

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING (IJEPC)





EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SINGLE PARENTING ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 10.08.2023 Revised date: 20.08.2023 Accepted date: 04.09.2023 Published date: 15.09.2023

To cite this document:

Bannawi, A. F. E., Foy-awen, N. P. D., Joseph, A. S. T., Rosario, G. D. D.,

Abstract:

This study aimed at knowing the relationship between single parenting, particularly the level of involvement of single parents, and the academic performance of their children who are in high school level. The study employed a quantitative method, specifically a correlational design, and through purposive sampling, 42 Junior High School (JHS) respondents were surveyed in one of the diocese schools in Baguio-Benguet. The researchers used a survey questionnaire to gather data; all the information was statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation coefficient. Based on the findings, it was found that single parents had a high level of involvement in terms of giving words of wisdom or moral support but not in physical actions,

Andawi, L.L. D., Eslao, N. L. D., Banih, A. J. L., & Pelila, J. R. O. (2023). Examining The Impact Of Single Parenting On The Academic Performance Of Junior High School Students. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 8 (51), 231-243.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.851016

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particularly in attending school activities. However, the respondents showed good academic performances based on their satisfactory grades. Nevertheless, it was revealed that there was a weak negative correlation between single parenting and the academic performances of the respondents. Therefore, it is imperative to note that too much meddling by single parents with their children can lower their academic performances.

Keywords:

Single Parenting, Academic Performance, Junior High School Students, Correlational Study



Introduction

In today's 21st century, divorce, separation, and unmarried couples are much more prevalent than in the past. The number of kids raised by single parents and the causes of being a single parent has grown significantly. The term 'parent' simply refers to a father or a mother, whereas parenthood is generally defined as having parental responsibilities. However, some single parents raise their children alone and are cut off from their relationships due to certain factors. Amofa (2013) said they are responsible for managing the household, caring for their child's needs, and promoting their children's growth by themselves. On another note, single parenting is about the relationship between a single parent and their child or children, even where the grandparents serve as their grandchildren's parents (American Psychological Association, 2019). Kessie (2023) distinguished the various types of single-parent families, such as whether they result from marital disruption (divorce or separation), parental death, or a never-married parent.

In the Philippines, these single parents are recognized by the government, and they refer to them as 'solo parents'. According to Section 3 of the Republic Act 8972 of the 'Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000', they are distinct as any individuals who falls in any of the following categories: a) a woman who gives birth as a result of rape and other crimes against chastity even without a final conviction of the offender; provided, that the mother keeps and raises the child, b) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to death of spouse, c) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood while the spouse is detained or is serving sentence for a criminal conviction for at least one (1) year, d) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to physical and/or mental incapacity of spouse as certified by a public medical practitioner, e) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to legal separation or de facto separation from spouse for at least one (1) year, as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children, f) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to declaration of nullity or annulment of marriage as decreed by a court or by a church as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children, g) a parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to abandonment of spouse for at least one (1) year, h) unmarried mother or father who has preferred to keep and rear her or his child or children instead of having others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution, i) any other person who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children, and j) any family member who assumes the responsibility of head of family as a result of the death, abandonment, disappearance or prolonged absence of the parents or solo parent (Philippines, 2000).

With this, when a press release by the legislators in 2021 (Senate of the Philippines, 2021) after they deliberated the increase in the benefits being received by solo parents of the said Act, it was highlighted that there are 'currently an estimated 14 to 15 million solo parents in the Philippines, 95% of whom are women, according to a World Health Organization-funded study by the Department of Health and the University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health'. It showed an unequivocal demonstration of the sharp rise in single parenting over the previous five years. Even though it is one of the most conservative nations bound with traditions and cultures, the Philippines is gradually adopting the idea of single-parent households.

Single Parenting and Its Impact on Children's Academic Performance

Any context in which parents are involved results in measurable student performance improvements. Involving parents in their children's education is important and can lead to success for all parties involved. Also, parenting is critical in fostering and assisting a child's physical, emotional, social, financial, and intellectual growth from childhood to adulthood. During their children's academic performance, parents' roles are helping their children with their schoolwork, providing learning materials for the child, communicating with the school, using some patterns in guiding the child, participating in school activities related to school performance, paying tuition, and setting expectations for the child to advance into higher education studies. Thus, Tus (2021) asserts that children's interaction with family members is critical for their learning and development because their first teacher is their parents, and their first learning occurs in the community. As a result of this interaction, the children gain knowledge about the world. In other words, parenting has always affected a child's development more than other elements like the environment and peers. Thus, good parenting affects children's psychological and behavioral actions, with kids who get good parenting more likely to act in ways that conform to the accepted norms of society. It leads to 'parenting styles' or 'parenting strategies. For instance, the studies of Bacus (2014), Kong and Yasmin (2022), and Yasmin and Kiani (2015) revealed that there was a strong correlation between students' attitudes toward school and authoritative parenting styles and academic performance. It means that whatever the actions and even behaviors of parents are being followed by their children, and this can be supported by the social learning theory of Bandura (1971), which suggests that people learn through observation and modeling play from someone who serves a role model or someone who has a great influence. More studies mentioned that most authoritative parenting was strongly and positively related to students' academic performance. That being said, permissiveness and authoritarianism appear to have no relationship or to be negatively correlated with student academic performance (Yasmin & Kiani, 2015). According to Odongo, Aloka, and Raburu (2016), permissive parents were found to be more lenient when taking care of their children because being hands-off may eventually harm the child's academic progress.

Furthermore, Amofa (2013) explained that a family is responsible for educating and raising the child following societal norms and values. They are in charge of the child's psychological and emotional health. Also, they are primarily in charge of their children's professional and academic development. In the Philippines, parenting is important in Philippine society because the family is the center of one's social world (Bartolome et al., 2017). Regarding their children, they especially regard their education because it's their sense of accomplishment if their children finish their studies. Though its common that a family will experience struggles in managing resources, it has been concerned an effect on the academic success of students mainly due to single parenting (Abudu & Fuseini, 2016; Afifi, 2013; Anyakoha, 2016; Fotoh, 2021;

Kessie, 2023; Munir et al., 2021; Oluwatosin & Joseph, 2011; Oyediran, 2019; Sackey et al., 2022). Although a study by Oluwatosin and Joseph (2011) revealed that there was no significant relationship between the single parental influence and the academic achievements of primary students, which implies that the absence of a parent doesn't necessarily influence the academic performance of the child, there were more studies said otherwise. For example, Abudu and Fuseini (2016) found that single parenting negatively impacts a child's academic performance.

In support, Munir et al. (2021) explained that the 'phenomenon of single parenting is a social problem in various countries in the world today, and it has become a global concern which deprives many children of the opportunity to attain academic excellence in their lives and excellent labor factor for national productivity and progress'. It was said for the reason that it came out in their study that a large percentage of respondents sometimes experience depression and are emotionally unstable, making students uncomfortable in their studies. Also, it shows that single parents do not regularly monitor and supervise their student's academic progress. In effect, these children are normally not provided with the necessary learning materials to aid their learning. In addition, this was also the main reason why the study of Anyakoha (2016) revealed that most senior secondary schools failed in their academics, attributed to single parenting. Also, Fotoh (2021) gave specific reasons why single parenting influences the academic performance of the children because most single parents do not have a reliable source of income, do not always pay their children's fees on time, do not provide most of their school needs (textbooks, school bag, and shoes) and do not regularly provide food for their children before and after school. It could also be the valid reason why the government in the Philippines made a law (i.e., RA 8972) to support the 'solo parents' in taking care of their welfare just like anybody else. Though parents' income and ethnicity or race of the family influence the academic performance of their children (Kessie, 2023), it was prevalent that the educational attainment of single parents is one of the main factors that affect the influence in the performance of their children (Fotoh, 2021). In such cases, they are not able to finish their studies, and it leads to the fact that they cannot check their children's books at home, do not always create time to do assignments with their children at home, do not always attend PTA meetings in school, and do not always create time to discuss with them about school. Getting the side of the teachers showed similar results, wherein the study of Oyediran (2019) showed that pupils of single parentage perform lower in academic activities in the school. It was also indicated that pupils of single-parentage are habitual latecomers to school and engage in deviant behaviors. It was similar to the study of Sackey et al. (2022) that students from singleparent families encounter students who do not easily socialize in the classroom and exhibit low self-esteem. In addition, the study concluded that the effect of single parenting on the education of junior high school students included students who were frequently absent from school. Hence, they scored low marks in class exercises.

Regardless, it must be understood that single parents experience unfaithfulness, marital violence, premarital pregnancy, poverty, divorce, and the death of a spouse, which is a reason for them to have such status (Fotoh, 2021). With this, they are also those prone to emotional destabilization, negative social disposition, and poor moral upbringing; as Ihedioha (2021) said, life in a single-parent family could be stressful for both the parent and the child due to many challenges.

Gap Analysis

There's a plethora of studies when it comes to the effect and relationship between single parenting and the academic performance of children or students (Abudu & Fuseini, 2016; Afifi, 2013; Anyakoha, 2016; Fotoh, 2021; Kessie, 2023; Munir et al., 2021; Oluwatosin & Joseph, 2011; Oyediran, 2019; Sackey et al., 2022). But despite a case where the two variables had no relationship, which implies that the absence of a parent doesn't necessarily influence the academic performance of the child (Oluwatosin & Joseph, 2011), negative effects and relationships were more prevalent (Abudu & Fuseini, 2016; Anyakoha, 2016; Fotoh, 2021; Kessie, 2023; Munir et al., 2021; Oyediran, 2019; Sackey et al., 2022).

In the case of high school students, a study showed that single parenting impacted the students' schooling, however, in a negative way (Anyakoha, 2016). In the Philippines, a study focused on the Junior High School level (JHS) but on the parents of the said high school students. With this, this study aimed to get the side of JHS students regarding their academic performances and their remarks on the level of involvement of parents in their children's performances at school.

Research Questions

The researchers sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What is the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students with single parents?
- 2. What is the level of involvement of single parents in their children's academic performances?
- 3. Is there a significant relationship between the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students and the level of involvement of their parents?

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students and the level of involvement of their parents.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative method, specifically a descriptive correlational design. According to Sousa et al. (2007), this design describes the variables and relationships occurring naturally between and among them. In addition, descriptive was used since more information can be drawn from a sample of the target population. On the other hand, the study was looking for the relationship between the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students and the level of involvement of single parents in any of the school's activities, particularly their children. Thus, the correlation was also looked at in this study.

Sampling and Locale of The Study

The study was conducted in one of the diocese schools of Baguio-Benguet, which catered to both Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) students. The school was selected to conduct the study since it is where almost all the researchers are affiliated. Using purposive sampling, the researchers chose those target respondents who are single-parented JHS students. With a total number of 563 students from the Junior High School, 42 attested that each of them has only one parent. Particularly, Table 1 shows the distribution of the number of respondents per grade level. As observed, the data implied that in the school where the

researchers gathered and conducted the study, it could be seen that only 42 of the 563 JHS students were single-parent families, while the rest were two-parent families.

Table 1: Distribution of the Number of Target Respondents per Grade Level

Cmada Laval	Donulation (f)	Sa	mple
Grade Level	Population (f)	f	%
Grade-7	134	6	14.29%
Grade-8	114	13	30.95%
Grade-9	141	9	21.43%
Grade-10	174	14	33.33%
Total	563	42	100.00%

Data Instrument

There were two main instruments in addressing the study's research questions – collecting grade point average (GPA) and administering a survey questionnaire. First, in knowing the academic performance of the single-parented JHS students, the grade point average (GPA) of these said students was obtained. According to Ensoy and Lavega (2015), the GPA is the calculation of the total final grades earned and dividing this by the total grades awarded. Also, it is computed as the basis for determining students' academic performances and even their honor roll or class rank in the school where they belong.

Moreover, a 4-point Likert Scale questionnaire was based on the questionnaire in the thesis made by Magara (2017) to know the level of involvement of the parents in their children's activities at school. It was made as the basis because it has basic concepts that the researchers found easy to understand, especially in administering to high school students. In the questionnaire, 27 items were put in knowing the involvement the single parents gave as per the observation or perception of their children (target respondents). Here, they were asked if they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each given statement. In addition, a demographic profile was added before the section where the survey was put in the questionnaire.

A reliability test was not done since the adapted questionnaire was already tested on the part of Margara (2017). However, content validity was done wherein some of the panel of evaluators of the study examined it first, especially its appropriateness before it was administered to the target respondents.

Data Procedure

After complying with the necessary documents to be processed before gathering the data, the researchers immediately approached the school's guidance counselor to request assistance identifying all single-parented JHS students. Later, a copy of the target respondents' grade point average (GPA) was also requested to check their academic performances at their school.

Upon securing the data mentioned above, the researchers went to the principal's office and asked permission to administer questionnaires to the identified respondents. After granting the request, the researchers approached each individual to take the printed survey. All of the respondents were surveyed face-to-face.

When the survey was done, the researchers organized the data and sent it to an expert for analysis based on the research questions being investigated. Afterward, the researchers retrieved the analyzed data, and a discussion was made before the study was concluded.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics addressed the first research question (RQ1), particularly frequency and percentage. Using the scale used by the school in determining if students are either 'outstanding', 'very satisfactory', 'satisfactory', or 'fairly satisfactory', the researchers organized the students' GPAs in which level (Table 2).

Table 2: Descriptive Equivalence of the GPA of the Students Being Used by the School

Grade	Descriptive Equivalence	
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory	
80 - 84	Satisfactory	
85 - 89	Very Satisfactory	
90 and above	Outstanding	

Furthermore, descriptive statistics, particularly mean and rank, treated the second research question (RQ2). A scale was computed for this analysis, and an interpretation was assigned afterward (Table 3).

Table 3: Interpretation Scale Used for RQ2

Mean	Interpretation of Parents' Level of Involvement
1.00 - 1.75	Very Low
1.76 - 2.50	Low
2.51 - 3.25	High
3.26 - 4.00	Very High

Lastly, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the third research question (RQ3). With this, a scale was adapted and used for the interpretation (Table 4). The table was given by the statistician who validated the result of the statistical analysis. After the data was analyzed, the discussion was correlated with existing studies. Later, a conclusion and recommendation were identified.

Table 4: Interpretation Scale that was Used in Analyzing the Correlation Coefficient

Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) Value	Strength	Direction
Greater than .5	Strong	Positive
Between .3 and .5	Moderate	Positive
Between 0 and .3	Weak	Positive
0	None	None
Between 0 and3	Weak	Negative
Between3 and05	Moderate	Negative
Less than5	Strong	Negative

Ethical Consideration

In every activity, the researchers followed all protocols and ethical considerations before, during, and after the data gathering. First, the researchers asked permission from the school principal by sending a letter, even if affiliated with the school. During the data gathering, the researchers first asked for verbal consent from every respondent and were reminded that the gathered data would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. After the data gathering, the researchers sealed the printed questionnaires in a secured box and kept them safe.

Findings and Discussion

Academic Performance of Single-Parented Junior High School Students

Table 5 shows the academic performance of single-parented JHS students based on their grade point average (GPA), and it was revealed that none of them failed. However, there was a distribution of target respondents, and it can be seen that 42.86% (f=18) of the respondents were 'very satisfactory' in their academic performance. It implies that they attained grades between 85 and 89. Furthermore, 35.71% (f=15) of the respondents were 'satisfactory' as indicated by their grades between 80 and 84. Interestingly, 14.29 % (f=6) of the respondents were outstanding in their studies since they garnered a grade of 90 and above. Undoubtedly, they are part of the achievers in their school. In contrast, 7.14 % (f=14) of the respondents were 'fairly satisfactory' in their academic performances, meaning they attained a grade between 75 and 79. Nevertheless, all the respondents were satisfactory in their academic performances, implying that they still passed their studies.

Table 5: Academic Performance of Single-parented JHS students

Grade	Descriptive Equivalence	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory	3	7.14%
80 - 84	Satisfactory	15	35.71%
85 - 89	Very Satisfactory	18	42.86%
90 and above	Outstanding	6	14.29%
	Total	42	100.00%

Level of Involvement of Single Parents in Their Children's Academic Performances

Table 6 shows the level of involvement of single parents in their children's academic performances. It revealed a 'very high level of involvement' of parents in terms of giving reminders to their children to study (\bar{x} =3.60). This finding is incongruent with the other list wherein single parents had a 'high level of involvement in terms of supporting their children in their co-curricular activities (\bar{x} =3.26), finding time to help them in their activities (\bar{x} =3.21), making sure that the homework is complete (\bar{x} =3.19), sharing stories about their experiences at school (\bar{x} =3.10), talking about possible careers in the future (\bar{x} =3.07), helping with their activities during struggles (\bar{x} =2.93), ensuring that their children have a quiet place where they can study (\bar{x} =2.86), monitoring their academic progress of grades (\bar{x} =2.83), and participating to any school activities (\bar{x} =2.62).

However, it was also revealed that respondents' parents had a 'low level of involvement' in communicating or engaging themselves in most activities at their children's school. For instance, conversing with school staff about things that children do at school (\bar{x} =2.50) and even

personal matters that concern their children (\bar{x} =2.17), attending PTA meetings (\bar{x} =2.48) and other school meetings and events (\bar{x} =2.17), actively involved in their children's academic work (\bar{x} =2.43) and any school-related activities (x=2.19), attending conferences with teachers about their children's learning progress and behavior (\bar{x} =2.40), making available time for school functions (\bar{x} =2.29), talking with teachers through phone or e-mail about their children's performances (\bar{x} =2.05), and contacting their children's school to get some information (\bar{x} =1.93). Also, they had similar levels of 'low to very low level of involvement' concerning helping their children with their homework (\bar{x} =2.36), particularly on their assignments (\bar{x} =1.95), limiting their children watching TV, cell phones, and computer time at home (\bar{x} =2.45), updating how is the day of their children at school (\bar{x} =1.79), and always checking their children's book at home (\bar{x} =1.64).

Table 6: Level of Involvement of Single Parents in Their Children's Academic Performances

Performances			
List of Involvement Activities	Mean	Descriptive Equivalence	Rank
My parent always reminds me to study.	3.60	Very High	1
My parent supports me in my co-curricular activities.	3.26	High	2
My parent finds time to actively help me in my studies.	3.21	High	3
My parent makes sure I complete my homework.	3.19	High	4
My parent shares stories with me about when he/she was in school.	3.10	High	5
My parent talks with me about possible careers in the future.	3.07	High	6
My parent helps me with academic skills I struggle with.	2.93	High	7
My parent ensures that I have a quiet place at home where I can do school work.	2.86	High	8
My parent(s) monitor and supervise my academic progress.	2.83	High	9
My parent(s) participates/attends/watches school activities.	2.62	High	10
My parent(s) communicates with school staff about things I tell him/her about school.	2.50	Low	11
My parent(s) always attends PTA meetings at my school.	2.48	Low	12
My parent(s) limits my TV watching, cell phones, and computer time at home.	2.45	Low	13
My parent is actively involved in my academic work.	2.43	Low	14
My parent attends conferences with teachers to discuss my learning progress and behavior.	2.40	Low	15
My parent helps me with my homework.	2.36	Low	16
My parent does creative activities with me, like singing, drawing, and storytelling.	2.33	Low	17
My parent(s) avails him/herself of school functions like free days.	2.29	Low	18

	DOI 10.35031/1J	1E1 C.031010
2.29	Low	19
2.19	Low	20
2.17	Low	21
2.12	Low	22
2.05	Low	23
1.95	Low	24
1.93	Low	25
1.79	Low	26
1.64	Very Low	27
2.52	High	
_	2.19 2.17 2.12 2.05 1.95 1.93 1.79 1.64	2.29 Low 2.19 Low 2.17 Low 2.12 Low 2.05 Low 1.95 Low 1.93 Low 1.79 Low 1.64 Very Low

It was prevalent in this study that single parents reminded their children to always study well by doing their best at school. They think of what's best for their children. That's why it was noticed that their involvement is more focused at home, but it is more encouraging and gives them the freedom to do whatever they want so long as it will benefit their studies. However, it can be gleaned that while they encourage and make sure that their children are doing well at school, there was not enough action regarding their involvement with their children's homework or assignments and even checking their books and perhaps their school materials. In a similar vein, it was saddening to know that despite the effort of the single parents in encouraging their children to study, it came out that they were not much involved in terms of attending meetings, conferences, and other school-related events, except for major school activities that need their presence.

The case of the single-parented JHS students in the present study was similar to what was proven by Mensah and Oduro (2019) in that their parents showed support. However, there was inadequate time for single parents to participate in any meetings required by schools where they must be involved. In support, the main reason why there was less involvement of single parents at school was that they are those kinds of parents who do not have a reliable source of income (Fotoh, 2021), so they have to work more than their required number of hours just to provide something for their family. Hence, it implies that single-parented students do not have much time to be with their parents provided they are still working whenever they go home, their parents are tired at work, or there is less communication between them.

Relationship between the Academic Performance of JHS Students and the Level of Involvement of their Single Parents

This section delved into examining the relationship between the academic achievements of junior high school (JHS) students from single-parent households and the extent of engagement exhibited by their respective single parents.

Table 7: Relationship Between the Level of Involvement of Single Parents in their Children's Academic Performances

Variable	Mean	Pearson's r	t-stat	t-critical	
Parents' Level of	2.519753086	-0.06344284	0.4021	2.021	
Involvement					
Children's Academic	85.35714286				
Performance					

Surprisingly, a correlation coefficient of -0.06 was revealed, indicating a 'negatively weak' association between the two variables. In other words, the finding suggests that as the degree of involvement by single parents in their children's academic pursuits increases, there is a corresponding tendency for the academic performance of the students to slightly decrease.

With this, it was found that the study's result was similar to the study of Amofa (2013), proving that there is no significant difference between the student's academic success or performance in single-parent households and people raised in intact families. It could be explained by the previous results of this study that since single parents do not involve themselves in most activities at school unless mandatorily required and are more encouraging (Table 6), many of their children had satisfactory grades (Table 5). In other words, this type of child can attain good grades even if their parents do not help them. Thus, it infers that other factors are affecting why they perform well at their school. According to Porumbu and Necşoi (2013), it could be found in certain family characteristics such as parents' educational level, socioeconomic status, family size, family structure, and the position of the children within the family, which intervene as predictors of academic achievement. Besides, children from higher-income, better-educated, two-parent, and small households outperform those from lower-income, less-educated, single-parent, and large families (Porumbu & Necşoi, 2013).

Another perspective that can be culled out is that even if single parents teach their children in their studies, they may not listen or comprehend at all. It could be explained by the fact that single parents are not involved more in school activities due to certain reasons, this caused their children to rely on someone other than their parents for their studies. The attitude could also be why single-parented children rely on someone since their parents are not involved in most children's activities. Donkor (2010) said that the parents cause the poor performance of children living with single parents since they do not give adequate supervision and monitoring of their children's academic progress. As a result, children raised by a single parent are more prone to rely on others than their parents. It was the contrary based on the findings; the more single parents are involved, the more negatively it affects their children's academic performance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It was concluded that too much meddling by single parents with their children could potentially lower their academic performances. However, their encouragement and aspirations for their children are still vital, as most of them were attaining satisfactory grades even if they were not involved in more school activities with their children.

Moreover, the results showed that the two variables were weak and, at the same time, negatively correlated. It implies that other factors affect the academic performances of these JHS students, and not each of their single parents. Since the study cannot know other contributing factors, future researchers may look to find these determinants.

Lastly, the respondents of this study were the JHS students who were single-parented children. It is also encouraged among future researchers to survey single parents to get their side. It is also urged to conduct in-depth studies using other research designs to provide thorough discussions regarding this matter.

Acknowledgments

The researchers extend their heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated teachers and personnel of Saint Louis University School of Pacdal Incorporated, whose invaluable assistance and unwavering support have been instrumental in bringing this research to fruition.

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