

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH SINGLE
PARENTS IN MWINGI CENTRAL, MWINGI
DISTRICT KENYA**

By

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**A RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR
OF EDUCATION IN ^{SNE}EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND PRIMARY EDUCATION OF
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 2011

DECLARATION

I, **JOEL NDEGWA NJUCHE** declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for award of any academic certificate or anything similar to such. I solemnly bear and stand to correct any inconsistency.

Signature

JOEL NDEGWA NJUCHE

DATE:

:
.....

APPROVAL

This is to acknowledge that this Report has been under my supervision as a university supervisor and is now ready for submission.

Signatures

Date

.....

.....

MR. MUGWERI FREDRICK

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my family members for their patience, support and co-operation during this time of my research study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all I give thanks to the almighty God for his mercy and grace granted to me during this time of my degree course and through this researcher project

I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. Mugweri Fredrick for being there for me whenever I needed him and also offering his professional advice where necessary.

Am also grateful to the full faculty of Kampala International University for mounting all the directives, procedures and methods of carrying out this research project.

I would also like to thank the respondents who returned the questionnaires and those who were cooperative to me.

May God bless you all.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms have been defined in the context of this research;

Academic performance: How students more especially children from single parents fair on in school that is in grades and in continuing school.

Defiant: Open refusal to obey or to conform to some rules or regulations.

Drug abuse: the improper use of drugs or alcohol to the degree that the consequences are detrimental to the user in society.

Research area: means a specific place where the detailed study of something is carried out in order to discover new facts

School drop out: the number of pupils who enroll in a school during a year but leave the school before the end of the year. It does not include girls who transfer from one school to another.

Single parent

According to the study it refers to one parent bringing up a child either after divorce, death of a partner or giving birth without marrying

ACRONYMS

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

UNICEF: United Nations Children Fund

i.e: that is

A.E.O: Area Education Officers

D.E. O: District Education Officer

T.S.C: Teachers Service commission

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the academic performance of children living with single parents in Mwingi Central, Mwingi District Kenya. Specific Objectives of the study were: (1) To investigate the relationship between children living with single parents and poor performance, (2) Investigate the relationship between children living with single parents and emotional stress, (3) Investigate the relationship between children living with single parents and dropping out of school and (4) Investigate the relationship between children living with single parents and delinquent behavior.

The methods used for data collection were questionnaires to the teachers and focus group discussions with the parents.

The findings revealed that children from single parent families were likely to drop out of school, perform poorly in school, have emotional stress and involve in delinquent behaviors.

The study recommended: that:

The government and policy makers should take into consideration the problems of children living with single parents.

The single parents should also be counseled on social needs of their children so that their academic work will not suffer at school. Children and their parents should be counseled together to help both the child and the parent.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the study

One of the most striking changes in family structure over the last twenty years has been the increase in single-parent families. During the second half of the 20th century, the share of children living in single-parent families increased steadily. The 1960 Census reported that 9 percent of children lived in single-parent families, compared with the 28 percent reported by 2000. (UNICEF 2003)

In Africa the existence of single parents is formally unknown and where they exist, they are ignored as exceptional cases. Ninety percent of single-parent families are headed by females. Not surprisingly, single mothers with dependent children have the highest rate of poverty across all demographic groups (Olson & Barnyard, 1993). The parents are mainly responsible for the educational and career development of their children. However, divorce and separation of various kinds or death of one spouse may leave the roles in the hands of a single parent. (Hetherington et al 2002). This affects the children academically.

Apart from the effect on the academics the child is also affected emotionally what is worse however is that these children are not given much attention both at school and at home (Bogenschneider et al 1993) hence need for the study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Children living with single parents pass through a lot of problems which are not even recognized or even taken serious and yet the experiences they go through are very serious and have a negative impact on their health and educational achievement. It is because of the problems they go through that are not recognized that I took up the study.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to analyze the academic performance of children living with single parents.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to determine the academic performance of children living with single parents.

Specific objectives.

Specifically this study sought to;

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in regards to:
age
gender
class
2. To determine the academic performance if children living with single parents in relation to:
Academic performance
emotional stress
dropping out of school
delinquent behavior

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the relationship between children living with single parents and their performance?
2. What is the relationship between children living with single parents and their emotional stress?
3. What is the relationship between children living with single parents and their drop out rate in schools?
4. What is the relationship between children living with single parents and their delinquent behavior?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was carried in Musukini primary school in Mwingi Central in Mwingi district, located in the Eastern side of Kenya. Mwingi Central is one of the nine divisions in Mwingi District. The division is located in the Eastern side of the district. The division covers 17511sq km and has a population of 24,150. The research study from this area was carried out between May 2011 and early August 2011. It was limited to the set objectives in relation to academic performance of children living with single parents.

1.7 Significance of the study

The policy makers will benefit from the study because they have ignored the problems of children living with single parents, by not implementing policies that help them and therefore the study will be an eye opener in that they will make policies that will help children with single parents to cope up with the environment more especially at school.

The government will be able to make an appropriate curriculum that is suitable for children living with single parents. That is, their psychological needs will be catered for.

The study will be of benefit to children living with single parents because the study will show what they go through and therefore will receive attention from the parents, teachers, and government among others.

The parents will benefit from the study since they are the contributors to a child's happiness. They will be able to help their children grow up well without any disruptions.

The teachers will be able to identify single parent's children in their schools and give out their records to the nearest office for academic progress monitoring. Through guiding and counseling, the teachers will assist such children in solving their social and academic problems

The district field supervisors will be able to strategize thorough modes of supervision that will ensure good implementation of the current curriculum to the school to suit children of all calibers.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature as an account of the knowledge and ideas that have been established by accredited scholars and experts in the field of children living with single parents and their academic performance. It is guided by the objectives of the study outlined in chapter one.

2.1 Academic performance of children living with single parents

2.1.2 Poor performance

single parents have less time to help children with homework. They are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement. Among children in single-parent families, those from mother-absent households earn lower science grades than children from father-absent homes. (Stanley Maxine Baca Zinn 2000)

Family income also influences parent support and involvement in education -- factors related to school achievement. (McLoyd et al 1994) Students who regard their parents as warm, firm, and involved in their education earn better grades than their classmates with uninvolved parents. In these families, parent support acts as a protective factor countering some of the risk factors these children encounter (John. J Maclons (2002)

2.1.2 Emotional stress

Children living with single parents are exposed to more stressful experiences and circumstances than are children living with continuously married parents. (Compas, Bruce E., & Williams, Rebecca A. (1990). Although scholars define stress in somewhat different ways, most assume that it occurs when external demands exceed people's coping resources. This results in feelings of emotional distress, a reduced capacity to function in school, work, and family roles, and an increase in physiological indicators of arousal.(MC Loyd et al 1994) Economic hardship, inept parenting, and loss of contact with a parent (as noted earlier) can be stressful for children. Observing conflict and hostility

between resident and nonresident parents also is stressful. (John. J Maclons (2002) (Conflict between nonresident parents appears to be particularly harmful when children feel that they are caught in the middle, as when one parent denigrates the other parent in front of the child, when children are asked to transmit critical or emotionally negative messages from one parent to the other, and when one parent attempts to recruit the child as an ally against the other. (Compas, Bruce E., & Williams, Rebecca A. (1990). (Inter parental conflict is a direct stressor for children, and it can also interfere with their attachments to parents, resulting in feelings of emotional insecurity. (Robert 2000)

2.1.3 Dropping out of school

Children in single-parent families are at greater risk than children in other types of families. (Battle, Juan J. 1998). Even when they have the same academic abilities, children in single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families.(Astone, Nan M., & McLanahan, Sara S. (1991). No matter which parent is missing, children from single-parent families generally find it more difficult to connect with school [Mulkey et al1992].

2.1.4 Delinquent behavior

Most children living with single parents are economically disadvantaged. (McLanahan et al 1994). It is difficult for poor single parents to afford the books, home computers, and private lessons that make it easier for their children to succeed in school. Similarly, they cannot afford clothes, shoes, cell phones, and other consumer goods that give their children status among their peers. (McLoyd et al1994) Moreover, many live in rundown neighborhoods with high crime rates, low-quality schools, and few community services. (Keith 1991).

Children in single-parent homes are also twice as likely to have a psychiatric disease, have alcohol-related problems, and are up to four times more likely to abuse drugs. (Keith 1991).

In conclusion a lot of literature has been written on children living with single parents in the world however few studies have been carried in Africa more especially Kenya and this study intends to bridge the gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

This study used a descriptive cross sectional survey. The research drew from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis approaches in order to get a bigger picture both in number and data.

3.2. Environment

This study was conducted in Musukini, Mandove, Muthuka, Nzouni and Ukasi primary school in Mwingi Central in Mwingi district, located in the Eastern side of Kenya. The case study was convenient because the researcher lives in that place and therefore would make work easier.

3.3. Respondents

The respondents included teachers, single parents and two parent families, pupils who live with both parents and those who live with single parents.

Table 3.3.1: categories of respondents

| Categories of respondents | Present popn(N) | sample | Methods used |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Teachers | 60 | 50 | Questionnaires |
| Parents | 20 | 20 | Focused group discussion |

The sample was selected according to R.V Krejcie and D.W. Morgan (1970) Appendix 9

3.4. Instruments of data collection

Questionnaires were used to extract information form parents. Focus group discussions were used to get information from pupils and interviews carried on

with the teachers. Open ended questionnaires were suitable for investigating deeper the subject matter.

3.4.1. Validity of questionnaires

The validity of the instruments was ascertained by discussing the questionnaire with my supervisor REV. CHANDY NINAN MATTATICAL who is an expert in research in education. I asked him to relate the likert scale namely (NR), (SR),(QR) and (VR). The calculation of each instrument was 0.9.

3.4.2. Reliability of instruments

Questionnaire helped get a lot of information in a short period of time while focused group discussions helped get a deeper meaning from the study.

3.5. Data collection procedure

A letter of introduction from the institute of continuing education was sent to facilitate in the data collection exercise. The letter was handed to the head teacher before interviews and focus group discussions were carried on with teachers and pupils. The data collected was sorted and categorized after which it was analyzed. The conclusions and recommendations were made.

3.6. Statistical treatment of data

The frequencies and percentages were used to determine the number of sample respondents used in the research process and the number that participated positively in contributing to the research.

Formula;

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{F}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \times 100$$

Where F = number of respondents present

Qualitative analysis; Data from questionnaires was standardized hence requiring categorization. Such data was presented in a descriptive form above which was used to discuss the results of quantitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation, interpretation and discussion of the field results. The results are presented in tables and in form of frequency counts and percentages. The results and discussions are centered on the set objectives of the study.

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Table 1: Shows the profile of the respondents.

| Respondents | Frequency (fo) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 27 | 54 |
| Female | 23 | 46 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |
| Age | | |
| 19-24 yrs | 10 | 20 |
| 25-30 yrs | 19 | 38 |
| 31 and above | 21 | 42 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single | 35 | 70 |
| Married | 15 | 30 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |
| Academic level | | |
| Primary Certificate | 10 | 20 |
| Secondary certificate | 25 | 50 |
| Diploma certificate | 15 | 30 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source field data

Sixty (60) questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and 50 were filled and returned this therefore represents 83 % of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed.

The study covered 50 randomly selected teachers of whom (54%) were male and (46%) were female

The age category of the respondents were divided in three groups that are 19-24 were 10 which represents (20%), 25-30 yrs were 19(38%) and 31 and above were 21 representing (24%) of the respondents.

35(70%) of the respondents were single while 15(30%) said they were married.

The academic level of the respondents was divided in three categories that are certificate, diploma and degree. 10(20%) of the respondents had certificates, 25(50%) had diploma and 15(30%) had degree level.

Focus group discussions were used to extract data from the parents. 20 parents with the help of chairman leaders were selected and grouped in four groups of five members. 8 of the 20 members were female and 12 were male. The discussions we held in languages that the respondents understood. 9 of the members were single parents while 11 were married.

4.2. Single parenting and poor performance of pupils

The first objective of the study was to find out the relationship between single parents and their children's academic performance. This is shown in table 2. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to academic performance of pupils living with single parents. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What is the relationship between children living with single

parents and their performance? The results are presented in the subsections below;

Respondents were asked whether children from single parent families perform poorly in class and their responses are summarized in table 4.1[a] below;

Table 2: Opinion on whether children from single parent families perform poorly in class

| children from single parent families perform poorly in class | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 17 | 11 | 8 | 14 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 34 | 22 | 16 | 28 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

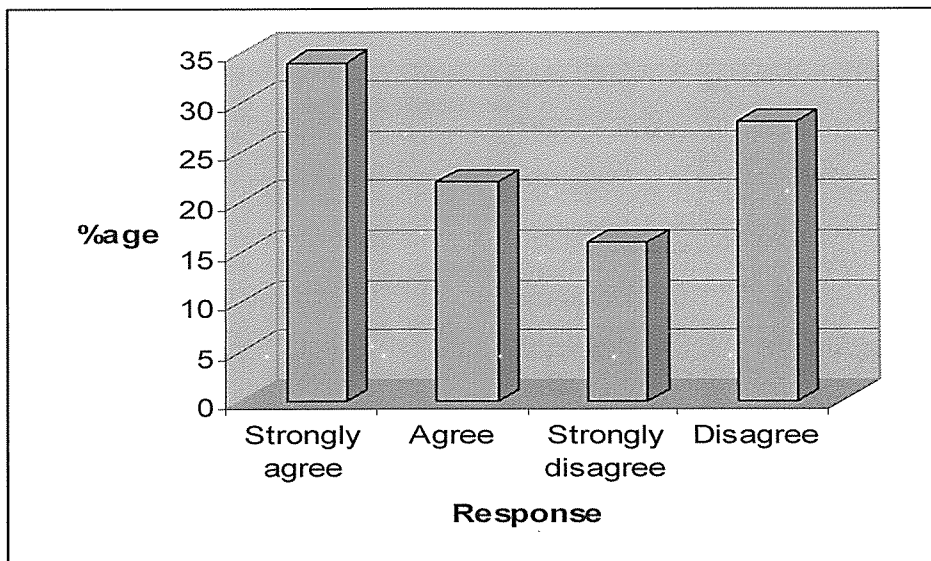
The results in table 2 showed that 34% of the respondents strongly agreed that pupils from single parent families perform poorly in class, 22% agreed while 16% strongly disagreed and 28% disagreed that pupils from single parent families do not perform poorly in class.

Some parents in focus groups agreed that children from single parents did not perform well in class because they do not get encouragement from their parents. However some other parents argued that all children perform equally, whether from single parent families or both parent families.

“.....it does not matter whether a child is from single parent family or both families, all children perform the same.....” (Parent FGD participant)

The data in table 4.2 was analyzed using a chart and summarizes the analysis of the opinion on whether children from single parent families perform poorly in class

Chart 1: Opinion on whether children from single parent families perform poorly in class



The results in chart 1 shows that 34% of the respondents strongly agreed that pupils from single parent families perform poorly in class, 22% agreed while 16% strongly disagreed and 28% disagreed pupils from single parent families perform poorly in class

The respondents were asked whether children from single parent families are poor and lack school facilities and their response was summarized in table 3 below,

Table 3: opinion on children from single parent families are poor and lack school facilities

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| children from single parent families are poor and lack school facilities | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
| Frequency (fo) | 19 | 15 | 9 | 7 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 38 | 30 | 18 | 14 | 100 |

The results in table 3 showed that 38% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are poor and lack school facilities, 30% agreed while 18% strongly disagreed and 14% disagreed children from single parent families are poor and lack school facilities.

Most of the parents agreed that children from single families were poor because supporting children alone was not easy. One of the participants who was a single mother had this to say;

“.....I have a well paying job but it cannot sustain me and my four children as a single mother. If I had a husband to support me things would be easier.....” (Parent FGD participant)

The respondents were asked if children from single parent families are not active in class and this was their response in table 4

Table 4: opinion on children from single parent families are not active in class

| children from single parent families are not active in class | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 10 | 15 | 15 | 10 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 20 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 100 |

The results in table 4 show that 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are not active in class, 30% agreed while 30% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed that children from single parent families are not active in class.

It was established that most children from single parent families are not active in class because of the less encouragement they get from their parents.

“.....single parents do not have time for their children because they have to go and work since looking after the family is left in their hands.....”(Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

However some parents revealed that in today’s demanding world even married parents participate less in their children’s school work because they have to go and work.

The respondents were asked if children from single parent's families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance and their response was summarized in table 5 below

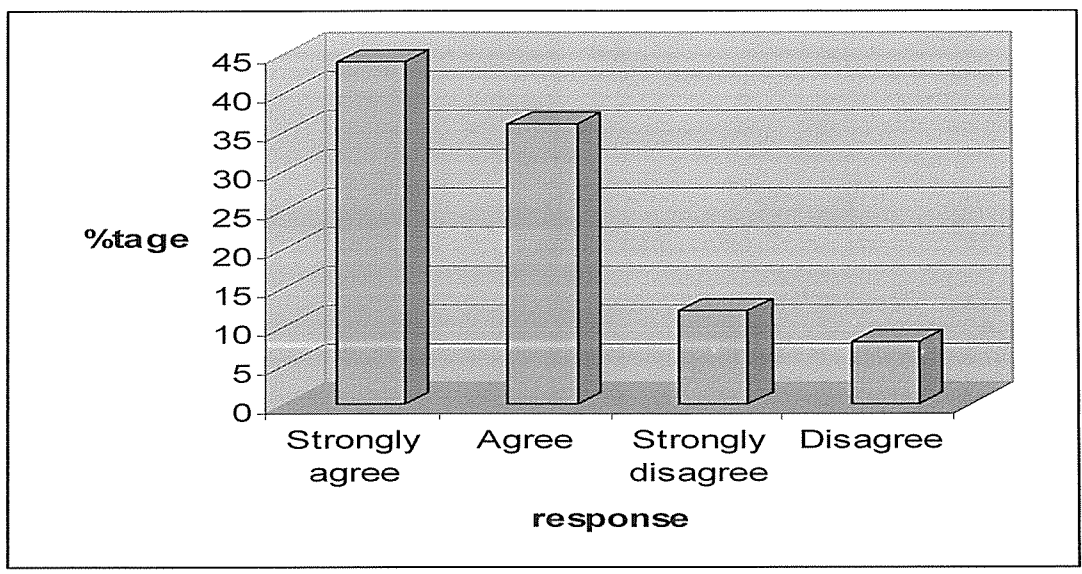
Table 5: opinion on the performance of children from single parent families

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| children from single parent's families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
| Frequency (fo) | 22 | 18 | 6 | 4 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 44 | 36 | 12 | 8 | 100 |

The results in table 5 showed that 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent's families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance, 36% agreed while 12% strongly disagreed and 4% disagreed that children from single parent's families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance.

The data in table 5 was analyzed using a chart and summarizes the analysis of the opinion on whether children from single parent's families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance

Chart 2: opinion on the performance of children from single parent families



The results in chart 2 shows that 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent’s families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance, 36% agreed while 6% strongly disagreed and 4% disagreed.

The parents revealed that most single parent families are poor and according to them mother only families are the worst affected. This therefore affects the children because the parent will not able to pay for school fees in time.

“.....am a widow with three children and the money I earn is not enough to sustain all of us leave alone paying for school fees and therefore whenever they chase children from school mine do not miss and this has affected their performance because they sometimes sit for two weeks at home.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

The respondents were asked whether Children from single parent families have less parental involvement in their schooling and their response was summarized in table 6 below;

Table 6: opinion on whether children from single parent families have less parental involvement in their schooling

| Children from single parent families have less parental involvement in their schooling | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 30 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 60 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 100 |

According to table 6, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that Children from single parent families have less parental involvement in their schooling, 20% agreed while 10% strongly disagreed and 10% of the respondents disagreed. Some parents agreed that they did not have enough time for their children because they were busy and therefore involvement in their schooling was difficult.

“.....I cannot get involved in my children’s schooling because as a single parent I have to work to make ends meet.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

4.3. Emotional stress of children from single families

The second objective of the study was to find out the relationship between single parents and Emotional stress of their children. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to the question. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What is the relationship between children living with single parents and their emotional stress? The results are presented in the subsections below

The respondents were asked whether children from single parent families are emotionally stressed which leads to poor performance and below was their response

Table 7: opinion on whether children from single parent families are emotionally stressed

| children from single parent families are emotionally stressed which leads to poor performance | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 14 | 23 | 7 | 6 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 28 | 46 | 14 | 12 | 100 |

Table 6 indicated that 28% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are emotionally stressed which leads to poor performance, 46% agreed while 14% strongly disagreed and 12% of the

respondents disagreed that children from single parent families are not emotionally stressed which leads to poor performance.

According to the parents when parents divorce the child is affected because he/she misses the love of both parents and therefore suffer emotionally and therefore are not stable at school which leads to poor performance.

This is supported by (Compas, Bruce E., & Williams, Rebecca A. (1990) that Children living with single parents are exposed to more stressful experiences and circumstances than are children living with continuously married parents.

The respondents were asked if children from single parent families are withdrawn and therefore do not participate in school activities and their response was as summarized below;

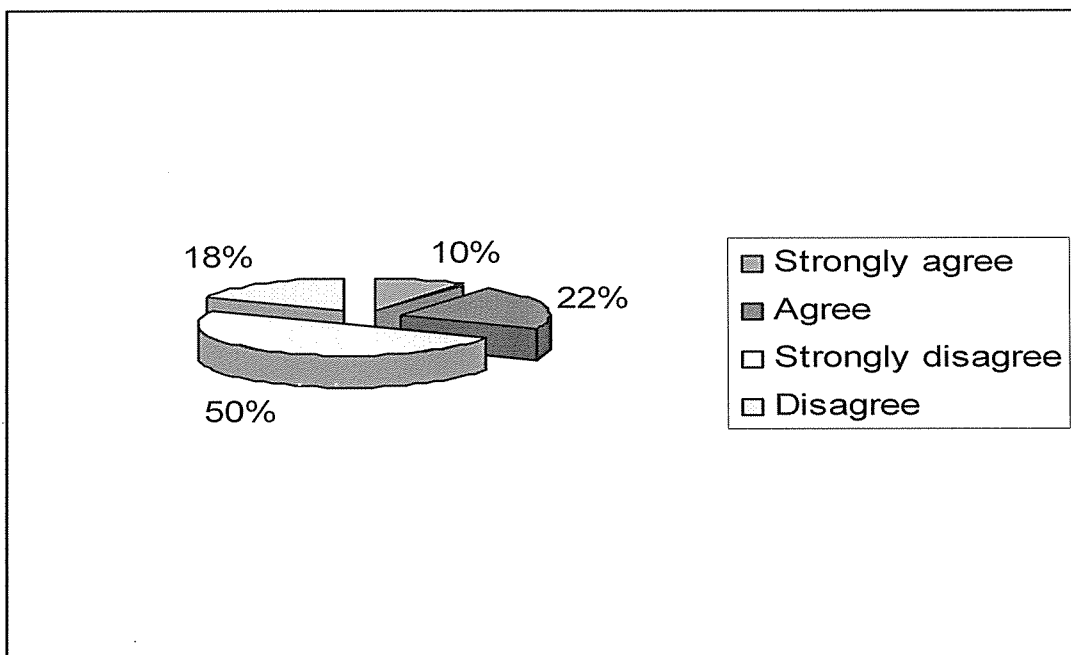
Table 8: opinion if children from single parent families are withdrawn and therefore do not participate in school activities

| children from single parent families are withdrawn and therefore do not participate in school activities | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 5 | 11 | 25 | 9 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 10 | 22 | 50 | 18 | 100 |

The results in table 8 showed that 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families withdraw themselves and therefore do not participate in school activities, 22% agreed while 50% strongly disagreed and 18% disagreed that children from single parent families withdraw themselves and therefore do not participate in school activities.

The data in table 8 was analyzed using a chart and summarizes the analysis of the opinion if children from single parent families are withdrawn and therefore do not participate in school activities

Chart 3: opinion on whether children from single parent families are withdrawn and therefore do not participate in school activities



The results in chart 3 shows that 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families withdraw themselves and therefore do not participate in school activities, 22% agreed while 50% strongly disagreed and 18% disagreed.

The parents revealed that single parenthood was difficult for children especially when the cause is death. They revealed that by losing one parent to either divorce or death the child is emotionally disturbed which leads to withdrawal of the child from people and activities. One of the single mothers who participated in the study had this to say;

“.....when I divorced with my husband my child blamed me and hated me for the mess. He could not talk to me or listen my parental advice especially with matters pertaining education.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

4.4. School drop out and children from single parent family

The third objective of the study was to find out the relationship between single parents and school drop out of children. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to the question. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What is the relationship between children living with single parents and school drop out? The results are presented in the subsections below;

The respondents were asked if children from single parent families are likely to drop out of school compared to children from both parent families and below is their response

Table 9: opinion on whether children from single parent families drop out of school

| children from single parent families are likely to drop out of school compared to children from both parents families | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 20 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 40 | 24 | 16 | 20 | 100 |

The results in table 9 showed that 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are likely to drop out of school compared to children from both parents families, 24% agreed while 16% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed that children from single parent families are likely to drop out of school compared to children from both parents families.

According to the parents since most of the children from single families are emotionally disturbed. They find it difficult to connect with school and therefore end up dropping out.

These findings are quite in agreement with the findings of Battle, Juan J. (1998).

“.....when my husband died my child refused to continue with school because he felt he did not fit in their.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

The respondents were asked if because of poverty children from single parent families’ drop out of school and their response was as shown in table 10 below

Table 10: opinion on poverty and children from single parent families’ drop out of school

| because of poverty children from single parent families drop out of school | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 15 | 17 | 9 | 9 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 30 | 34 | 18 | 18 | 100 |

According to table 10, 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that because of poverty children from single parent families drop out of school, 34% agreed while 18% strongly disagreed and 18% disagreed

According to the parents single parent families especially mother only families are poor and therefore fail to keep their children in school. The parents revealed that the child is mostly affected when the father dies and the mother is a house wife.

The respondents were asked whether children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance and below was their response

Table 11: opinion on whether children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance

| children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 10 | 11 | 19 | 10 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 20 | 22 | 38 | 20 | 100 |

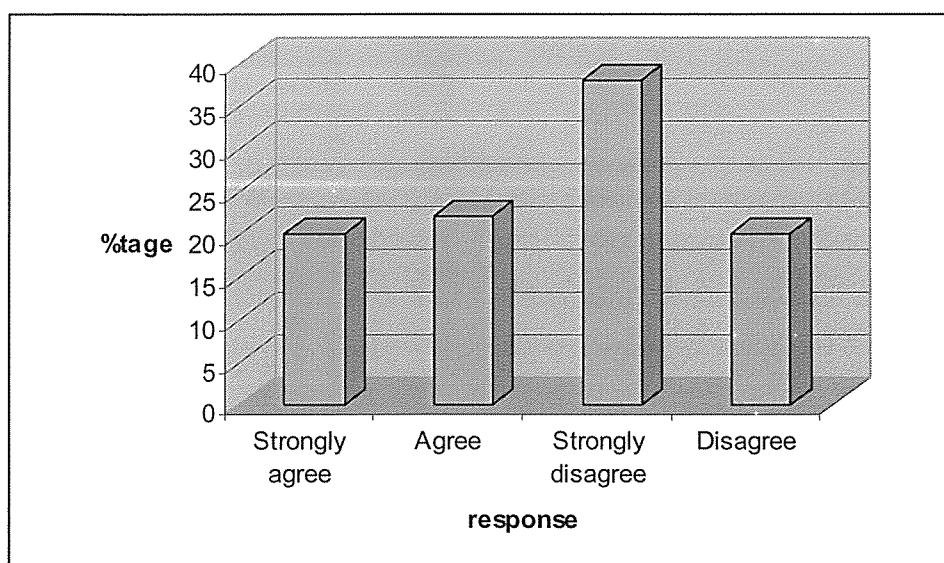
The results in table 11 showed that 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance, 22% agreed while 38% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed that children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance.

According to the parents in most cases these children are emotionally disturbed and therefore cannot concentrate in school and class which leads to poor performance and in turn school drop out.

“.....most of the children from single parents perform poorly because they fail to connect with school and sometimes are involved in indiscipline cases and therefore by performing poorly in they hate the school environment and hence drop out.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

The data in table 11 was analyzed using a chart and summarizes the analysis of the opinion on whether children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance

Chart 4: opinion on whether children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance



The results in chart 4 shows that 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent family's drop out of school due to poor performance, 22% agreed while 38% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed

The respondents were asked whether children from single parent families are likely to refuse going to school compared to children from both parent families and this was their response

Table 12: opinion on whether children from single parent families are more likely to refuse going to school

| children from single parent families are likely to refuse going to school | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 13 | 10 | 16 | 11 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 26 | 20 | 32 | 22 | 100 |

According to table 12, 26% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are likely to refuse going to school compared to children from both parent families, 20% agreed while 32% strongly disagreed and 22% of the respondents disagreed.

The parents earlier mentioned that children who have lost a parent refuse to go to school. In most cases, it is the fathers who take their children to school as they go to work so when the father leaves or dies the children find it hard to adjust to the situation and sometimes refuse to go to school.

“.....my husband had a car and would take the children to school as he went to work but when we separated I had to stay with the children and they refused to go to school for a week because they did not want me to take them to school without a car.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

4.5. Delinquent behavior and performance of children from single parent families

The fourth objective of the study was to find out the relationship Delinquent behavior and performance of children from single parent families. To achieve this, the respondents were asked questions related to the question. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What is the relationship between children living with single parents and Delinquent behavior? The results are presented in the subsections below

The respondents were asked whether children from single parent family are likely to abuse drugs compared to children from both parent families and their response is summarized in the table below;

Table 13: opinion on whether children from single parent family are likely to abuse drugs

| children from single parent family are likely to abuse drugs | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 5 | 15 | 20 | 10 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 10 | 30 | 40 | 20 | 100 |

The results in table 13 showed that 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent family are likely to abuse drugs compared to

children from both parent families, 30% agreed while 40% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed.

The parents revealed that when children lack the love and attention they deserve they resort to drugs as a solution to their problems.

“.....my child could not handle the fact that his mother was dead and gone and therefore he started abusing drugs and since I was a busy parent it took me long to notice.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

This is supported by (Keith 1991) who stated that children in single-parent homes are also twice as likely to have a psychiatric disease, have alcohol-related problems, and are up to four times more likely to abuse drugs.

The respondents were asked whether Girls from single parent family are likely to get pregnant early compared to those from both parent families their response was as shown in table 14 below;

Table 14: opinion on whether Girls from single parent family are likely to get pregnant early

| Girls from single parent family are likely to get pregnant early | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 15 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 30 | 20 | 26 | 24 | 100 |

The results in table 14 indicated that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that Girls from single parent family are likely to get pregnant early compared to

those from both parent families, 20% agreed while 26% strongly disagreed and 24% of the respondents disagreed.

The parents revealed that there were three reasons why girls from single parent families were likely to drop out. The first was that such families were poor and girls lacked the basic needs and therefore sought older men for money, secondly girls in such families lack parental love and therefore seek love and attention by involving in sexual relationships and thirdly parents were too busy to discipline their children and therefore did whatever they wanted.

The respondents were asked whether children from single parent families are more likely to get arrested than children from both parent families their response was as below

Table 15: opinion on if children from single parent families are more likely to get arrested

| children from single parent families are likely to get arrested | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 5 | 10 | 25 | 15 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 10 | 20 | 50 | 30 | 100 |

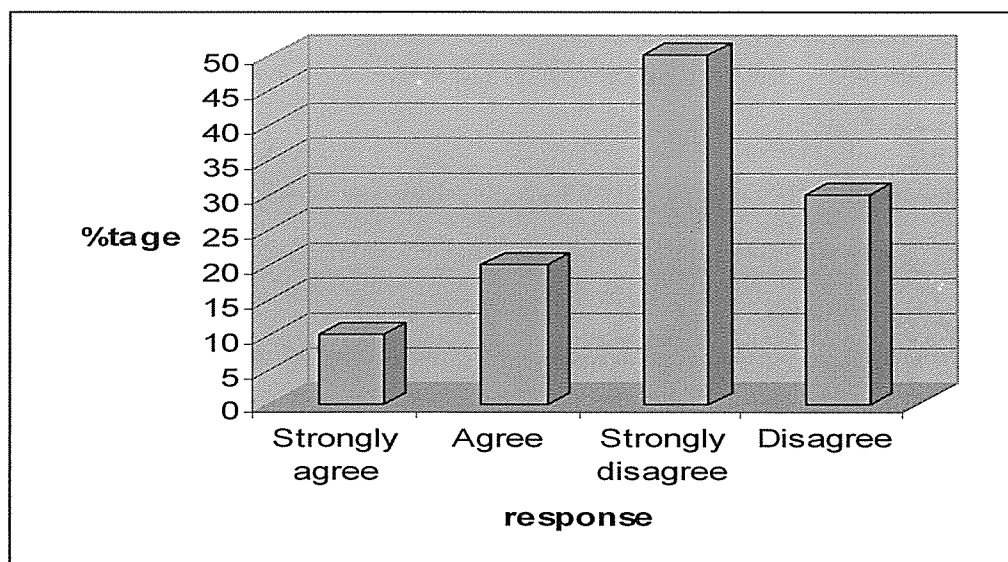
The results in table 15 showed that 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are likely to get arrested than children from both parent families, 20% agreed while 50% strongly disagreed and 30% of the respondents disagreed.

According to the parents since such children were likely to abuse drugs. They were likely to break the law and hence get arrested.

“.....my child has been arrested several times and sometimes I think he does it to get attention from me.....” (Parent FGD participant Mwingi Central)

The data in table 15 was analyzed using a chart and summarizes the analysis of the opinion on whether children from single parent families are more likely to get arrested than children from both parent families

Chart 5: opinion on if children from single parent families are likely to get arrested



The results in chart 5 shows that 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are likely to get arrested than children from both parent families, 20% agreed while 50% strongly disagreed and 30% of the respondents disagreed. In this respect, the researcher feels that the re could be other reasons for those who strongly disagree. This might help other researches to do a research on such respondents

The respondents were asked if Children from single parent families are likely to be suspended or expelled from school than children from both parent families and below in table 16 was their response

Table 16: opinion on if children from single parent families are more likely to be suspended.

| Children from single parent families are likely to be suspended or expelled from school | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Total |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Frequency (fo) | 6 | 4 | 30 | 10 | 50 |
| Percentage (%) | 12 | 8 | 60 | 20 | 100 |

The results in table 16 shows that 12% of the respondents strongly agreed that children from single parent families are likely to be suspended or expelled from school, 8% agreed while 60% strongly disagreed and 20% of the respondents disagreed

According to the parents some children seek attention by breaking school rules so that the parent is called to the school. This might be as a result of stress and misguidance faced by children living with single parents.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

The major purpose of the study was to conduct an investigation to determine the academic performance of children living with single parents.

This chapter focuses on the discussions of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Finally the chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

5.1. Discussions

The first research objective was to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and their academic performance. The study found out that children from single parents were likely to perform poorly in class because they lack the basic needs and parental involvement. According to Stanley Maxine Baca Zinn (2000) single parents have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement. Among children in single-parent families, those from mother-absent households earn lower science grades than children from father-absent homes.

The second research objective was to determine² the relationship between children living with single parents and emotional stress. According to the study children living with single parents are emotionally stressed and disturbed. The study revealed that the child find sit hard to cope without the other parents. According to Compas, Bruce E., & Williams, Rebecca A. (1990). Children living with single parents are exposed to more stressful experiences and circumstances than are children living with continuously married parents.

The third objective was to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and dropping out of school. The study revealed that children from single parents were likely to drop out than children from both parent families. According to Battle, Juan J. (1998), children in single-parent families are at greater risk than children in other types of families. Even when they have the same academic abilities, children in single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families. (Astone, Nan M., & McLanahan, Sara S. (1991).

Finally the study sought to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and delinquent behavior. The study revealed that children from single parent families were more likely to involve in delinquent behaviors than children from both parent families. According to McLanahan et al (1994) it is difficult for poor single parents to afford the books, home computers, and private lessons that make it easier for their children to succeed in school. Similarly, they cannot afford clothes, shoes, cell phones, and other consumer goods that give their children status among their peers. Children in single-parent homes are also twice as likely to have a psychiatric disease, have alcohol-related problems, and are up to four times more likely to abuse drugs. (Keith 1991).

5.2. Conclusion.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate factors affecting academic performance of children living with single parents, Mwingi Central Mwingi district Kenya.

The first research objective was to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and their academic performance. The study found out that children from single parents were more likely to perform poorly in class

because they lack the basic needs and parental involvement.

The second research objective was to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and emotional stress. According to the study children living with single parents are emotionally stressed and disturbed.

The third objective was to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and dropping out of school. The study revealed that children from single parents were more likely to drop out than children from both parent families.

Finally the study sought to determine the relationship between children living with single parents and their behavior. The study revealed that children from single parent families were more likely to involve in delinquent behaviors than children from both parent families

5.3. Recommendations.

The government and policy makers should take into consideration the problems of children living with single parents and thus allocate funds for their education in all levels. The government should also organize refresher courses and workshops of personnel's handling children with single parents.

The Non Government Organizations (NGOS) should come in to assist single parents with the daily basic needs.

The single parents should also be counseled on social needs of their children so that their academic work will not suffer at school. Children and their parents should be counseled together to help both the child and the parent cope up with the situations at hand and how to make use of the available resources around them.

Suggestions for further research.

More research should be done on the topic single parents and academic performance of pupils in other districts, this will act as an eye opener to the current society in realizing the situation at hand of single parents and their children, since few people have ventured in the study.

It's my sincere hope that permanent remedy will be put in place in aid of this group of the current society.

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PPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

Dear respondent the purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of children living with single parents and you have been chosen in the study you are requested to tick where appropriately and fill in the gaps. I would like to bring to your attention that the information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

NB. Do not write your name anywhere on this paper

Personal information

Age

- 19-24yrs
- 25-30yrs
- 31 and above

Sex

- Female Male

Marital status

- Single Married

Educational level

- None
- Primary
- Secondary
- College
- University

For the following questions, please use the rating scale below

Please tick in the box whose digit is the most appropriate for you.

| |
|---|
| 1 |
|---|

| |
|---|
| 2 |
|---|

| |
|---|
| 3 |
|---|

| |
|---|
| 4 |
|---|

Strongly agree

Agree Strongly disagree

Disagree

Single parenting and poor performance of pupils

1 children from single parent families perform poorly in class

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

2 children from single parent families are poor and lack school facilities

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

3 children from single parent families are not active in class

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

4 Children from single parent's families are always sent home for school fees hence poor performance.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

5 Children from single parent families have less parental involvement in

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Emotional stress of children from single families

6 children from single parent families are emotionally stressed which leads to poor performance

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

7 Children from single parent families withdraw themselves from school programs and therefore do not participate in school activities.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

School drop out and children from single parent family

8 children from single parent families are likely to drop out of school compared to children from both parents families

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

9 because of poverty children from single parent families drop out of school

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

10 children from single parent families drop out of school due to poor performance

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

11 Children from single parent families are likely to refuse going to school compared to children from both parent families.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

Delinquent behavior and performance of children from single parent families

12 children from single parent family are likely to abuse drugs compared to children from both parent families

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

13 Girls from single parent family are likely to get pregnant early compared to those from both parent families.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

14 children from single parent families are more likely to get arrested than children from both parent families

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

15 Children from single parent families are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than children from both parent families.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

APPENDIX C: Focus group discussion with the parents

1. Are you a single parent?
2. If yes what is the reason for being single?
3. How has it affected your children?
4. What challenges do face in raising your children alone?
5. Do you miss your spouse?
6. Do you plan to remarry?
7. How are your children fairing at school?
8. How has living as a single parent influenced your child's life?
9. Do you think that your child's life would have been different if he/she was with both parents?
10. Give reasons for whichever answer you give?
11. How have you as a single parent influenced your child's growth?
12. If both parents, how has having both parents helped your children?

APPENDIX D: TIME SCHEDULE

| Date | Activity |
|--|--|
| 20 th May-29 th June 2011 | Looking for funds to buy all the necessary items for the study. |
| 1 st June-15 July 2011 | Carrying out the research |
| July 16 th -August 30 th ,2011 | Compiling of findings while checking with my supervisor for corrections. |
| August 1 st 10 th ,2011 | Submit in my dissertation to my supervisor for approval. |

APPENDIX E: BUDGET

| Items | Cost (Ug shs) | Costs (K shs) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Stationary | 5,000/= | 208/= |
| | 10,000/= | 416/= |
| Pens and pencils | 35,000/= | 1458/= |
| Ream of paper | 100,000/= | 4166/= |
| | 150,000/= | 6250/= |
| Transport costs | | |
| Miscellaneous expenses | | |
| Typing and printing charges | | |
| Total | 300,000/= | 12500/= |