (28.0)	6 (24.0)	6 (24.0)	6 (24.0)	2.66
3	Work related activities which can lead to temporary separation	7 (28.0)	8 (32.0)	6 (24.0)	4 (16.0)	2.72
4	Birth to unmarried woman or unintended pregnancy	6 (24.0)	7 (28.0)	5 (20.0)	7 (28.0)	2.68
5	Single parent adoption or by choice.	9 (36.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)	5 (20.0)	2.80
6	Wealth Status	7 (28.0)	9 (36.0)	4 (16.0)	5 (20.0)	2.72
7	Separated couples ending up divorcing each other	8 (32.0)	9 (36.0)	4 (16.0)	4 (16.0)	2.84
8	Health challenge of husband	8 (32.0)	9 (36.0)	3 (12.0)	5 (20.0)	2.80
9	Age at first birth	10 (40.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)	4 (16.0)	2.92
10	Children ever born	8 (32.0)	6 (24.0)	6 (24.0)	5 (20.0)	2.68
11	Educational Status	9 (36.0)	7 (28.0)	3 (12.0)	6 (24.0)	2.76
12	Domestic violence or exposure to violence	6 (24.0)	7 (28.0)	5 (20.0)	7 (28.0)	2.48
13	Desertion is a factor that leads to single parenthood	8 (32.0)	7 (28.0)	5 (20.0)	5 (20.0)	2.72
14	Socioeconomic hurdles	9 (36.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)	5 (20.0)	2.80
15	Abandonment	8 (32.0)	9 (36.0)	4 (16.0)	4 (16.0)	2.84
16	Death of a spouse	8 (32.0)	10 (40.0)	3 (12.0)	4 (16.0)	2.88
17	Parental stress	9 (36.0)	7 (28.0)	6 (24.0)	3 (12.0)	2.92
18	Lost social networks	10 (40.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)	4 (16.0)	2.88
	Weighted Mean			2.61		

While 36.0% (n=9) of respondents disagreed with the assertion, 64.0% (n=16) of respondents agreed that a woman's wealth position could lead to being a single parent. While 32.0% (n=8) of respondents disagreed, 68.0% (n=17) of respondents agreed that separated spouses who later divorce one another could force career women to become single parents. While 32.0% (n=8) respondents disagreed, 68.0% (n=17) of the respondents agreed that a business woman's husband's health challenges could result in the woman becoming a single mother. Age at first birth could cause career women to become single parents, according to 68.0% (n=17) of the respondents, while 32.0% (n=8) disagreed. 56.0% (n=14) of the respondents agreed that children have ever been born, while 44.0% (n=11) disagreed. A career woman's educational position makes them single, according to 64.0% (n=16) of the respondents, while 36.0% (n=9) disagreed. While 48.0% (n=12) of the respondents disagreed, 52.0% (n=13) of the respondents believed that spousal abuse or exposure to violence may likely cause career women to become single parents. In general, 60.0% of respondents (n=15) think that dissertation is a factor that contributes to single parenthood, while 40.0% of respondents (n=10) disagree.

In general, 60.0% of respondents (n=15) think that dissertation is a factor that contributes to single parenthood, while 40.0% of respondents (n=10) disagree. Socioeconomic barriers may cause a woman to become single, according to 64.0% (n=16) of the respondents, whereas 36.0% (n=9) disagreed. Of the respondents, 68.0% (n=17) agreed that being abandoned could cause career women to become single parents, whereas 32.0% (n=8) disagreed. Death of a spouse is a factor contributing to single parenting, according to 72.0% (n=18) of the respondents, whereas 28.0% (n=7) of the respondents disagreed. 64.0% (n=16) of the respondents believed that parental stress may lead to women becoming single parents, whereas 36.0% (n=9) disagreed.

However, 68.0% (n=17) of the respondents believed that career women losing their social networks could result in them having only one child, whereas 32.0% (n=8) disagreed. The mean score, which varied from 2.66 to 2.92, is lower than the mean score of 2.6. Thus, the results showed that divorce of couples with children, type of residence being in an urban center, work-related activities which can lead to temporary separation, birth to unmarried women or unintended pregnancies, single parent adoption or by choice, wealth status, separated couples ending up divorcing each other, health challenge of husband, age at first birth children ever born, educational status, domestic violence or exposure to violence, desertion ,socioeconomic hurdles, economical barriers, abandonment, the loss of a spouse, parental stress, and lost social are the reasons why working women choose to be single parent.

4.0 Discussion

This result supports earlier research by Adejoh, Kuteyi, Ogunsola, and Adeoye (2019) which discovered that some of the perceived causes for the rise in the proportion of never-married single mothers identified include family background, sexual abuse, age, careless sexual behaviour and non-use of contraceptives, personal preference, and perceived economic benefits. This finding supports earlier research on the factors that contribute to being a single mother which have been identified in the literature and include age, culture, education, place of residence, age at first sexual encounter, age at first birth, religion, exposure to violence in intimate relationships, way of life, wealth status, type of job, and number of children (Ntoimo and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014; Driscoll, 2014; Neal, Chandra-Mouli, & Chou, 2015; Garriga, Sarisa, & Berta, 2015; Maslauskaite, Jasilioniene, Stankuniene, & Shkolnikov,., 2015; Islam, Islam, Hasan & Hossain 2017; Cherlin, 2017; Odimegwu, Mutanda, & Mbanefo, 2017; Muthuri, Oyolola, & Faye 2017; Eyo, 2018; Sassler, Michelmore, & Qian, 2018; Harkonen, 2018; Ntoimo & Mutanda, 2020).

5.0 Conclusion

The survey makes it clear that single parenting is common knowledge and on the rise due to a variety of causes and factors (such as divorce, widowed as well as economic independence and choice). Therefore, it is advised that marriage institutions be strengthened in order to encourage stable family patterns through the provision of social welfare services such as preventive strategies on pertinent information about family life and counseling to adolescent girl children on the need for achieving good family life. Social workers, psychologists, and counsellors can help single parents understand themselves and their difficulties and discuss what needs to be done through various intervention.

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