

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Factors that motivate and disrupt single mothers in the
workplace**

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Abstract

Single parenting is rapidly becoming a growing trend in society. In South Africa an estimated 30% of households are headed by single parents. The key aim of the study was to establish whether single parents prioritized their careers over children.

In an endeavour to determine the factors that motivate and disrupt single mothers in the workplace, a sample of 146 subjects was selected utilising non-probability sampling.

Non-probability sampling was utilized to create the sample because there was no method of determining the precise size of the population from which it was going to be drawn. Two types of non-probability sampling were utilized to select the sample, namely purposive and snowball sampling. The sample consisted of 45 parents aged 21-24; 51 parents aged 25-34 and 50 parents aged 35-49. Data was collected using structured and self-completion questionnaires which were administered via e-mail.

The analysis revealed that parents aged 25-49 had adequate economic resources and showed more concern for their children's academic achievements than younger parents, although not much assistance was given to their children in the area of homework. The study found that younger parents' economic conditions were inadequate and these parents did not participate in their child's school activities nor did they assist them with homework.

A salient feature of this study is that young single parents aged 21-24 showed less concern for their children's education and well-being. The primary recommendation of this study is that members of society should wait until they have stable careers and a stable economic situation before they start families, as this will have positive ripple effects on the lifestyle they lead, irrespective of whether they are single parents or not.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

According to Prince (2009, p.3), an estimated 40% (7,2 million) of the eighteen million children in South Africa are being raised by single mothers as the nature of traditional family changes. The Deficit Model for studying single parenting, has blamed single parents for a host of problems among children. This model maintained that single parenthood was bad for children since such parents did not have the time to devote enough energy and attention to their children's needs. As a result, many children might be tempted to turn to prohibited substances and other delinquent behaviours to get the attention of their parents.

This study was based on the Risk and Protective Factor Model. This model maintained that all families, including those with two parents, faced their share of problems. Raising children successfully was not dependant on the presence of either both or single parents but on the parent's ability to raise children. The crucial factors which determined successful child-rearing included the parent's economic conditions and the parent's education level. In this study the implications of single parenthood and career advancement were measured against the relationship that parents shared with their children and the assistance they offered them with homework. The economic position of single parents were also investigated to either confirm or contradict studies which maintained that poverty was most prevalent in single parent households, especially those headed by females.

The rising phenomena of single parenthood could compel South African policy coordinators to consider an overhaul in single parents' social and other benefits which in turn would benefit their children. According to the South African Race Relations Institute (2009) as cited by Prince (2009, p.3), the research results were the starting

point and further research was required to determine the future of single parents. Prince (2009, p.3) maintained that research on the social implications of single parenthood was yet to be conducted in this country.

1.2 Motivation for the Study

The first motivation for this study was to determine whether single parenthood hindered progress at work. Monaghan (2009, p.18) maintained that studies had shown that lone parents are at a disadvantage in the workforce as they are less likely to access enough childcare to enable them to work unsocial or extended hours.

The second motivation was to establish the problems that single parents encounter in their expeditions. According to Richards and Schmiege (1993) as cited by Kelch (1997) the main drawbacks of single parenting were money and the lack of a social life. For households headed by mothers, money was the biggest problem.

The last motivation was to determine whether single parenting negatively affected children. Children who are raised by single parents experienced many emotional issues. According to *Single Parenting in the Nineties* (1996), these emotions consisted of worry, anger, jealousy, fear, withdrawal and rejection. Single parents needed to be familiar with these emotions to help their child deal with them in a positive way. The Children's Society's report, (2009) as cited by Hornby (2009, p.18) was based on the Deficit Model and it maintained that being brought up in a single parent household was socially and emotionally damaging for children, and said that the infants needed a father as well as a mother and having a male role model was very important in the development of young children. They were supported by Kelch (1997) who postulated that in the future, the phenomenon of single parenting would continue to grow.

The questions asked throughout the remainder of this paper were:

- Was a mother's career affected by single parenting?
- Were single mothers really struggling financially compared to single fathers?

- Does being a single parent and working at the same time affect parents' involvement in their children's school work?
- Were research findings by Hornby (2009, p.18) true that being brought up by a single parent is socially and emotionally damaging for children?
- Were single parents really at a disadvantage in the work force because of their children i.e having to balance career and children?
- Could a child, being raised by a single-parent mother function as well as a child being raised by an intact family?

The answers to the above questions would assist single mothers to balance their careers and their children's interests. Single mothers' support systems as outlined in the study would benefit the people who are providing this support, because single mothers would begin to acknowledge their importance and how invaluable their assistance was. The teachers who taught children from single parent families also would benefit because mothers would be alerted to the importance of being involved in their children's career at an early age. Lastly, the policy coordinators in this country would benefit as they would know exactly what types of problems are particular to single parenthood and they would be able to amend their policies accordingly.

1.3 Focus of the Study

The focus of this study revolved around South African Institute of Race Relations' latest Fast Facts survey, on South African families (2009) as cited by Prince (2009, p.3) that an estimated that 40% of the total of 18 million South African children were being raised by single mothers as the nature of the country's traditional family structure changed. This study attempted to determine how mothers performed as the leaders of households as a result of the decreased presence of fathers. The economic conditions of single mothers, the relationships they shared with their children, and the frequency and quality of assistance offered with homework and the levels of concern over their children's academic achievement were also scrutinized. An endeavour was also made to determine the factors that motivate and discourage mothers in the workplace, their level

of education and the support systems that they enjoyed.

1.4 Problem Statement

The term 'parenting' has changed from the historical trend of two parented families to single parent families. According to the Life Magazine (2009) recent statistics in South Africa estimated that about 40 percent of all households were single parented, with that figure being much higher in the rural areas.

Meintjies (2007) as cited by Keeton (2007, p.1), said that an analysis of South Africa's General Household Survey (2006) found that 35% of children lived with both parents, 39% lived only with their mothers, 3% lived only with their fathers, 23% lived with neither parents (they mostly lived in extended families or with relatives) and 0.7% lived with no adults. This study was aimed at finding a preliminary understanding of single parent family challenges.

The family Deficit Model of studying single parenthood maintained that single parented families had a number of social problems and were ravaged by poverty. This Model further maintained that these families were characterized by overburdened adults who attempted to balance demands of caring for their children and the demands of their careers. This conflict of interests often meant that they could not possibly provide the amount of supervision, nurturance, time, discipline and love that their children needed. This led to children having a number of social problems including worry, jealousy, and anger. The children's achievement at school suffered and this often led to high levels of delinquent children, especially teenagers. This study is aimed at determining if single parents prioritized their career to the detriment of relationship they shared with their children.

1.5 Objectives

According to *A Single Parent's Top Ten List of Questions* (2009) single parents sought answers to questions about everything from fitting in as a single parent, recovering from

a divorce, and negotiating for child support and alimony payments, to challenges such as surviving on a single-parent budget, finding a therapist or a support group, and coping with dating and remarriage.

The specific objective of this study was to research single motherhood with the aim of determining the following:

- The relationship single mothers shared with their children and their involvement in their children's school activities and the level of assistance given with homework
- The factors that motivated single mothers in the workplace
- The factors that disrupted single mothers' careers in the workplace
- The condition of single mothers' economic positions and standards of living expressed in terms of having a job, pattern of accommodation, owning a car and income level
- The extent to which single parents prioritized their career before their children

1.6 Research Questions

In an attempt to collect information to address the research problems, this study aimed to answer the following questions

- What factors motivated single mothers in the workplace?
- What factors disrupted single mothers in the workplace?
- To what extent did single mothers experience economic difficulties and adverse standards of living?
- To what degree does single motherhood affected career advancement in the workplace?
- To what extent was their career most important to single mothers than their children?

It was envisaged that this study would change society's attitude towards single mothers

in the hope that South African leaders would be encouraged to seek new methods of assisting, rather than sidelining, single mothers.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

1.7.1 Sample Size

This study sampled 146 single parents in KwaZulu-Natal. Previous studies by Life Magazine (2009) showed that in South Africa single parenthood is extremely prevalent in rural areas. However, single parents in rural areas were not reached with the questionnaire because it was administered electronically and these parents did not have e-mail facilities. As a result the generalizability of the study was limited.

1.7.2 Identifying and Targeting Respondents

Respondents were approached via email and were requested to respond on e-mail. Respondents who did not have electronic facilities were left out.

1.7.3 Administering the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered on the email, therefore only the respondents who had e-mail facilities could respond. A survey conducted by Research ICT Africa, (2009) as cited by Internet Access in South Africa (2009) said that only 14.7% of South African households had a computer, therefore this eliminated respondents who did not have access to a computer, but whose input may have materially affected the results of the study.

1.7.4 The Size and Scope of the Topic

The topic was wide and the time to conduct research i.e four months was limited.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter the study was introduced and the motivation and focus of the study, and research aim and objectives were outlined. The questions which were expected to be answered by conducting the research were outlined and the limitations of the study were highlighted. These included the selection of the sample, the administering of the questionnaire utilizing e-mail. Limitations of the study included the time constraints in covering the topic, administering the questionnaire, and analyzing the data. In Chapter 2 the literature review will be pursued.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND STATISTICS OF SINGLE PARENTING

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature starts from a single parent point of view in general and will focus particularly on single mother families. Models for studying single parenting will be discussed and the historical overview of literature outlined. The role of mothers in parenting and the challenges that single mothers face within the society and in the workplace will be examined. Literature on the economic position and standard of living for single mothers, the relationship that single mothers share with their children and the involvement in their children's school will be interrogated.

2.2 Overview

This dissertation focused on the topic of single-parenting, mainly single parent mothers and their ups and downs. The reason for focusing on single-parent mothers was that mothers were usually awarded custody of their children and had to look after them. For the father to gain custody of his children, he needed to either be the child's choice or be able to prove the mother incompetent.

For this study four topics were chosen. The first one was the relationship that single mothers shared with their children, their involvement in their children's school activities and the assistance they offered their children with homework. The second topic was the factors that motivated and disrupted single mothers in the workplace. The third topic was single mothers' economic positions and standards of living because research had shown that for most single-mothers, money was their biggest problem. Up to 78% of them battled financially (Kelch, 1997). The last topic was the extent to which single parents prioritized their careers over their children.

Research on children's development showed that the fundamentals of good parenting

were the same, regardless of the child's gender, age and whether a child was a twin or had multiple siblings. The basic principles of parenting had been corroborated in studies done in different parts of the world across different ethnic and racial groups, in poor as well as in rich families, in families with divorced, separated and married parents (Steinberg, 2004, p.4). According to Steinberg (2004)

"Good parenting was parenting that helped children succeed in school, that promoted the development of intellectual curiosity, motivation to learn and desire to achieve. It deterred children from anti-social behaviour, delinquency, and drug and alcohol use. Good parenting was parenting that helped protect children against the development of anxiety, depression, eating disorders and other types of psychological distress."

Steinberg (2004) provided the following ten basic principles of parenting:

2.2.1 Responding to Children

Steinberg (2004) maintained that what parents did to their children mattered. He maintained that the way parents responded to their children should come from a sense of knowing what to accomplish, and parents should take into consideration what effect their decisions would have on their children.

2.2.2 Parents Cannot be Too Loving

Parents should express warmth and affection for their children but should resist merely providing them with other things in place of love. Some examples of these undesirable things are leniency, lowered expectations or material possessions, because these could lead to a child being spoilt. Material items that parents provided to their children did not replace love, because children would yearn for love even after being in possession of these items.

2.2.3 Involvement in Children's Life

Parents should always be available, both physically and emotionally for their children.

This demanded a sacrifice on their behalf of time and was hard work. It often meant that parents had to rethink and rearrange their priorities. It frequently meant sacrificing what they wanted to do, for what their children needed them to do.

2.2.4 Adapt Parenting to Fit Children

Parents should make sure that their parenting skills keep pace with their children's development. Parents might wish to slow down or freeze-frame their children's lives, but this was the last thing that children wanted. All that children wanted was to grow up, gain independence and be inquisitive about life.

2.2.5 Establish and Set Rules

Parents should manage their children's behaviour whilst they were young, as this would assist them as adults to manage themselves when the parent was no longer around. Any time of the day or night, parents should be accountable for their children's whereabouts. The rules that children learn from parents shape the rules they apply to themselves later in life.

2.2.6 Foster Children's Independence

Setting limits helped children to develop a sense of self-control but also encouraged independence and helped develop a sense of self-direction. To be successful in life children needed both control and direction. Parents were often guilty of mistakenly equating their children's independence with rebelliousness or disobedience. Children pushed for independence because it was part of human nature to want to feel in control rather than to feel controlled by someone else.

2.2.7 Parents Must be Consistent

Not having consistent rules from day to day and applying rules intermittently could often be the cause of children's misbehaviour. A parent's most important disciplinary

tool is consistency. Parents needed to identify their non-negotiable rules. The more the parent's authority is based on wisdom and not on power, the less the child is likely to challenge it.

2.2.8 Avoid Harsh Discipline

Corporal punishment was the one form of punishment that had the worst side effects of all the forms of punishment that parents used. It often led to children being more prone to fighting with other children and more likely to be bullies and to use aggression to solve disputes with others.

2.2.9 Explanation of Rules and Decisions

Parents had expectations that they wanted their children to live up to. Generally these expectations were emphasized more when the children were young and less when they were adolescents. To ensure the achievement of these expectations, emphasis on them should be at all levels of children growth.

2.2.10 Children Should be Treated with Respect

For parents to get respectful treatment from their children, they should treat them as respectfully and courteously as they would do to anyone else. Parents should speak to their children politely, respect their opinions and pay attention when their children speak to them. In addition, parents should treat their children kindly, and try to please them when they were able to. A parent's relationship with their children was the foundation for the children's relationships with others.

Ford and Abort (2008) described single parenting as a situation where a child was brought up in a household with one of their parents whilst the other one lived elsewhere. Kerka (2009) separated single parents into three groups i.e displaced homemakers, adolescent mothers and single fathers.

According to *Single Parenting in South Africa* (2008) single parenthood was a result of divorce, death, estrangement of a spouse and teenage pregnancy. In South Africa there was high rate of single parenthood which was a result of both the AIDS epidemic and the high rate of teenage pregnancy: both of these contributing factors resulted in a high degree of social fragmentation. *Single Parenting in South Africa* (2008) also maintained that 15% of teenagers in South Africa fell pregnant every year.

2.3 Overview of Literature

Single parenting became a rapidly growing trend in society (*Single Parenting in South Africa*, 2008). According to *South African Women on Top* (2009) in 1993 15% of South African women with children under the age of 16 were single. This had increased to 40% in 2009.

According to Pillay (2009) the Markinor study (2009) found that of the 800 respondents, almost half were single. At least 46% of the mothers who they interviewed were unmarried compared to 47% who were. The others were either engaged, separated, divorced or widowed. Pillay (2009) also maintained that in a study commissioned by Alchemy Publishing, publishers of “Your Baby, Your Pregnancy” (2007), whose sample comprised 51% black, 23% white, 20% coloured, 6% Indian, it was discovered that;-

- most parents wished they had known beforehand how much children would cost;
- sexual abuse topped most parent’s list of child-safety concerns; according to *A Child is Raped every Three Minutes* study (2009) it was found that 45 percent of all rapes in the country were child rapes.
- parents felt that vital information on medical issues around pregnancy and birth had been withheld from them
- most parents were unprepared for the magnitude of the physical changes they experienced;

- on average, parents spent R656 a month on their children, excluding childcare, crèche or school fees.
- another interesting finding was that spending patterns in the sample group were similar.

According to Prince (2009, p.3), an estimated 40% of South Africa's 18 million children were being raised by single mothers as the nature of the country's traditional family changed. Seven 7.2 million children were growing up with single mothers, outnumbering the 6.8 million (representing approximately 23% of the country's children) who lived with both parents. These findings were reported in the South African Institute of Race Relations' Fast Facts survey on South African families, (2009) as cited by Prince (2009, p.3). This survey also discovered that between 1993 and 2002 the presence of fathers in the household decreased across all races. It was revealed that this trend was not always due to the deaths of fathers as a result of illnesses such as HIV/Aids, but that there was an increase in absent living fathers from 40% to 50%.

According to Meintjies, (2007) as cited by Keeton (2007, p.1), an analysis of South Africa's General Household Survey 2006 discovered that:

- 35% of children lived with both parents;
- 39% lived only with their mothers;
- 3% lived only with their fathers;
- 23% lived with neither parents and mostly lived in extended families or with relatives; and
- 0.7% lived with no adults.

2.3.1 HIV Aids and Single Parenting

Ross (2009) described the HIV and Aids pandemic and the associated high incidence of TB as alarming. He said South Africa's mortality rates due to Aids-related diseases resembled those of a country at war. According to HIV Prevalence (2009) the roots of

South Africa's massive Aids pandemic which was responsible for close to 1 000 people dying of the disease every day, rested in factors such as the destruction of family life as well as the destruction of culture and community. A further contributor was risky sexual behaviour, especially that of young people in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) (*HIV Prevalence*, 2009).

According to *HIV Prevalence* (2009) a study conducted in the Mtubatuba area of northern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) showed that in 70 to 80% of the households, the men were absent and working away from home for nine months of the year. Evidence from this study revealed that homes that had men who were migrant workers had a higher incidence of HIV than homes in which there was a nuclear family. In South Africa in 1998, over a fifth of all households were run by single parents with single parenthood resulting from separation or divorce, death, and pregnancy outside of wedlock (*Single Parenting in South Africa*, 2008). Aids as well as the increased number of divorced people in South Africa had created more single-parent families.

According to *Situational Analysis of Children in South Africa* (2009) as conducted by the Presidency, HIV prevalence among pregnant women was 28% in 2007, while prevalence among children 2-14 years old and youth 15-24 years old was 3.3% and 10.3% respectively in 2005. Infection rates were systematically higher amongst girls. Reports indicated that the number of divorced couples increased from 27 000 in 1986 to around 33 000 in 1987 and 1989 and in two-thirds of the cases there were children involved (*Single Parenting in South Africa*, 2008).

According to Keeton (2009) South Africa's new model to prevent HIV Aids involved the use of antiretroviral drugs which would be used not only to treat people who already had HIV, but also the use of life-extending drugs that would be used to prevent transmission of the virus. When this model is fully implemented, more than seven million Aids related deaths could be averted by 2050.

2.4 Models for Studying Single Parenting

2.4.1 The Family Deficit Model

There are two approaches to studying single parenting: one is the Family Deficit Model and the other one the Risk and Protective Factor Model. The Family Deficit Model perceived the standard two parent family as the ideal family. One negative aspect of this model was that it began with the concept that single parenting was inherently bad for children. It presumed that single parenting negatively impacted children since there was no nuclear two parent family structure (*Single Parenting in South Africa*, 2008).

Atwood (2009) maintained that the Deficit Model had the following assumptions about single parents' households:

- The high divorce rate in society represented a breakdown of the institutions of marriage and the family unit, and was the reason for most social problems.
- Whether due to death or divorce, single parent families were born of loss. The widows and the widower's single parent households were more stable, and in more need of support than those of divorce.
- Single parent families were characterized by overburdened adults who balanced the need to care for children with the demands of careers outside the home. This meant that they could not possibly provide the amount of supervision, nurturance, time, discipline and love that their children needed.
- Single parent homes were predictably unstable, over-emotional, under-emotional, unreliable, and parents were usually too busy to partake in community activities
- Single parents usually felt guilty about leaving the family or were angry and resentful for having been left with the burden of caring for the children alone
- When adults in single parent homes socialized, it was at the expense of the children. Further, they were indiscriminate in their intimate life, negatively affecting impressionable children

- Single parent families relied on the older children to shoulder the extra burden in the family. They often also failed to adequately teach their children role modelling of both sexes, and had adversarial relationships with their ex-partners.

The structuralism approach to single parenting maintained that

“the absence of a parent was expected to have a shattering effect on children, since the absence of one of the parents usually the father, was perceived as a disruption in the task, power, affection and communication structures of the system with severe consequences for its functioning,” (*Single Mothers and Their Children after Divorce: a Study of Those “Who Make It”*, 2009).

Researchers in these studies found children affected by divorce to be prone to a variety of problems for example, depression, antisocial behaviour and delinquency. Only a few published studies discovered that divorce had no detrimental effects on children or that the initial effects were often not long lasting. The researchers who supported the negative effects i.e those who agreed with the Deficit Model, asserted that these effects were often a function of the economic difficulties that female single parents experienced and were not a factor of single parenting per se. (*Single Mothers and Their Children after Divorce: a Study of Those “Who Make It*, 2009).

2.4.2 The Risk and Protective Factor Model

The Risk and Protective Factor Model emerged in the 1990s. The cornerstone of this model was that all families had challenges. This model took into consideration that many different factors such as financial, parent employment and other lifestyle factors affected all families. According to this model, single parents had the opportunity to be both a protective as well as a risk factor for a child’s development. Knowing this, single parents could work on keeping their children on track (*Single Parenting in South Africa*, 2008).

According to *Single Parenting and Children's Academic Achievement* (2009),

“personality, availability of social support, and family cohesion were often identified as categories of factors that could impact a child positively or negatively. Researchers defined personality factors as internal characteristics found in every child, including the child's intellectual ability and approach to learning, attitude and disposition, self-esteem, and impulse control. Social support availability factors were whether or not the child had advocates at home, at school, and elsewhere in the community. Family cohesion included family structure and background characteristics such as the parent's occupation, family income, parent education, parental mental illness, parenting style, race and ethnicity, and family size.”

Researchers involved in *Single Parenting and Children's Academic Achievement* (2009) maintained that elements of each of personality, the availability of social support, and family cohesion could serve as either risk or protective factors. These researchers were also of the view that

“family size was regarded as a risk factor when there were four or more children, close in age, within the same household, but a protective factor in families with fewer than four children or when children were spaced three or more years apart. Risk factors could lead to negative results, but the presence of risk factors did not guarantee poor outcomes.”

Single Parenting and Children's Academic Achievement (2009) further maintained that protective factors included high self-esteem, strong social support at home and at school, low rates of criticism from parental figures, positive parental mental health, college-educated parents, high income, as parenting strategies that effectively addressed high-risk situations.

Atwood (2009) maintained that The Risk and Protective Factor Model possessed the following assumptions:

- Single parent households were more flexible, were collaborative rather than hierarchical, and therefore were more successful in today's changing world.
- It was most desirable to look at developing a solution to a problem rather than understanding the cause only
- This model saw single parent households as healthy and viable; in encouraging and empowering families rather than two parent families, where there was dependency between the mother and a father
- Getting a divorce was better than living in a hostile two parent household

Lang (2004) discovered that mothers could be a positive influence in their children's lives, whether they were single parents or not. This author also maintained that being a single parent did not appear to have a negative effect on the behaviour or educational performance of children. Lang (2004) further maintained that what mattered most in single family households was a mother's education and ability level, whilst, to a lesser extent family income and quality of the home environment were important.

In Lang's (2004) study, little or no evidence of the systematic negative effects on children of single parenthood was found. The findings suggested that in the presence of other favourable maternal characteristics, such as education and positive child expectations, along with social resources supportive of parenting, single parenthood in and of itself needed not to be a risk factor for a child's performance and behaviour.

2.5 Role of Mothers in Parenting

“A good mother had been historically expected to contribute her whole life to her family. Mothers had been the glue that held a family together since it was up to them to provide the loving care and support needed by growing children”
(*Role of Mother*, 2009).

Hall-Bills (2008) maintained that mothers had always been ultimately responsible and were expected to be the decision makers about child rearing, and matters pertaining to the house. According to him, the changing role of a mother includes career issues, the

responsibility for total home care, the education of the children, healthy lifestyles for the family and more focus on the mother as a person with needs of her own.

In society many problems had arisen because the line between the modern role of a mother and traditional beliefs had become blurred. Many mothers, as single parents, had to take on an even bigger role in the lives of their children. Not only were they to provide the care and support a child needed but they also had to provide enough income for the family to live on (*Role of Mother*, 2009).

Being a single mother had put a woman in a completely different world to parenting in households with a father and mother. A single mother had to raise her children on her own and had to adjust to performing the roles that were usually the responsibility of both parents. Single motherhood was like having two jobs at once because it required the single mother to be a sympathetic mother on the one hand and a strict and providing father at the same time. Psychologists believed that raising a child or children can be a stressful duty and requires the management of behavioural, emotional and spiritual aspects of the single parent, (*Single Parenting in South Africa*, 2008)

Kerka (2009) maintained that

“Single parents commonly experienced difficulties with role identity. For single mothers, development of positive role identity was often hampered by their inability to support their families financially. Single parents often experienced role strain from attempting to balance wage-earner and parental responsibilities.”

2.6 The Challenges Faced in Society and the Workplace

According to *South African Women on Top* (2009) women comprised 51% of South Africa's population of 47.9 million people and the average South African woman had a life expectancy of 52 years. There was a 60% chance that she lived in an urban area and a 50% chance that she was happy with her home life. Kerka (2009) maintained that as

the sole supporter of their families, single parents were concerned with securing a good job and achieving economic independence.

“This was a great time for women in business. There were more opportunities available than ever before, and a high demand for people with leadership, management and marketing skills. At the same time, however, women continued to face challenges in getting ahead, achieving the recognition they deserve and integrating the career and personal life they most desired” (Shea, 2009, p.2).

Shea (2009) further maintained that the reality was that while companies were changing to accommodate women, it was still going to take time for the old male-oriented structures to become women-friendly. According to Murphy (2009) single mothers earned only 60% of what their male counterparts earned and there was still stigma that single moms would perform their duties poorly because of having to take care of their children at the same time. Single mothers quoted child care as the most difficult of obstacles in their efforts to manage the demands of work while providing for their families through paid work.

Monaghan (2009) supported Murphy (2009) when he maintained that studies had shown that lone parents were at a disadvantage in the workforce as they were less likely to access suitable enough childcare to work unsocial or extended hours. A respondent interviewed by Monaghan (2009) said that when her son was younger she was not able to work overtime, go on courses or attend work nights out because she had nobody to mind him.

The most stressful aspect of single parenting for the female parent was how she could manage her household while she worked for 8 to 9 hours during the day to earn a living (Single Parenting Advice, 2009). This view was supported by Shea (2009) who maintained that another challenge that women faced was balancing work and life. She said companies were recognizing that this balancing act, and the fact that the raising of children was difficult not only for mothers but for fathers as well. Employers were becoming better prepared to deal with the fact that most working mothers were single. She continued and said that single parents had to be careful in selecting their career

choices. They had to ensure that the career they followed was able to accommodate the time they needed for the family as well as work. She said the goal was not to choose work or family but it was to balance and integrate both worlds successfully.

According to Peppard (2007), questions asked in job interviews on topics such as their marital and childbearing status led to discrimination of women. If the answer from the female candidate was “single” and “two children” employers possibly considered them to be undesirable candidates for certain positions.

Franco’s (2009) recommendation to single working mothers to successfully manage work and family responsibilities was to do what they could to ensure that their jobs could accommodate their family responsibilities. This could be achieved through flexi time and job sharing. Although it might seem impossible to change the way jobs were structured, these strategies could be suggested to employers who would then be in a better position to decide how to implement flexi time and job sharing in their organization.

Single mothers also needed to re-evaluate their own family roles and dynamics to create the support systems that will make the balancing act work. They needed to enlist the active support of their families, friends and significant others in household management and childcare, and utilize it. He said that single mothers should talk about their challenges with friends and co-workers, and pool knowledge and resources to find the best strategy for learning how to manage work and family in order to achieve success and maintain their sanity.

In a study conducted by Hoffman (2009) it was discovered that mother's employment status did have effects on families and children, but few of these effects were negative, and most were positive, these effects included higher academic outcomes for children, benefits in the behavioural conduct and social adjustment, and the higher sense of competence and effectiveness. “On the whole, these research results suggested that most families accommodated to the mother's employment and in doing so provided a family environment that worked well”(Hoffman 2009, p.1).

2.7 The Single Mother's Economic Position and Standard of Living

According to the Child Welfare South Africa national programmes manager Mathee (2007) as cited by Keeton (2007, p.1), children needed both male and female role models. "They didn't necessarily have to live with the children but they needed to have a specific attachment to them," (Keeton 2007, p.1). Mathee, (2007) as cited by Keeton (2007, p.1) did not think income was as important to children's happiness as love.

Helen Meintjies a South African Researcher in University of Cape Town's Children's Institute (2007) as cited by Keeton (2009, p.1) thought income, rather than just family structure, was a really important predictor of children's health.

According to a study conducted by Kelch (1997) single parenting affected the entire family: the parent who has custody of the children, the parent who has visitation rights and also the children. There were problems for everyone involved but there were also strengths. According to Philp (2009, p.1) due to the global meltdown and the associated credit crunch there might be 300 000 job losses in South Africa , and the worst hit sectors would be automotive, mining, clothing and textiles. These job losses will affect the entire family.

The main problems of single parenting according to Richards & Schmiede (1993) as cited by Kelch (1997) were: money, role or task overload, social life, and problems with the ex-wife or husband. For up to 78% of single-mothers, money was the biggest problem, compared to 18% for single fathers. Ford and Abbott (2008) claimed that once separated from her male partner, the single mother saw her income fall, and the only connection that she had with the father was in terms of monetary support for the children. Lino (1995) claimed that poverty amongst widowed and never married parents was more prevalent than for divorced parents. For employed single mothers child care could be the biggest expense.

Many South African studies had revealed that poverty was largely prevalent amongst Africans. These studies confirmed that in rural areas, female-headed households,

women and children were the most vulnerable. Rural areas accounted for 77% of the total poverty gap, whilst the head count poverty rate for children aged between 0-15 was higher at 60% than adults aged over 65 (Kruger, 1998, p.1).

Poverty in South Africa was driven by job scarcity and unemployment which was quoted as being at the 23,5% level in the first quarter of 2009, (Statistics South Africa , 2009). Modimoeng (2009) maintained that growth in the number of jobs dropped to 1.5% quarter-on-quarter. The total number of employed people dropped to 13.63 million, and most job losses were recorded within the informal sector (96 000), followed by the formal sector (88 000). According to Statistics South Africa (2009) as cited by Modimoeng (2009) the quarterly labour force survey revealed that about 267 000 South Africans lost their jobs between the first and second quarters of 2009. The job losses occurred in the following sectors:

- 143 000 in trade,
- 65 000 in construction,
- 62 000 in manufacturing,
- 26 000 in agriculture,
- 17 000 in transport, and
- 10 000 in community and social services (Modimoeng, 2009).

South Africa had moved towards a developmental model of social welfare, as a means of addressing and overcoming the country's high level of poverty. The social grant was introduced for families and couples who had children aged 15 and below with an income of less than R4 600 and single parents earning less than R2 300 a month. Single mothers who earned above this income band had to fend for themselves (Khumalo, 2009).

The report titled *Situational Analysis of Children in South Africa* (2009) conducted by the Presidency maintained that the grant system had expanded dramatically, with coverage increasing from 2.5 million beneficiaries in 1998 to more than 12.3 million in 2008.

Kerka (2009), maintained that

“Poverty was persistently linked with single-parent households, especially those headed by women. Such families were the poorest of all major demographic groups. Wage differences between men and women arose from lack of labour and market preparation or experience or from discrimination of women which reinforced low-income status.”

2.8 The Relationship Shared with Children

There were many emotions that children of single parents experienced including worry, anger, jealousy, fear, withdrawal and rejection (*Single Parenting in the Nineties*, 1996). Single parents needed to be able to recognize these emotions and help their child deal with them in a positive way. The Children's Society's Report (2009) as cited by Hornby (2009) maintained that being brought up in a single parent family was socially and emotionally damaging for children, and that infants needed a father as well as a mother. They were supported by Kelch (1997) that single parenting was likely to continue to grow, and having a male role model was very important in the development of young children.

Lack of the required parental care and attention was the main factor for the subsequent rise in the percentage of juvenile delinquency among children. The absence of parental instructions caused children to develop irreversible behavioural and emotional problems. Children resorted to crimes because they sought attention and thought that in this way they could fulfill their wishes. Children might also revert to uncontrolled violence if not kept under supervision (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

According to DePaulo (2009), being raised by a single parent was not the only factor that determined a child's failure but it was one amongst other factors. He said studies by sociologists had shown that the children were not only raised by the single parent, but had a network of friends, relatives and neighbours who cared about them. Most children

of single parent households had the stability and security of a loving parent and a supportive network as well. (DePaulo, 2009)

Ford and Abbott (2008) suggested that the best way for separated parents to raise a child was with co-parenting. They described this strategy as bringing up the children together as a mother and a father and working together in co-operation to do the best for their children. These authors said that methods of co-parenting included making arrangements to have children on alternate weekends, alternating holidays, sometimes letting the other co-parenting visit the premises where the child stayed, doing the bathing, bedtime and homework. These authors left it up to the parents to agree on a realistic and achievable way of managing their own situation and to set up a co-parenting plan. This obviously would work for mothers who were never married and divorced, but not for widows.

The individual involvement of mothers and fathers played a vital role in the behavioural development of a child. One study aimed at investigating parental concern showed that despite mothers' sincere endeavours to raise their children, the role of fathers could not be ignored. Both the mother and a father served as an important foundation for the future progress of their children (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Molekwa (200) maintained that single mothers, especially Black mothers in South Africa, were jealous of their children, especially their sons. Once these children got through university education utilizing their mothers' hard earned income, the single mothers did not want them to be independent. Molekwa (2009) was of the opinion that these mothers unfairly expected their sons to fulfil the role that was supposed to be played by their father. Molekwa (2009) also believed that these mothers were selfish, insecure, and believed that they had total ownership of their sons' lives, including his love life.

Herd (2009) as cited by Life Magazine (2009) provided the following five principles of single parenting :

- Parents should not be afraid to say sorry. She said children did not need perfect parents but they needed parents who could be assertive when necessary.
- Develop children's independence and decision-making abilities by being flexible and allowing the child to have more say in his or her life e.g. how he or she spends the day or what he or she wears.
- Parents should discipline their children with respect. There should be no name calling and parents should never hit their children. Self-discipline is learnt by children when they are given reasonable limits and rules that have logical consequences when they are broken.
- Parents should learn to be good listeners and should set aside their own agendas and be available to hear what their children are saying even if it is difficult. Skills should be acquired to read non-verbal cues or body language such as door slamming, sulking and tantrums, and parents should respond by acknowledging their children's feelings.
- Parents' focus should be on what the child does right rather than what they do wrong and must acknowledge the efforts and the improvements that children make. Positive feedback should be given because encouragement enhances self-esteem.

According to Life Magazine (2009) the following positive benefits might result from single parent households:

- Children who were exposed to family violence within two parent families were psychologically better off after a divorce.
- Single parent family members tended to be more interdependent on each other and work very effectively together.
- Single parent families provided an environment for emotional growth and enhanced the ability to obtain life skills to be used later in life.
- The support system that single parent families enjoyed, resulted in the children being part of a larger community and not feeling the need for the other missing parent.

2.9 Involvement in their Children's School

Lemmer (2007, p.1) maintained that "Parent involvement in South African schools had been primarily limited to financing schools and parent volunteering." According to Dietz (1997) as cited by Lemmer (2007, p.6) single working parents, low income or unemployed families often experienced a lack of time, suitable transport to the school or required child care or elder care in order to be able to attend school activities.

According to Desforges & Abouchar (2003) parental involvement fell into three categories: behavioural, intellectual, and personal and there were two parenting processes, namely supportive parenting and harsh parenting. Supportive parenting utilized proactive teaching, calm discussion in disciplinary encounters, warmth and interest and involvement in peer activities.

In the study conducted in *Parent's Involvement in Children's Education* (2009) a factor that was found to hinder children's development was the risk of low socio-economic status, single-parenting and family stress. This study discovered that students from one-parent household showed a less positive attitude towards school and their studies compared to students from two-parent households. However, supportive parenting was found to overcome the risks associated with family adversities associated with single parenting. From the study it became a widely accepted fact that supportive parenting played an important role in children's development of empathy, prosocial behaviour and emotional competence.

According to *Single Parenting and Children's Academic Achievement* (2009), research does not provide a definitive answer on whether single parenthood negatively affected children's academic achievement. However, because single parents were the sole source of financial support for the family, they had less time to help children with homework, were less likely to use consistent discipline and had less parental control. All of these conditions might contribute to lower academic achievement.

The study conducted by Michigan department of Education (2001) revealed that the most effective forms of parental involvement were those which engaged parents in

working directly with their children on learning activities at home. According to that study, teachers often thought that one obstacle to a child's educational process was that low-income parents and single parents could not spend as much time helping their children at home, unlike middle-class parents who had more education and more leisure time.

According to Rose et al. (2008) as cited by Bauch (2009), 86% of people believed that support from parents was the most important way to improve achievement of children at school. Research has shown that parental involvement in their children's school achieved:

- Higher grades,
- Better test scores, and graduation rates
- Better school attendance and increased motivation,
- Better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension and decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behaviour

The more parents participated in their children's schooling in a sustained way at every level including encouragement, decision-making, fund-raising, volunteers, professionals, home and teachers, the better it was for the children's achievement.

According to Allen and Daly (2002) studies had shown that children whose parents were involved showed greater social and emotional development, including more resilience to stress, greater life satisfaction, greater self-direction and self-control, greater social adjustment, greater mental health, more supportive relationships, greater social competence, more positive peer relations, more tolerance, more successful marriages and fewer forms of delinquent behaviours. Lemmer (2007, p.1) also maintained that

“The benefits of good school, family and community partnerships led to improved academic earner achievement, self-esteem, school attendance and

social behaviour. Parents and teachers experienced mutual support and satisfaction in achieving positive changes in children and the school.”

Henderson (1998) as quoted by Michigan Department of Education (2001) maintained that families whose children did well in general and at school had established a daily family routine by, for example, providing time and a quiet place to study, assigning responsibility for household chores, being firm about bedtime and having dinner together. These families also monitored out-of-school activities by either limiting television watching or arranging for after-school activities and supervised care.

Henderson (1998) as quoted by Michigan Department of Education (2001) also said that successful families modelled the value of learning, self discipline, and hard work. They expressed high but realistic expectations for achievement by setting goals and standards that were appropriate for the children's age and maturity levels. In these homes there was evidence of encouragement of children's development and progress in school by maintaining a warm and supportive environment. There was also support for reading, writing, and discussions among family members. In her theory of overlapping spheres of influence, Epstein (2005) as quoted by Lemmer (2007, p.4) developed a framework for six types of parental involvement and these are shown in Table 1.1. Epstein (2005) as quoted by Lemmer (2007) maintains that this framework of overlapping spheres of influence posits that the work of the most effective families and schools overlap, and they share goals.

Table 1.1 Six Types of Parent Involvement

SIX TYPES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT	
Type 1	Parenting: Schools should assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each stage and grade level.
Type 2	Communication: Schools should communicate with families about school programmes and students' progress with school-to-home and home-to-school communication.
Type 3	Volunteering: Schools should improve recruitment, training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at school or in other locations to support students and school programmes.
Type 4	Learning at home: Schools should involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework, and other curricula-linked activities and decisions.
Type 5	Decision making: Schools should include parents as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through PTA's, committees, councils, and other parent organizations.
Type 6	Collaborating with the community: Schools should coordinate the work and resources of the community, businesses, colleges or universities, and other groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices and student learning and development.

Source : (Six Types of Parent Involvement Epstein 2005 as cited by Lemmer 2007, p.4)

Epstein (2005) as cited by Lemmer (2007, p.12) maintained that each type of parental involvement posed different types of challenges for implementation and each type led to a different outcome.

In a study conducted by Nord et al. (1997) the relationship between parental involvement and child performance was explored. The results showed that in single-parent families, fathers had a much higher involvement i.e. 46% compared with only

27% in the two-parent home. Single fathers and mothers were about equal in their involvement. The data also showed more involvement by all parents in lower grades. As children got older, there was a decline in involvement by all parents. This was probably due to the schools offering fewer opportunities for parental involvement as children grew older. Parent involvement was higher for those families above the poverty threshold than those below it.

In single-parent families, the fathers' involvement was an influence on the likelihood of the children getting mostly A's, but this influence diminished when correlated with the fathers' educational expectations for their children. Fathers who did not reside with mothers and children were much less likely than fathers of two-parent families to be involved. Approximately 69% of non-resident fathers did not participate in their children's school activities (Nord et al. 1997).

Although this study emphasized fathers' involvement, information on mothers, data on step parents and foster parents was also collected. The study showed clearly the impact that parental involvement could have on their children's education.

2.10 Literature Critique

The historical view of single parenting which supports the Deficit Model failed to take into account that factors like economic difficulties that single parents experience, could affect two parent families as well. Two parent families could experience instability and the parents' emotions might negatively affect the children just as is the case in some single parent families.

The Risk and Protective Factor Model was the most practical and reflected the modern way of thinking. It is a fact that all families face certain challenges and factors like economic position and standard of living, and parent employment affected both single and two parent families. According to *Female Role Models in Children's Literature*

(2009) working mothers were a positive influence and were good role models for their children who looked up to them and shaped their lives accordingly.

Children from two family structures whose mothers did not work, were likely to look forward to be non-working mothers and cause problems to society. Children in single parent households where the mother was working, were likely to view the mother as a role model and grow up to be responsible working adults.

The quality of single motherhood depended on each individual: a mother who was determined to succeed, would succeed irrespective of who she was parenting with. Ford and Abbot's (2008) recommendation of co-parenting was the best way to achieve optimal benefits for the children since children needed both a mother and a father in their lives.

2.11 Literature Gap

There is a hiatus in literature caused by the fact that there has been no research conducted on single parenting in KwaZulu-Natal. This dissertation is aimed at highlighting and addressing this hiatus. The research conducted by The South African Race Relations Institute, (2009) as cited by Prince (2009, p.3) revealed that the structure of the family is not known and that the statistics quoted in that study were just a starting point. Further research could reveal what the future holds for the South African family.

2.12 Summary

In this chapter the historical overview of the literature was discussed. This showed that some sections of society had begun to view single parenting positively. There was emphasis on the fact that the effects of single parenting were not only negative, but could in certain instances, provide a positive influence on children. The statistics showed that single parenting was a growing trend and mothers were viewed as

important figures: the backbone for the proper functioning of both single and two parent families. Fathers' involvement in children's growth could not be ignored as the results were desirable and only positive for the children. Parents were advised that the sooner they became involved in their children's education, the better the outcome.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that will be employed in an attempt to analyze data on single parenting and address the hiatus as mentioned in Chapter 2. This chapter covers the following aspects: aims and objectives of the study, quantitative research as a method of study, sampling, data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of quantitative research methods. Issues relating to reliability, validity and bias are also discussed.

3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to determine the priority of single parents, whether it is their children or their career and to determine the single parent's economic position and the factors that motivate and disrupt them in the workplace. *See the Advantages Single Parenting Offers* (2009) is of the view that single parenting is characterized by financial problems and struggles.

The study aims to determine the following:

- Single mothers' relationships with their children, their involvement in their children's school activities and the assistance they offer with homework
- The factors that motivate single mothers in the workplace
- The factors that disrupt single mothers' careers in the workplace
- Single mothers' economic position and standard of living

- The extent to which single mothers put their careers before their children

3.3 Data Collection Strategies

3.3.1 Sampling Techniques

Non-probability sampling was utilized to create the sample because there was no method of determining the precise extent of the population from which it was going to be drawn (Bryman & Bell, 2009). According to Bryman & Bell (2007, p730) non-probability sample is

“a sample that had not been selected using random sampling method. Essentially this implied that some respondents in the population were more likely to be selected than others, the critical factor was that the sample should be representative of the population from which it was selected.”

The reason for selecting non-probability sampling was to select information-rich respondents that might best illuminate the purpose of the study (*Sampling and Samples*, 2009).

Two types of non-probability sampling were utilized to select the sample, namely purposive and snowball sampling. *Sampling and Samples* (2009) defined purposive sampling as a sample selected in a deliberative and non-random fashion to achieve a certain goal. *Sampling and Samples* (2009) were of the view that in purposive sampling the researcher picked a sample that was believed to be representative of the population of interest. Respondents were not selected randomly, but by using the judgment of the interviewers. In this study the purposive sample were the single parents who were approached by e-mail to respond to a questionnaire and the purpose for the study was to determine if these parents prioritized career over children. *Sampling and Samples* (2009) maintained that the advantages of purposive sampling were that people who did not fit the requirements were eliminated, making the study less time consuming, and less expensive as it involved lower search costs.

Bryman & Bell (2007) defined a snowball sample as

“an approach in sampling where the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contacts with others.”

Snowball sampling hardly led to representative samples but is useful when trying to reach populations that were inaccessible or hard to find. In this study each single mother already in the sample frame, was approached personally to provide email addresses and other contact details for other single mothers known to her, so that they could be contacted for a response. It was emphasized that the participants were responding in their own personal capacity and their anonymity was assured.

3.3.2 Sample Size

The sample consisted of 146 single mothers who were separated, divorced or widowed and who had retained custody of their child(ren). Participants were assured of their anonymity both at the beginning and the end of the research.

According to *Sampling and Samples* (2009), the sample size for an unknown population size is obtained by utilizing the formula as follows:

$$s = (z / e)^2$$

Where:

s = is the sample size, z = a number relating to the degree of confidence in the result. The value of ‘z’ is 1.28 for 80% confidence, e = the error the researcher is prepared to accept, measured as a proportion of the standard deviation is 10%.

$$s = (1.28/.10)^2$$

$$s = 163.84$$

3.3.3 Data Collection Tool

According to *A Brief Guide to Questionnaire Development* (2009) the data collection

tool must be strong enough to support the findings of the research. The data collection tool utilized was a structured and a self-completed questionnaire. The information needed was precisely defined and as few questions as possible were compiled to obtain it. To pre-test and validate the questionnaire it was administered to a small but representative sample of potential respondents. This sample consisted of 20 people. The completed version of the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 146 respondents.

3.4 Research Design and Methods

3.4.1 Description and Purpose

In an effort to measure the impact of single motherhood on careers and children with a degree of precision, quantitative research was chosen as the best method. Bryman & Bell (2007, p.731) maintain that

“quantitative research usually emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data. As a research strategy it is deductive and objectivist; and incorporates a natural science model of the research process”

Bryman & Bell (2007, p.28) identified the following characteristics of quantitative research:

- It entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the accent is placed on the testing of theories.
- Has incorporated the practices, norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular.
- Embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality.

3.4.1.1 Qualities of Quantitative Research

Quantitative research entails the measurement of concepts. There are three key concepts that are utilized in measurement, namely validity, reliability and generalizability. Each of these concepts will be unpacked below.

3.4.1.1.1 Validity

According to Bryman & Bell (2007) validity refers to whether or not an indicator that is devised to gauge a concept, truly measures that concept. There are several ways of establishing validity and these entail face validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, construct validity and convergent validity. Bryman & Bell (2007) concern themselves with measurement validity which they maintained was only utilized in quantitative research and essentially had to do with the question of whether a measurement that was devised of a concept really does reflect the concept that it is supposed to be denoting. In this study face validity was utilized. The research committee at the university, as people who are experienced in the field, were requested to act as judges to determine if the indicators utilized in the self completion questionnaire to measure the concept of single parenting on the face of it, seemed to reflect the concept concerned.

3.4.1.1.2 Reliability

Bryman & Bell (2007) maintained that reliability referred to the consistency of a measure of a concept and whether the results of a study were repeatable. According to these authors three prominent factors are used to determine if the measure is reliable: stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency.

- Stability referred to a situation where, if the questionnaire were to be re-administered, there would be little variation over time in the results obtained.

- Internal reliability refers to whether or not the indicators that make up the scale are consistent
- Inter-observer consistency referred to the likelihood that in cases where there were more than one observer, there was the possibility of lack of consistency in their decisions.

In this research both the stability and internal reliability were taken into consideration when devising the self completion questionnaire.

3.4.1.1.3 Generalizability

Generalizability is the extent to which the study achieves external validity. Bryman & Bell (2007) maintained that in quantitative research there was a concern about findings being able to be generalized beyond the confines of the particular context in which research was conducted. These authors maintained that the sample had to be representative of the population in order for the findings to be generalized to that population and not beyond. They maintained that probability sampling was the main way which researchers sought, to generate representative sample. This method ensured that bias was eliminated from selection of sample by using a process of random selection (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

One of the characteristics of non-probability sampling was that each person who is considered to be representative of the population was asked to participate. This was less complicated and more economical. In non-probability samples, the population may or may not be well represented, and if population was represented it was hard to know how well. The reason for non-representation was that some combinations of individuals might be more likely to be selected than others, therefore the results of the study lacked external validity and could not be generalized to the population. Although probability samples are more rigorous, it is not always possible to utilize them in all studies (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

It is because of the above characteristics that quantitative research was regarded as

highly structured. This made it the most suitable type of research which would allow the investigator to examine the precise concepts and issues that are the focus of the study. The findings of the sample in quantitative research could be generalized to the entire population, if the sample was representative enough. Quantitative research data is regarded as unambiguous and possesses precision offered by measurement (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.4.1.2 Construction of the Instrument

The instrument that was used to collect data was a structured, self-completion questionnaire where the respondents were required to answer the questions by completing it. The questionnaire was short, the questions were relevant to the variables that were to be tested, and the questionnaire consisted of 19 closed questions which were easy to follow. Bryman & Bell (2007, p260) assert that closed questions are easy to answer, the appropriate code can be easily derived from the appropriate answer and this reduces the possibility of variability.

Bryman & Bell (2007, p242) provide the following advantages for self-completion questionnaires;

- Self-completion questionnaires are usually the cheapest method of data collection for most surveys.
- Most respondents will perceive a self-completion questionnaire as the least intrusive and most anonymous way of being surveyed, and this leads to the most honest answers from them.
- It is quicker to administer. One self-completion questionnaire can be attached to a string of e-mail addresses when submitting them to potential respondents.
- It does not suffer from interviewer effects. Bryman & Bell (2007) maintain that characteristics such as the ethnicity, gender and the social

background of interviewers may combine to prejudice the answers that respondents provide. Since there is no interviewer present when a self completion questionnaire is completed, such interviewer effects are eliminated.

3.4.2 Pre-Testing and Validation

The questionnaire was expected to measure four dimensions such as the relationship that the parent shared with the child, the factors that motivated and disrupted single mothers in the workplace, single mother's economic position and standard of living; and the extent to which single mothers put their career before their children. The questionnaire was designed such that it addressed these questions.

The questionnaire was then administered in a small convenience sample of 20 respondents, with the aim of investigating possible data quality concerns and the identification of ways to minimize identified sources of non-sampling error. According to Instrument Development (2009) this test formed part of pilot testing of the instrument and was used to:

- refine the response categories of questions
- check question sequencing and flow
- evaluate the overall layout and design of the questionnaire
- check adequacy of written instructions for respondents
- estimate timing of filling in the questionnaire

Based on the feedback received, the questionnaire was modified to ensure that it maintained validity i.e to ensure that the questionnaire measured what it intended to measure.

3.4.3 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent to respondents via e-mail. Databases of e-mail addresses were taken from the internet, utilizing non -probability sampling to select the potential respondents. E-mails were then sent to the mothers and a time period for responses was specified. An automatic reminder was set on the email system to follow up on those responses that were not received timeously. Respondents were requested to provide details of the single mothers known to them and the questionnaire was administered to those parents as well.

3.5 Analysis of the Data

Render et al. (2006) described quantitative data analysis as a process of gathering, modelling and transforming data, and has a goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyze the data. The data was installed into SPSS Software. Each row of the data editor represented each respondent and 29 coding variables were created with numeric codes for each specified in columns.

In analyzing the data, exploratory methods were utilized to summarize and discover what the data seemed to be expressing. The methods utilized for this descriptive statistical measure were frequency and cross tables. Bar Diagrams were also utilized to depict data from the frequency tables. Frequency tables were utilized to analyze data belonging to the same category and frequencies, percentages and cumulative percentages were used to describe various variables and allow for the clear presentation of the data.

3.5.1 Pearson Chi Square Statistic

The Pearson Chi Square statistic test was utilized to analyze data with the aim of determining if there was any relationship between two variables related to single parenting and career advancement, as this test determines whether the two variables are independent. The significance level was .05. If the significance value was less than .05 then the null hypothesis that states that the variables are independent was rejected. In such cases, the alternate hypothesis that states that the two variables are somewhat related, was accepted. Where the p value was found to be less than .01 ($p < .01$) the results were regarded as “highly significant” (Field, 2005 p.691).

The value of the Chi Square Statistic was provided in each Table together with the degrees of freedom which were used. Although the Pearson Chi Square detects whether there is significant association between two variables, it is not able to measure how strong that association might be. Therefore the Phi coefficient test was utilized to test this aspect i.e. the strength of the association.

There are two assumptions made by the Pearson Chi Square test as outlined by Field (2005):

- For the test to be meaningful each person must contribute to only one cell of the contingency Table. The Pearson Chi Square test cannot be utilized with repeated measures i.e. each respondents must participate once. For example, where a respondent had two types of support systems in Question 5 of the questionnaire, Pearson Chi Square could not be utilized because this would mean that the respondent would contribute to two cells i.e. one for “Professionals” and another one for “Friends”
- The second assumption is that expected frequencies should be greater than 5. The reason for this assumption is that, where frequencies are less than 5, there will be loss of statistical power i.e. the Pearson Chi Square test may fail to detect a genuine effect.

The Phi coefficient test was utilized with the Chi Square test to describe the effects of the size of the strength of association. Phi is calculated by taking the Chi Square value, dividing it by the sample size and then taking the square root of this value (Field, 2005 p 689). The Phi test ranges from -1 to 1 with the magnitude of relationship decreasing as the coefficient gets close to zero.

3.5.2 Pearson Coefficient of Correlation

According to Lind et al. (2008, p458) correlation analysis is the study of the relationship between variables. This test will be utilized to test the relationship between the number of children, concern over assistance with homework and academic achievement. The level to be used for this test is .01 and (SPSS) would be utilised to analyze the correlation coefficient. The following outcomes were anticipated from the variables:

- they could either be positively related which could mean, for example the more children a parent has, the more concerned he/she is about their academic achievement
- the variables could have no relationship at all
- the variables could be negatively related which could mean the more children a parent has, the less he/she is concerned about their academic achievement.

3.6 Summary

In this Chapter the research design and the particulars of the research approach were outlined. The specifics of the research design were highlighted dealing with the sample size, construction of the research tool, pre testing and validation of the tool. Thereafter, the data collection procedures and the data analysis techniques were highlighted. In Chapter 4 the data analysis and results of the study will be discussed further and contextualized.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present the data gathered from the questionnaire that was developed to collect data. The statistical information in this chapter was derived from a sample of 146 single mothers. The questionnaire set out to answer the following research questions:

- What factors motivate single mothers in the workplace?
- What factors disrupt single mothers in the workplace?
- To what extent do single mothers have economic problems and experience adverse standards of living?
- To what degree does single motherhood affect career advancement in the workplace?
- To what extent is the career more important to single mothers than their children?

In discussion of the results, the results of the items for each dimension in a particular category will be summarized, and the p values obtained in the chi-squared statistical test that was utilized to analyze the data will be interpreted. Then, more details will be given on the items where there was a statistically significant relationship. Throughout the chapter the significant level of .05 was applied for the Chi Square Test and .01 for the correlation test.

Category	Number of items	Question numbers in the questionnaire
General category	5	1,2,3,4,5
The factors that motivate and disrupt single mothers in the workplace	4	12,15,18
Economic position and standard of living	4	11,19,20,21
Single motherhood and career advancement	3	13,14, 16,17
Importance of career over children	5	6,7,8,9,10

Table 4.1: Distribution of Items into Categories

Table 4.1 above describes the variables to be tested according to the categories. Each category was allocated questions as indicated in the right hand column.

4.2 General Category

The purpose of the questions in this category was to determine the age of the parent, the number of children parented, and the support system that a single parent enjoyed.

4.2.1 Single parent's age

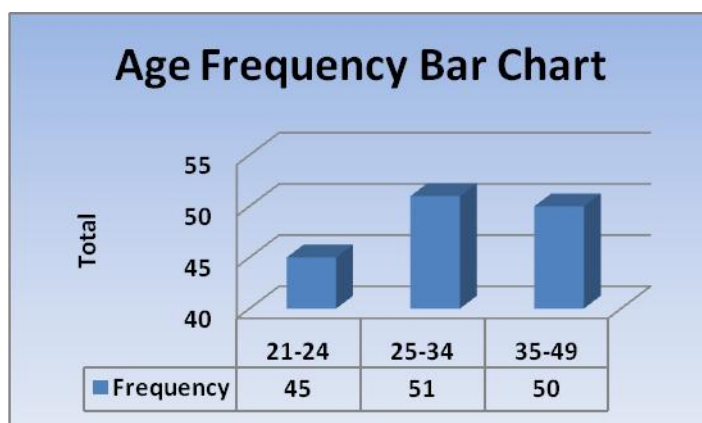


Figure 4.1 – Age of Single Parents

Figure 4.1 above illustrates that there were 146 subjects in the sample and reflects the frequency distribution across all ages. The sample consisted of more single parents aged between 25-34, numbering a total of 51(34.93% of the sample). Single parents aged 35-49 numbered 50 (34.25%) and single parents aged 21-24 numbered 45 and comprised 30.82% of the sample.

4.2.2 Number of children

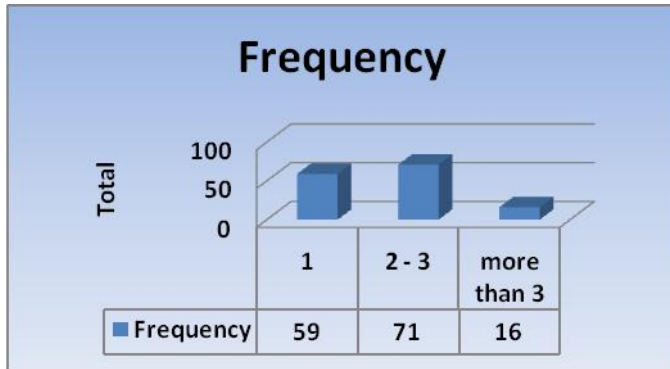


Figure 4.2 Number of Children

Figure 4.2 above illustrated that there were 71 parents with 2 to three children, making up 48.63% of the sample. A further 59 single mothers looked after one child and accounted for 40.41% of the sample. Only 11 mothers were parenting more than three children and they accounted for 10.96% of the sample.

4.2.3 Support System

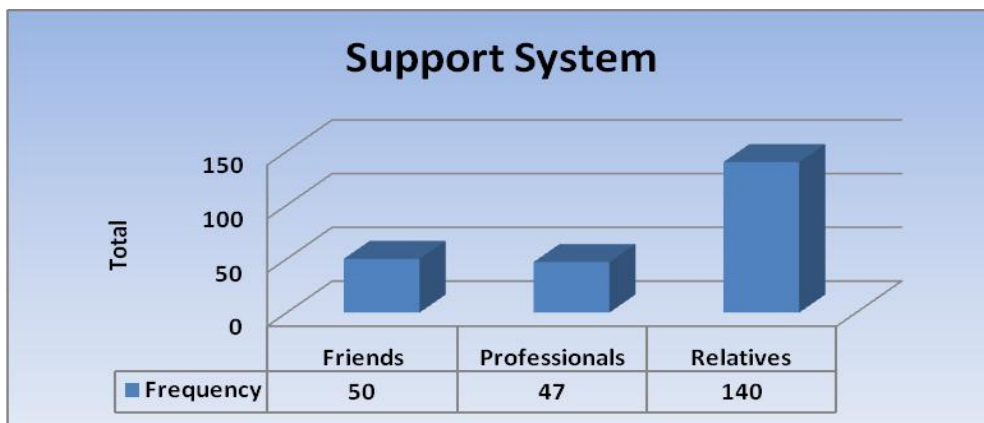


Figure 4.3 – Support System

From the results shown in Figure 4.3 above, 140 single parents had relatives as their support system, 50 had friends as a support system and 47 parents had professionals as their support system. This is confirmation for the findings made by DePaulo (2009) who was of the view that children were not raised by the parent alone, but had a network of friends, relatives and neighbours who cared about them. The reason the frequency in Figure 4.3 gives a total which is more than the sample of 146, is because a number of single parents said that they had two or more support systems.

4.3 The Factors in the Workplace

4.3.1 Single Parents with Jobs

			Job		
			Yes	No	Total
Age	21-24	Count	41	4	45
		% within Age	91.11	8.89	100
		% within Job	28.87	100	30.82
	25-34	Count	51	0	51
		% within Age	100	0	100
		% within Job	35.92	0.00	34.93
	35-49	Count	50	0	50
		% within Age	100	0	100
		% within Job	35.21	0.00	34.25
Total	Count	142	4	146	
	% within Age	97.26	2.74	100.00	
	% within Job	100	100	100	

Table 4.2 – Cross Tabulation of Age and Holding a Job

Question number 12 was meant to determine the percentage of single parents that had a job. The cross tabulation reflected in Table 4.2 shows the number of single parents that fell within the categories of ages 21-24, 25-34 and 35-49. From a sample of 146 parents, 142 (97.26%) had a job, while only four (2.74%) parents did not. The 97.26% who had jobs, was split into 30.82% in the age category 21-24, 34.93% in the age category 25-34 and 34.25% in the age category 35-49. The “No” row (indicating those without jobs)

does not meet the Chi Square assumption mentioned in Chapter 3 of the expected count to be more than 5. Therefore, the association between age and not holding a job could not be tested.

4.3.2 Chi Square Test for Age and Holding a job

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.23	2	0.01	0.01

Table 4.3 – Chi Square Age and Holding a Job

The hypothesis being tested were

Ho: The variables age of single parent and holding a job are independent of each other. (There is no association between them).

Ha: The variables age of single parent and holding a job are not independent of each other.

The calculated chi-square statistic in this case is 9.23 as reflected in Table 4.3, 2 degrees of freedom were utilized with a p-value of 0.01. A p-value less than the chosen significance level were taken to indicate the rejection of the null hypothesis. At a 0.05 significance level, the p-value of 0.01 indicated that there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis of independence of age and holding a job. That is, a conclusion can be drawn that the age of single parents is significantly associated with holding a job i.e. the age of the single parent determined whether they possessed a job or not.

		Value	Approx. Sig.	Exact Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.25	0.01	0.01

Table 4.4 – Phi Test for Age and Holding a Job

The Phi test therefore confirms the results of the Pearson Chi Square. Table 4.4 shows a Phi value of .25 which is significant, suggesting that age of the single parent mattered in holding a job. This could be a de-motivating factor for single parents who may be disheartened that their age determined their employability.

4.3.3 Chi Square Test for Age and Retaining a Job

			Retention		
			Yes	No	Total
Age	21-24	Count	16	29	45
		% within Age	35.56	64.44	100
		% within Retention	38.10	27.88	30.82
	25-34	Count	19	32	51
		% within Age	37.25	62.75	100
		% within Retention	45.24	30.77	34.93
	35-49	Count	7	43	50
		% within Age	14	86	100
		% within Retention	16.67	41.35	34.25
Total		Count	42	104	146
		% within Age	28.77	71.23	100
		% within Retention	100	100	100

Table 4.5 Age and Retaining a Job

Table 4.5 consists of responses to Question 17 of the questionnaire which was “Considering the current global meltdown, are you confident that you will retain your job when your employer decides to retrench?”

Only 28.77% of single parents were confident that with the existing global meltdown they will still retain their jobs, while the majority of 71.23% percent of single parents was not confident that they would retain their jobs. Parents aged 35 to 49 were the least confident with 41.35% having answered “No” to the question.

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.13	2	0.02	0.02

Table 4.6 – Phi Test for Age and Holding a Job

The hypotheses being tested were:

Ho: The variables age and retaining a job are independent of each other. (There is no association between them)

Ha: The variables age and retaining a job are not independent of each other.

In Table 4.6 the Pearson Chi Square is 8.13, the degrees of freedom utilized were 2, and the p value is .02 which was less than the .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected, therefore the variables of being a single parent aged between 21 to over 49 and retaining a job were dependent at .05 level of confidence interval. Single parents should be concerned about being retrenched based on being single parents and their age because the two variables are dependent on each other.

	Value	Approx. Sig.	Exact Sig.
Phi	0.24	0.017	0.018

Table 4.7 Phi Test for Age and Retaining the Job

The Phi test in Table 4.7 above also confirms the dependence of the two variables age and retaining a job. The value of .24 shows large effect size.

4.4 Economic Position and Standard of Living

4.4.1 Education

		Education					
Age		Matric	Degree	Diploma	Certificate	Post Graduate	Total
	21-24	10	5	18	12	0	45
	25-34	0	25	20	6	0	51
	35-49	0	22	0	10	18	50
Total		10	52	38	28	18	146

Table 4.8 Cross Tabulation for Age and Education of Single Parent

Question number 11 asked parents what their highest level of education was to determine their economic position and standard of living. In cross tabulation shown in Table 4.8 above, only 10 single parents had matric as their highest qualification in the age group 21-24. Other age groups had either a degree, diploma or certificate. Only parents aged between 35-49 had post graduate qualifications in the sample.

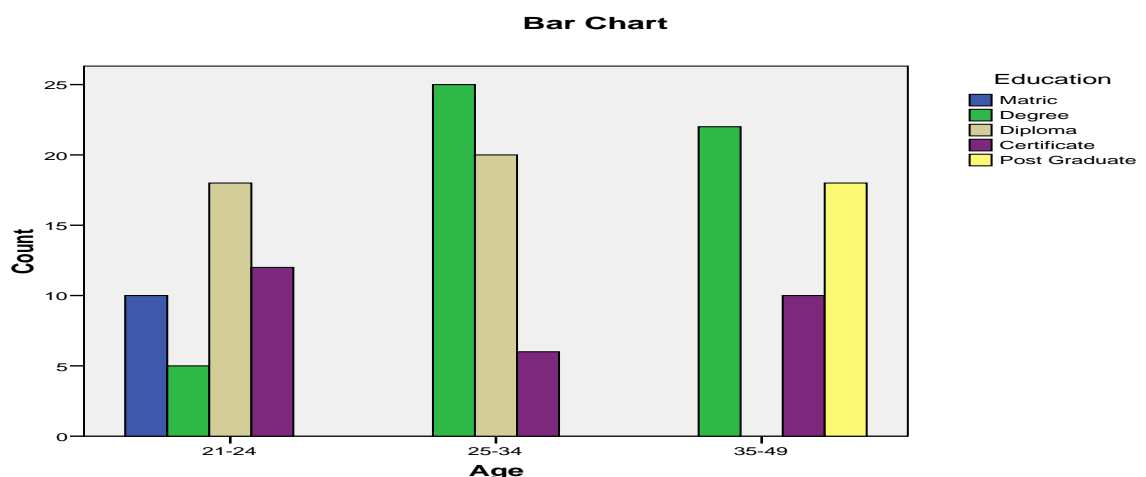


Figure 4.4 Level of Education

Figure 4.4 above confirms the results of Cross Tabulation number 4.8 above: that the

lowest qualification was matric for parents aged 21-24, and a post graduate qualification was possessed only by parents aged between 35-49. Most single parents aged 21-24 had certificates and diplomas as qualifications. This illustrated that the older single parents were the more educated, possibly because they knew that they were the only source of income for their families, besides maintenance and other fees from the absent father.

4.4.2 Owning and Renting of a Home

		Home		Total
		Own	Rent	
Age	21-24	9	36	45
	25-34	16	35	51
	35-49	50	0	50
Total		75	71	146

Table 4.9: Cross Tabulation on Owning or Renting a Home

Question 19 related to whether single parents owned or rented a home. Cross Tabulation 4.9 above depicts that 50 single parents aged 35-49 owned a home, while none of the parents in this age rented a home. In the age group 25 to 34, 35 parents rented a home as opposed to 16 that owned it. In the group 21-24 only 9 parents owned a home compared to 36 that rented it.

Figure 4.5 below confirms the results in Table 4.9 above that most single parents in the age group 21-24 rented a home rather than owned it, and those aged 35-49 owned their own houses. This led to a conclusion that the older the single parent was, the more likely it was that he/she had assets, including a home.

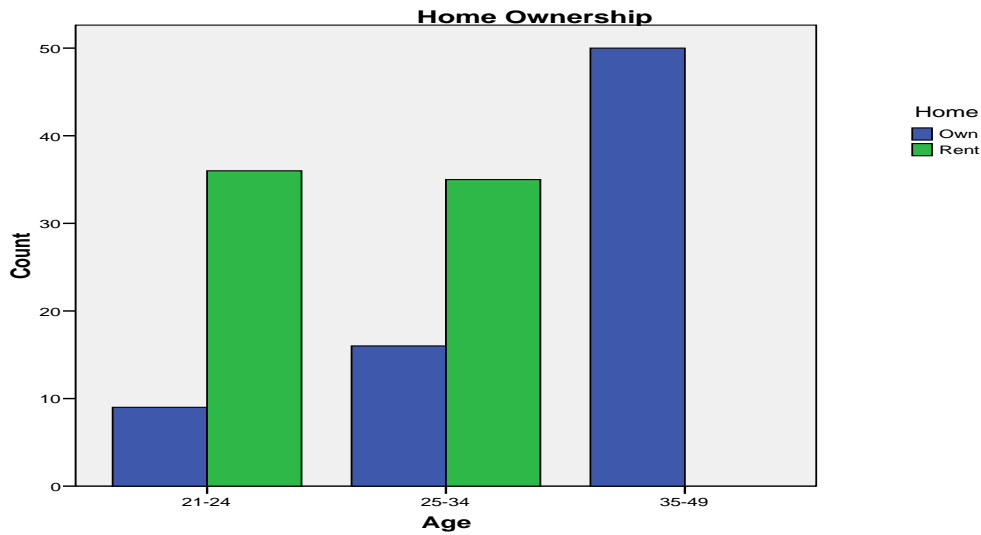


Figure 4.5: Home Ownership

4.4.3 Car Ownership

		Car		
		Yes	No	Total
Age	21-24	7	38	45
	25-34	38	13	51
	35-49	50	0	50
Total		95	51	146

Table 4.10: Cross Tabulation between Age and Owning a Car

Question number 20 was meant to determine whether single parents owned a car and Table 4.10 above indicates that a total of 95 parents owned a car, as opposed to only 51 who did not. The age category between 35-49 were the majority who owned a car and there were 50 of them, followed by those aged 25-34 with 38. In the age group 21-24 only 7 people owned a car.

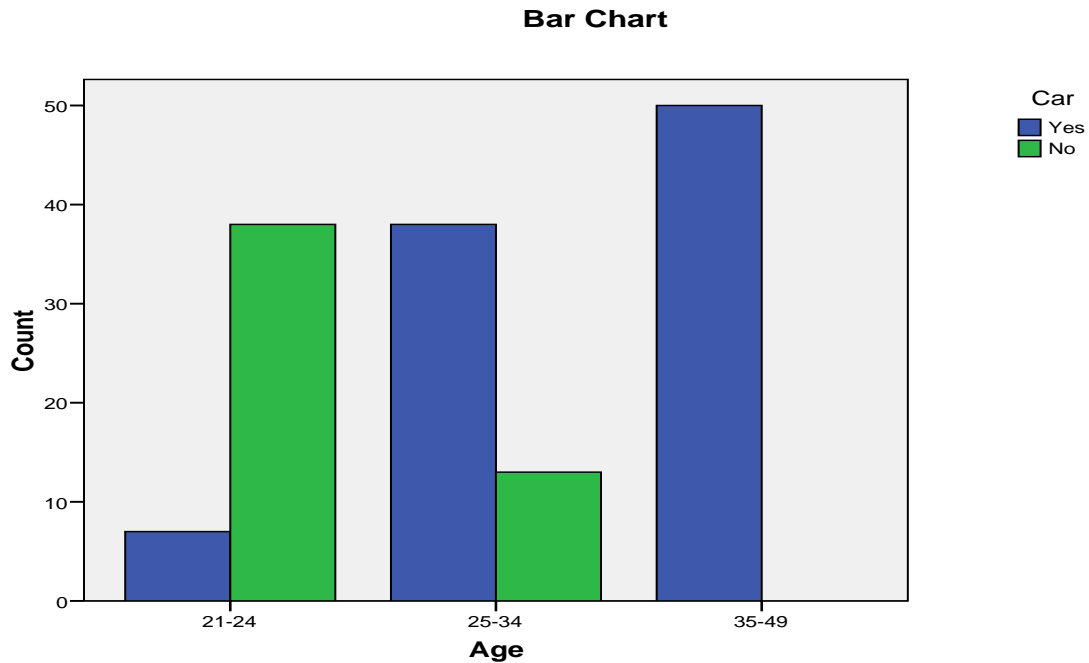


Figure 4.6 – Car Ownership

Figure 4.6 above shows that majority of single parents owned a car. All the parents aged from 35-49 owned a car. Only 51 parents from the sample did not own a car and were from the age category 21-34.

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Degrees of Freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	77.38	2	0.00	0.00

Table 4.11: Chi Square Test between Age and Owning a Car

In Table 4.11 the Pearson Chi Square was performed to test the association between the ages of parents and the possession of a car and the result was 77.38. The degrees of freedom utilized were 2, and the p value is .00 which is less than the .05 level of

significance. The null hypothesis was rejected, therefore the variables of age of a single parent and owning a car were dependent at .05 level of confidence interval. The dependence is “highly significant” because p is less than.001. This means that the older the single parents were, the greater the possibility of them owning a car.

4.5 Single Motherhood and the Career

4.5.1 Single Parenthood and Career Advancement

Question 13 aimed to test the variables related to whether single parents felt that their status of being single hindered their progress at work. Of the total of 146 parents, 68 (46.58%) of them felt that single parenthood did indeed hinder their progress at work, while 78 (53.42%) felt that single parenthood did not hinder their progress at work. This result is reflected in Table 4.12 below.

			Age			
			21-24	25-34	35-49	Total
Career	Yes	Count	35	18	15	68
		% within Career	51.47	26.47	22.06	100
		% within Age	77.78	35.29	30	46.58
	No	Count	10	33	35	78
		% within Career	12.82	42.31	44.87	100
		% within Age	22.22	64.71	70	53.42
Total		Count	45	51	50	146
		% within Career	30.82	34.93	34.25	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.12: Cross Tabulation between Age and Career Advancement

As can be seen in Figure 4.7 below, single parents aged between 21-24 believed that their status hindered their progress at work, whereas those aged between 25-49 did not believe that being single determined their progress at work. The majority of younger parents believed that their status hindered their progress at work.

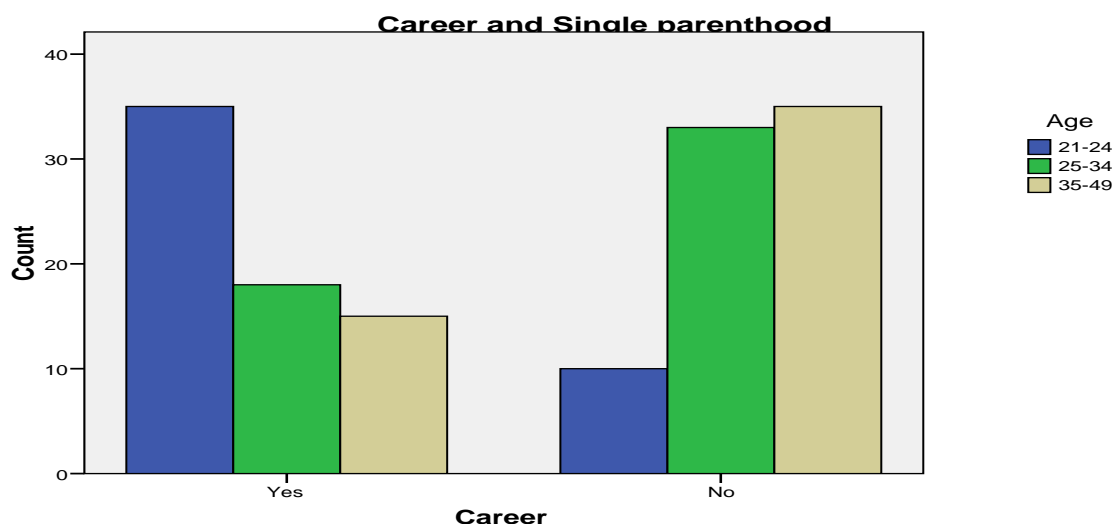


Figure 4.7 – Career and Single Parenthood

4.5.2 Promotion and Single Parenthood

Question 14 asked whether single parents regarded their single status as a reason for not receiving promotion at work

		Age				
		21-24	25-34	35-49	Total	
Promotion	Yes	Count	35	29	15	79
		% within Promotion	44.30	36.71	18.99	100
		% within Age	77.78	56.86	30	54.11
	No	Count	10	22	35	67
		% within Promotion	14.93	32.84	52.24	100
		% within Age	22.22	43.14	70	45.89
Total	Count	45	51	50	146	
	% within Promotion	30.82	34.93	34.25	100	
	% within Age	100	100	100	100	

Table 4.13: Cross Tabulation between Age and Promotion at Work

As shown in Table 4.13 above, 79 parents believed that single parenthood hindered their promotion. Most parents who answered yes were aged 21-24. This confirmed the result in Cross Tabulation 4.12 that 35 single mothers aged 21-24 believed that single

parenthood hindered their progress at work. Only 11 parents aged 25-34 who had answered “no” in Table 4.12 above, then answered “yes” in Table 4.13 which made it difficult to say for certain where the single parents aged between 25-34 stood on the question of whether they believed that single parenthood hindered their progress at work. The younger single parents were consistent in both questions, they did believe that their status denied them promotion, and so were those aged 35-49 who did not believe that their status hindered progress at work.

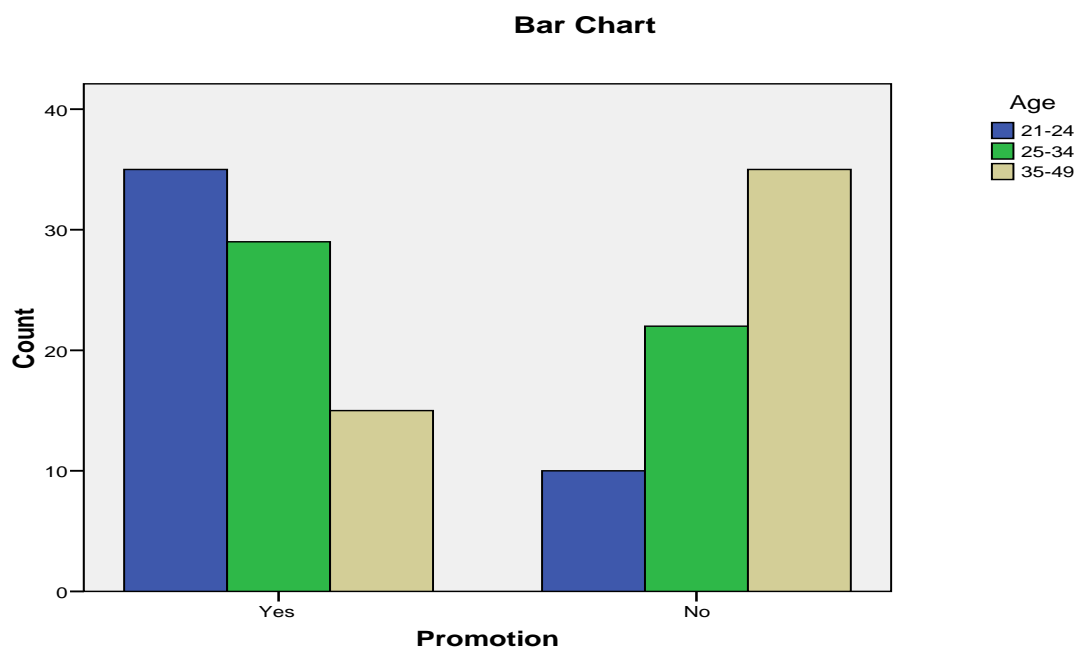


Figure 4.8 – Promotion and Single Parenting

Figure 4.8 above shows that parents aged 21-24 believed that their status hindered progress at work. Those aged 25-34 were split, 56.86% believed that progress was hindered by being single parent and 43.14% believed that progress was not hindered by being a single parent. The majority of parents aged 35-49 did not believe that progress was hindered by being a single parent.

4.5.3 Retention of Job and Economic Conditions

In Question 15 single parents were asked if they believed that, in the current economic conditions, they were likely to retain their jobs or not. Table 4.14 below shows that 104 single parents which is 71.23% of the sample, were not confident that they would retain their jobs, only 42 were.

		Age				
			21-24	25-34	35-49	Total
Retention	Yes	Count	16	19	7	42
		% within Retention	38.10	45.24	16.67	100
		% within Age	35.56	37.25	14	28.77
	No	Count	29	32	43	104
		% within Retention	27.88	30.77	41.35	100
		% within Age	64.44	62.75	86	71.23
Total		Count	45	51	50	146
		% within Retention	30.82	34.93	34.25	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.14: Cross Tabulation between Age and Retention of Job

The bar chart below displays that the majority of parents were not confident that they would retain their jobs irrespective of age.

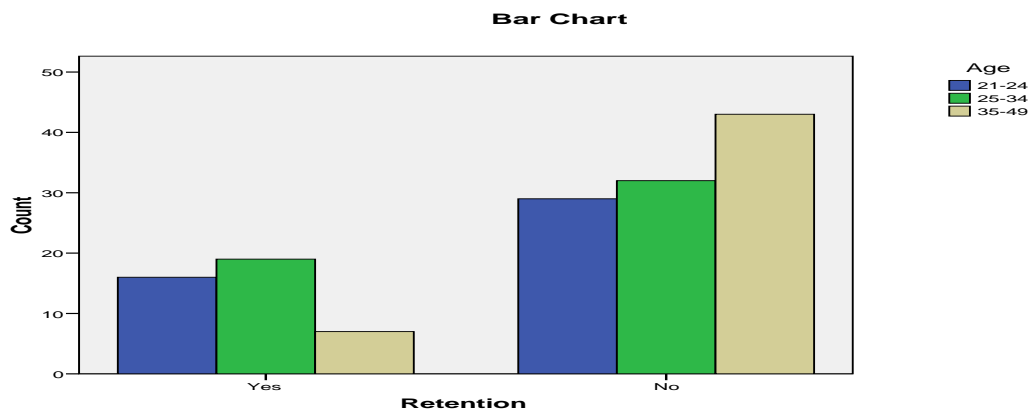


Figure 4.9 – Retention of Job

4.5.4 Chi Square Test for Age and Accepting Job Offer

		Age			Total	
		21-24	25-34	35-49	21-24	
Offer	Yes	Count	45	51	44	140
		% within Offer	32.14	36.43	31.43	100
		% within Age	100	100	88	95.89
	No	Count	0	0	6	6
		% within Offer	0	0	100	100
		% within Age	0	0	12	4.11
Total		Count	45	51	50	146
		% within Offer	30.82	34.93	34.25	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.15: Cross Tabulation for Age and Accepting Job Offer Outside KZN

Question 17 of the questionnaire was designed to determine if single parents would accept a job offer outside KZN. The cross tabulation depicted in Table 4.15 shows that 95.89% of single parents would accept a job offer outside the KZN Province and parents aged 25-34 are most likely to do so with 36.43% of the total. Only 4.11% of the respondents said they would not accept the offer.

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.01	2	0.00

Table 4.16 Chi Square Test for Age and Job Offer Outside KZN Province

The calculated chi-square statistic in Table 4.16 above is 12.01, with a p-value of 0.00. A p-value less than the chosen significance level indicated the rejection of the null hypothesis. At a 0.05 significance level, the p-value of 0.01 indicated that there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis of independence of age and acceptance of offer outside the current province of residence. It could therefore be concluded that the age of single parents plays a significant role in determining whether an individual would accept an offer outside the province i.e. the age of the single parent determined whether they would accept an offer outside their province or not.

Phi Test		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.29	0.00

Table 4.17 Phi Test for Age and Offer Outside the KZN Province

Phi test in Table 4.17 above further confirms the dependence of the two variables of age and retaining a job. The value of .29 showed larger effect size.

4.5.4.1 Adjustment of Children to Relocation

Description	Column4	Column5	Column6	Column7
	Age			Total
	21-24	25-34	35-49	
Will adjust eventually	26	18	16	60
Counselling will assist in adjustment	0	16	25	41
Children will be left with the Grandmother and fetched later	19	17	0	36

Table 4.18 Adjustment of Children to Parent's Relocation

Parents who replied “yes” to question 17 which tested whether they would accept an offer outside the province, were then asked how they felt their children would adjust to this move. While 60 of them said that the children would eventually adjust to this move, 41 older parents felt that if children did not adjust, counselling would be utilized to ensure that this happened. Interestingly, 36 younger parents felt that they would leave the children with the grandmother and would move them once they themselves had checked if the situation was conducive for them to move.

4.6 Relationship with Children and Assistance with Homework

4.6.1 Career Achievement and Homework

In Questions 6 and 7 single parents were asked if they were concerned about their children's progress at school. The bar chart below shows that the younger the parents were, the less concerned they were with their children's career advancement.

		Age				
			21-24	25-34	35-49	Total
Academic	Very Concerned	Count	17	42	50	109
		% within Academic	15.60	38.53	45.87	100
		% within Age	37.78	82.35	100	74.66
	Somewhat Concerned	Count	28	9	0	37
		% within Academic	75.68	24.32	0	100
		% within Age	62.22	17.65	0	25.34
Total		Count	45	51	50	146
		% within Academic	30.82	34.93	34.25	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.19 Career Achievement and Homework

In Table 4.19 above 109 parents were very concerned about their children's academic achievements, indicating that they wanted their children to achieve the best results possible at school. Only 37 parents were least concerned and they were from age group 21 to 34.

Figure 4.10 below shows that parents aged 35-49 were the most concerned about their children's career advancement, and those aged 21-34 were the least concerned.

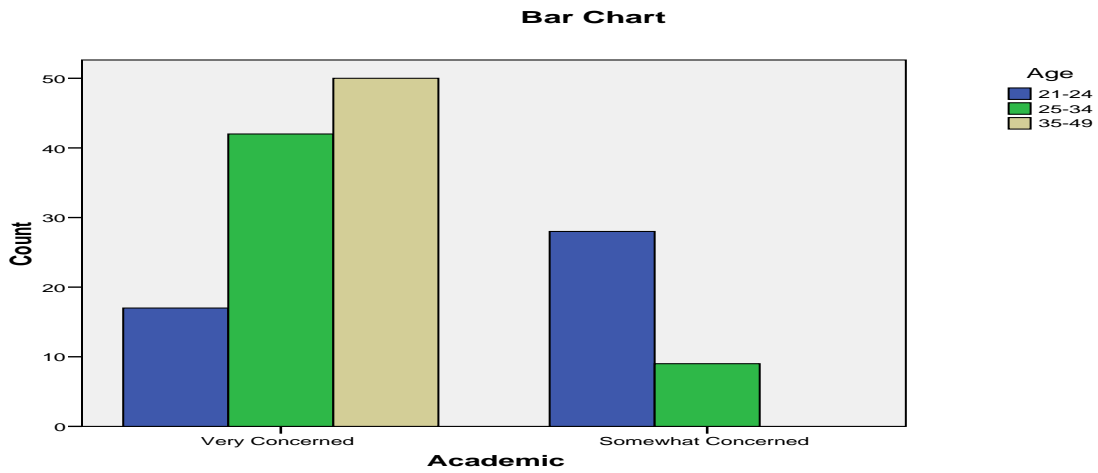


Figure 4.10 – Children’s Academic Progress

When single parents were asked if they were concerned about their children’s homework, parents aged from 21 to 34 showed they were not very concerned as reflected in Figure 4.11 below. Parents aged 35-49 showed more concern and willingness to assist with their children’s homework, and parents aged 25-34 were the least concerned.

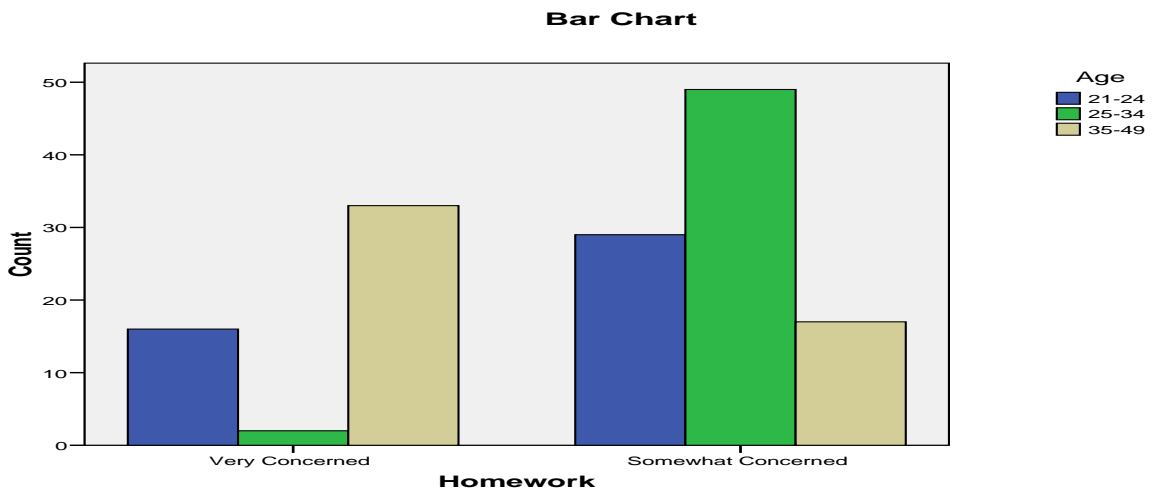


Figure 4.11 – Assistance with Homework

4.6.2 Involvement in Children’s School

In Question 8 parents were asked in which ways they were involved in their children’s school. They were given six options to choose from:

- assisting in fund raising for the school,
- helping in the classroom,
- assisting with school trips,
- supporting sport teams,
- learning alongside your child in school,
- belonging to a parent forum / body, or
- not involved at all.

4.6.2.1 Non-Involvement at School

		Age			Total	
			21-24	25-34	35-49	21-24
School	Not Involved	Count	29	15	10	54
		% within School	53.70	27.78	18.52	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100
Total		Count	29	15	10	54
		% within School	53.70	27.78	18.52	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.20: Cross Tabulation for Age and Non-Involvement at School Activities

The majority of parents who were not involved in their children’s activities fell within the age group 21-24 which accounted for 29 the total of 54 uninvolved parents as shown in Table 4.20 above.

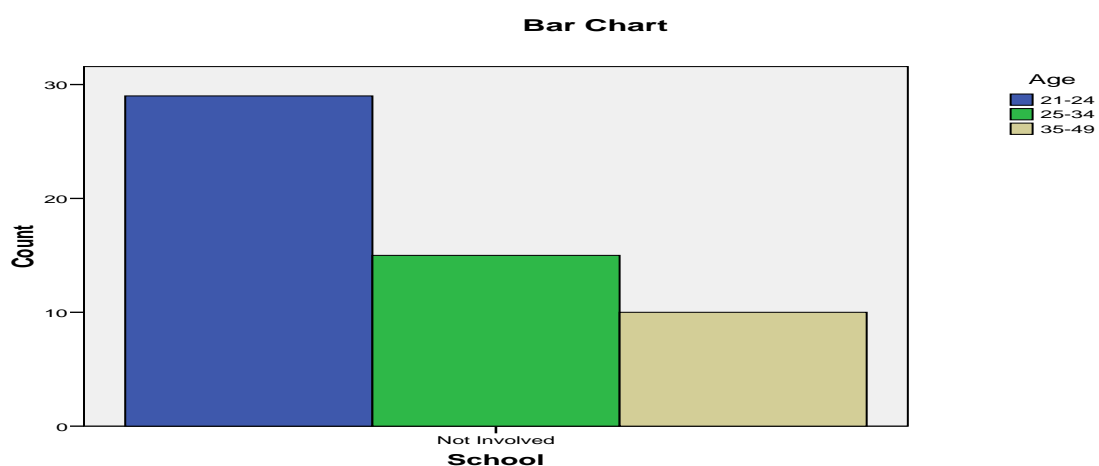


Figure 4.12 Non-Involvement of Parents

Figure 4.12 confirms that most parents aged 21-24 were not involved in their children's school, followed by those aged between 25-34. Only a few parents in the age group 35-49 were not involved in any way in their children's school.

4.6.2.2 Assisting in Fund Raising

Question 8 tested whether parents assisted in fund raising. Table 4.21 below shows that 34 parents from a sample of 146 were involved in fund raising activities. Only 17.65% of parents aged 35-49 were involved in fund raising as opposed to 32.35% of parents aged between 21 and 24, and 50% of those aged between 25 and 34.

		Age			Total
		21-24	25-34	35-49	
Fund raising	Count	11	17	6	34
	% within Fund raising	32.35	50	17.65	100
	% within Age	100	100	100	100
Total	Count	11	17	6	34
	% within Fund raising	32.35	50	17.65	100
	% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.21 Involvement in Fund Raising Activities

Figure 4.13 below confirms that the majority of parents who were involved in fund raising activities fell within the age group 25-34.

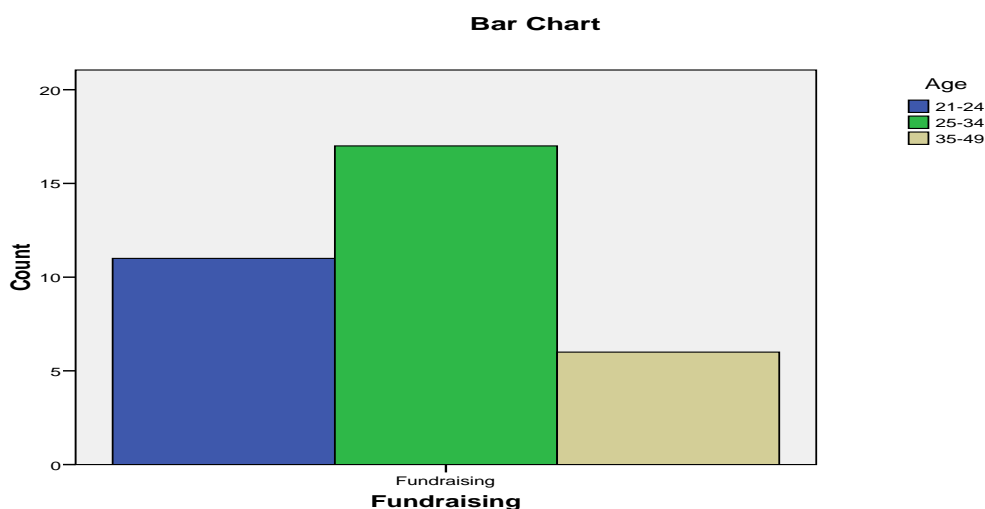


Figure 4.13 Assisting with Fund Raising

4.6.2.3 Belonging to a Parent Forum / Body

In Question 8 parents were asked if they belonged to a parent forum or body. Only 10.42% of those aged between 21 to 24 belonged to a parent forum or body as opposed to 43.75% and 45.83% of those belonging to age group 25 to 34 and 35 to 49 respectively as reflected in the Table 4.22 below.

		Age			
		21-24	25-34	35-49	Total
Parent Forum / Body	Count	5	21	22	48
	% within Forum	10.42	43.75	45.83	100
	% within Age	100	100	100	100
Total	Count	5	21	22	48
	% within Forum	10.42	43.75	45.83	100
	% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.22 Belonging to a Parent Forum /Body

4.6.2.4 Assisting with School Trips

Out of a sample of 146, only five parents assisted with the school trips and were all aged 35-49.

4.7 Attendance of School Governing Body AGM

Figure 4.14 below illustrates the responses to Question 9 on whether parents attended the School Governing Body AGM. This Figure show that only parents in the age group 25 to 49 attended, and none from the age group 21 to 24 years old.

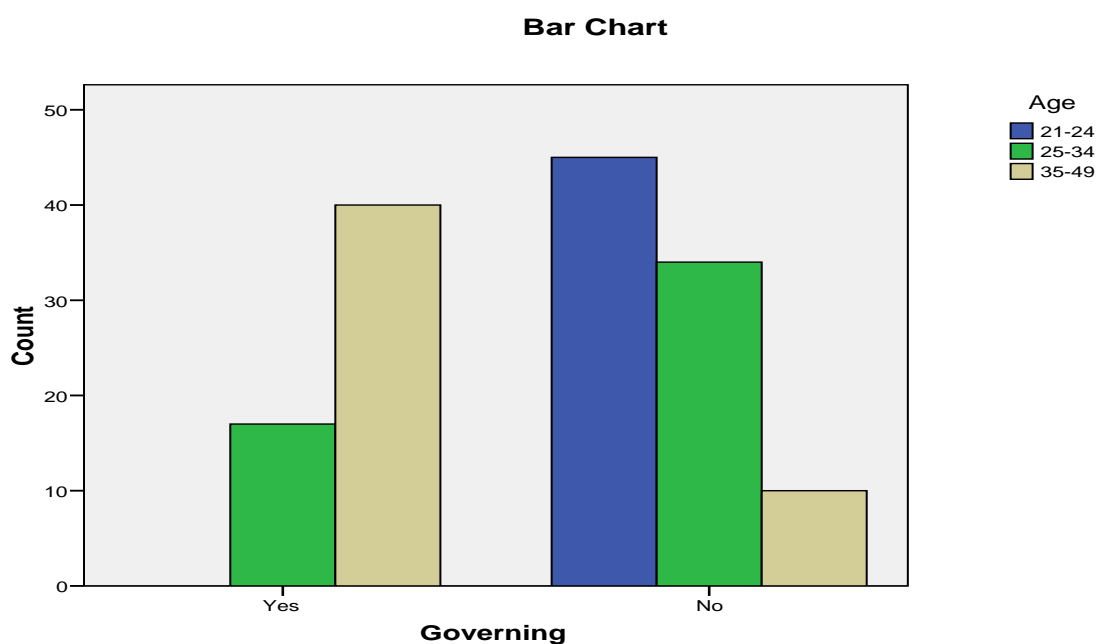


Figure 4.14 – Attending Governing Body Meeting

4.7.1 Reasons for Non-Attendance

Table 4.23 below shows that when parents were asked in Question 10 for the reasons why they did not attend the meetings, they responded as follows:

- 19.23% of those aged between 35 to 49 said they did not have the time
- Those between 25 to 34 quoted both difficulties with transport and not having time as the reasons for not attending
- Parents aged 21 to 34 quoted three reasons for not attending and those were difficulties with transport, not having time and seeing no reason to attend as their reasons for not attending the school governing body AGM for parents.

			Age			Total
			21-24	25-34	35-49	21-24
Reasons	Difficulties with Transport	Count	10	20	0	30
		% within Reasons	33.33	66.67	0	100
		% within Age	22.22	58.82	0	33.71
	Don't have the time	Count	28	14	10	52
		% within Reasons	53.85	26.92	19.23	100
		% within Age	62.22	41.18	100	58.43
	Don't see the need to Attend	Count	7	0	0	7
		% within Reasons	100	0	0	100
		% within Age	15.56	0	0	7.87
Total		Count	45	34	10	89
		% within Reasons	50.56	38.20	11.24	100
		% within Age	100	100	100	100

Table 4.23 – Reasons for Non-Attendance

4.8 Correlation Analysis for Children, Homework, and Academic Achievement

A relationship between the selected variables was expected, although the direction of the relationship was not predicted. For this reason, a two tailed bivariate correlation test was conducted to test relationships between the following variables;

- Number of children that a parent had and concern over academic achievement i.e. did the increase in the number of children have any bearing on the level of concern from a parent.
- Number of children per parent and assistance over homework, i.e. did the number of children in the family have any relationship to the level of assistance with homework.
- Assistance offered with homework and concern over children's academic performance i.e. did more assistance with homework mean more concern from the parent over the academic achievement of the children.

Correlations		Children	Academic	Homework
Children	Pearson Correlation	1	0.142	-0.132
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.087	0.111
	N	146	146	146
Academic	Pearson Correlation	0.142	1	-0.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.087		0.222
	N	146	146	146
Homework	Pearson Correlation	-0.132	-0.102	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.111	0.222	
	N	146	146	146

Table 4.24 – Correlation analysis

In Table 4.24 above each variable is perfectly correlated to itself hence the value of 1 for children in the column and children in the row. Concern over academic achievement is positively correlated to the number of children with a Pearson coefficient of $r=0.142$ and there is .087 probability that this correlation coefficient would have occurred by chance in a sample of 146 people. Therefore the Pearson coefficient of correlation means that the more children in the family, the more the parents were concerned about their academic achievement. According to Field (2005, p126) any probability value over .05 is regarded as not being statistically meaningful, therefore a conclusion is drawn that the relationship between academic performance and children is not genuine, because the

relationship between these two variables is not significant. Lind, Marchal and Wathen (2008) confirm this notion when they maintained that a correlation of 0.142 is not close to 1 and proved that the linear relationship between the two variables is weak.

The Pearson Coefficient of correlation for the relationship between the number of children per parent and assistance with homework is $r = -.132$ which showed that they were negatively correlated, and there was .111 probability that this correlation coefficient would have occurred by chance in a sample of 146 people. The conclusion drawn was that there was a weak relationship between these variables because the coefficient of correlation was $-.132$ which is not close to 1. Therefore the more children in the family, the lower the level of concern or willingness to give assistance with homework.

The two variables “assistance offered with homework” and “children’s academic performance” are negatively correlated with a Pearson Coefficient of $r = -.102$ and there is a probability .222 that this relationship would have occurred by chance in a sample of 146 people. The relationship between these two variables was weak, therefore the less the parents assisted with homework, the more concerned they were over the academic achievements of their children.

4.9 Summary of Chapter Findings

The sample selected for the test had an almost even distribution across all ages, and consisted mostly of parents looking after two to three children. Most single parents had relatives as their support system, confirming studies previously conducted. The majority of single parents in the sample had a job. However, most of them were not confident that they would retain their jobs in the current economic conditions, but said that they would accept a job offer outside the province if it offered, or if it meant more income.

Single parent’s standard of living and economic conditions were fairly stable for the older single parents i.e. aged between 25 and 49, but this was not the case for those aged

between 21 and 24. Single parents believed that their status of being single mothers hindered their progress at work, although the question which was meant to cross test this displayed mixed feeling for parents in the age group 25-34.

Even though the single mothers were very concerned about the academic achievements of their children, they did not contribute by assisting with homework. The younger the single parents were, the less involved they were in their children's school, and when asked to provide reasons for none attendance in the school governing body meetings they quoted either not seeing the need to attend or having difficulty with transport as the reasons for this. More discussion on the findings will be done in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This study was prompted by an interest in determining the challenges that single parents encounter. In the literature review in Chapter 2 the main challenges of single parenting were highlighted. These were money, task overload, social life, and problems with the ex-partner. For single-mothers, money was the biggest problem.

The literature review in Chapter 2 demonstrated that whilst the old customs and values attached social stigmatization to single parenthood, this had changed and single parenting was becoming a rapidly growing trend in the society.

5.2 Overview of the Study

In order to investigate factors that motivate and disrupt single mothers in the workplace, a large body of literature was reviewed in Chapter 2. In the literature review the main intention was to examine the evolution of single parenting and to determine the variables that affect a single mother's career and the relationship shared with their children. In doing this, different models which have been used to study single parenting were highlighted and the role of mothers in parenting in general, as well as their role in single parenting, was pursued.

Chapter 2 also noted factors that mothers face at work as well as in society. The authors noted that although the twenty-first century is a great time for women in business, the old stigma of women not performing their duties because they have to look after the children, still exists.

Single mothers encountered difficulties when balancing a career and raising children at the same time. Parental involvement was also a very important factor in their children's progress at school. The studies confirmed that the more parents are involved in their children's school whilst children are young, the better the grades.

Chapter 3 covered the research design of the study. A quantitative research method was utilized to conduct this study. A self completion questionnaire which was administered on e-mail was used as the instrument to collect data from a sample that was selected through purposive and snowball sampling.

Chapter 4 contains the results from the data analysis.

5.3 Addressing the Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to determine if the combination of single parenthood and career advancement leads to the neglect of children by parents who cared more about their career than their children. The study aimed to verify if it was possible to raise well groomed children despite the parent's single status.

The information gathered from structured self completion questionnaire highlighted some of the factors that single parents encounter. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- 5.3.1 The factors that motivate single mothers in the workplace
- 5.3.2 The factors that disrupt single mother's careers in the workplace
- 5.3.3 Single mothers economic position and standard of living
- 5.3.4 The extent to which single parents put their careers before their children
- 5.3.5 The relationship with their children and involvement in their children's school activities and assistance offered with homework

5.3.1 Objectives Number 2 & 3

5.3.1.1 Factors that Affect Single Mothers in the Workplace

First and foremost, it was appropriate to determine if single parents do have jobs. The first question in the self completion questionnaire that was meant to address this research question showed that the majority of single parents (97.26%) in the sample were employed. The Chi Square Test performed illustrated that single parents' age determined if they would have a job, and this on its own is a demotivating factor for single parents. In this society where the role of mothers is changing from only caring for the children to also providing income that would sustain the family, knowing that their age hinders entrance to the job industry is definitely a demotivating factor for single parents.

This concurs with the study by Peppard (2007) which discovered that questions asked in interviews such as the candidate's marital status and their number of children, led to companies eliminating single mothers from employment at the interview point. The employment status of mothers would have a ripple positive or negative effect on children as concluded in a study conducted by Hoffman (2009). The employment or otherwise of the single parent will eventually provide a family environment that either helped or hindered the children in the family.

This finding also confirms the finding of Kelch (1997) that single parents, especially mothers, often experienced financial difficulties. This study confirms that this was due to them being unemployed as a result of their age.

Single mothers in possession of a job, were not confident that they would retain it in the current economic conditions. Only 28.77% of parents were confident that they would retain their jobs while the majority (71.23%) were not. This confirms a prediction by Philp (2009) that due to the current global meltdown and credit crunch, there might be 300 000 job losses in South Africa. This factor is a disruption to the single mothers in

the workplace.

5.3.1.2 Single Mothers' Economic Position and Standard of Living

Most single parents had either a certificate, degree, diploma or post graduate qualification. Only 10 out of 146 had just a matric certificate as a qualification. The older parents i.e. aged between 35 to 49 had post graduate qualifications because they understood the responsibility they were faced with of earning more income for the family.

Of the 146 within the sample, 75 parents owned a home as opposed to 71 who rented it, and 95 parents owned a car while only 40 did not have a car. The older parents aged 35 to 49 owned most of the assets i.e. home and a car and the younger ones did not. This does not concur with the study conducted by Kerka (2009), which maintained that poverty was persistently linked with single-parent households, especially those headed by women and such families were the poorest of all major demographic groups. The sample selected in this study demonstrated that where a single parent had education and a decent job, they were able to provide for the needs and required assets for their family.

In the sample, single mothers were educated and they managed to get jobs. This concurs with Lang (2004) who maintained that what mattered most in single family households was a mother's education and ability level and, to a lesser extent, family income and quality of the home environment.

5.3.1.3 Career versus Children

The reason why parents put their careers before their children was because they felt that their status of being single hindered their progress at work, and therefore were trying to prove themselves. Younger single parents aged 21-24 felt that single parenthood hindered their progress at work and they felt that they would not easily be promoted because they were single mothers. This endorses Murphy (2009) finding that there was still a belief that single mothers would perform their duties poorly because of having to take care of their children at the same time.

The mother's sentiment about promotion concurs with Shea's (2009) view that another challenge that the single women faced was balancing work and life which led to non promotion at work. Shea's (2009) view was echoed by a respondent who was interviewed by Monaghan (2009) who said that when her son was younger she was not able to work overtime, go on courses or attend work nights out because she had nobody to mind him, and this affected her career.

Mothers were keen to accept job offers outside the KZN province. The vast majority (95.89%) of single parents would accept a job offer outside the province. When testing their concern about children when relocating, it was discovered that majority of parents felt that the children would eventually adjust to their move, whether assisted by professional counselling or by themselves. The younger parents said they would leave their children with grandmothers. This confirms the Deficit Model of studying single parenting that single parent families were characterized by overburdened adults who balanced care for children and careers outside the home and could not possibly provide the amount of supervision, nurturance, time, discipline and love that their children needed. In this instance, the parents were worried about earning more income from better job offers and showed little concern for how this may affect their children. Younger single mothers aged 21 to 34 showed the least sympathy and care when leaving children with grandparents.

Shea (2009) recommended to single mothers that they had to be careful in selecting their career choices. They had to ensure that the career they followed was accommodating to the time they need for the family as well as work.

5.3.1.4 Relationship and Involvement in School Activities

Parents displayed the greatest concern over their children's achievement, but did not ensure that the children achieved this ambition by assisting them with homework. The data showed that the younger the single parents were i.e. aged 21-34, the less they were concerned about their children's school achievements, and were not involved in

activities in their children's school. However, parents in all the age groups, were guilty of not assisting children with their homework. The older parents were mostly involved in the following school activities

- fund raising
- belonging to a Parent forum / Body
- assisting with school trips
- attendance of School Governing Body AGM

In Chapter 2 Rose, Gallup, & Elam, (2009) as cited by Bauch (2009), said that 86% of the public believed that support from parents was the most important way to improve the achievement of children at school. Research has shown that parental involvement in children's school achieves higher grades, better test scores and graduation rates, better school attendance and increased motivation, better self-esteem, and fewer instances of violent behaviour.

Research by Rose, Gallup & Elam, (2009) as cited by Bauch (2009) maintains that the more parents participated in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level such as by encouragement, decision-making, fund-raising, volunteers, professionals, and home teachers, the better it was for the children achievement.

Older single parents i.e. those aged 35 to 49 quoted time as an impediment to getting involved in their children's schools. Those parents aged between 25 to 34 quoted both difficulties with transport and not having time as the reasons for not attending. Those parents aged 21 to 34 quoted three reasons for not attending the school governing body AGM for parents and those were difficulties with transport, not having time and seeing no reason to attend.

This concurred with the study by Michigan Department of Education (2001) that teachers often thought that as an obstacle to child's educational process, single parents could not spend as much time helping their children at home.

5.4 Summary

The younger the single parent was, the less responsibility they displayed towards the children and the adverse the economic conditions. The majority of the single parents were guilty of not assisting children with homework and this concurred with other studies that children from single parent families did not perform well at school. In addition to not assisting with homework, the younger parents did not participate in the children's school activities.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The research results of this study are important especially for younger single parents who start families prematurely. This Chapter will be looking at recommendations stemming from the results of the data analysis and the implications of the study.

6.2 Implications of this Research

Data analysis showed that most parents are hard pressed to fulfil the demand of both career and child rearing efficiently. Single mothers obtained assistance to raise their children from friends and families who formed part of their support system. The support system assisted in ensuring that children and their parents coped with their day to day activities and stress levels.

Younger single parents found it difficult to cope with the responsibility of single parenting. They could not secure decent careers for themselves and therefore could not acquire the necessary assets like a house and a car that were required to be utilized on a daily basis by a family. These mothers, in addition to not coping, had time constraints and were unable participate in their children's school activities, and assist with homework. Younger mothers were the least confident about retaining their jobs, since they could not perform the balancing act between career and raising children.

This study has demonstrated that there are a lot of positive factors that come from being a single parent as reflected in Chapter 2. Parenthood is not the only factor that determines the child's outcome, other factors like both parent's level of education and the methods used to raise the child determined whether a child would be a delinquent teenager or not.

Parents in the study felt that they needed to generate more money to cater for their families and hence would move to any destination in South Africa if they received decent job offers. Parents' support systems which were friends and relatives, as well as counselling were expected to help the children cope with the move.

The conclusion of this study is simple. The lone parent definitely has to put in more effort to raise her children, taking care of themselves and balancing the demands of being a mother with those of their career. All of this is possible with proper time management, choosing the right career, and utilization of the support systems around them.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Study

The following recommendations may contribute to the success of single mothers in their endeavour to raise children all by themselves:

6.3.1 Sample Selection

This study was conducted on heterogeneous types of single parents i.e. divorced, widowed, and unmarried. It would be more interesting to look at each type and analyze each one to determine which one is the most prevalent in South Africa and what the social implications are of each type of single parenthood.

6.3.2 Single Parenting and Retaining Job

The question that was designed to test these variables demonstrated that the older single parents did not believe that their status of being single hindered their progress at work whereas the younger ones did. The question that was designed to cross test this question showed that single parents aged 25-34 were undecided about their belief of whether their status hindered progress at work. However, it would be worthwhile to study this aspect further to determine with certainty what parents aged 25-34 believed about their

status at work. The Human Resources departments within different organizations should gather statistics of the staff promotion rates of employees who are single parents aged between 21-24 and conduct research on reasons leading to the promotion or non-promotion of these employees depending on the results of statistical analysis.

6.3.3 Younger Parent's Economic Position

It would be interesting to explore the standard of living of younger single parents in South Africa. This study found that their commitment to raising children and their standard of living was the most drastic among the subjects in the sample. Further investigation of reasons for their lack of commitment and strained economic conditions would be worth pursuing.

6.3.4 Social Implications of Single parenthood

Research from the Michigan Department of Education (2001) showed that the major influences on how a child develops were not related to single parenthood, but rather to how a family functions. According to the Deficit Model of single parenting, single parenthood has always bred a host of children's problems ranging from behavioural, underachievement at school, mental health problems, alcohol and drug abuse and the inability to form lasting relationships. In South Africa the South African Institute of Race Relations as quoted by Prince (2009, p3) claimed that there really was not enough information on what the status of the typical South African family was. Further research could determine what the future holds for the South African family, and what the social implications of the South African family are.

6.3.5 Relationship with Children

Single mothers, especially the younger ones, should endeavour to get education on parenting skills so that they can accept themselves as well as their children. Parents in general need to be educated in areas such as education, discipline and child and adolescent psychology. This will have a ripple effect in assisting with homework, participating in school activities, and helping the child to achieve better grades at school

and improve their self esteem. Assistance offered with homework was a concern as the majority of parents in the sample did not offer this to their children. Research on courses to be offered for single parenting education should be conducted.

The correlation analysis for the relationship between children, homework and academic achievement revealed that the less the parents assisted with homework, the more concerned they were over academic achievement of their children. Educators should be compelled to sign performance agreements to improve the quality of education and part of the performance indicators should include a measurement on ensuring that parents assist with their children's homework. The school principal should ensure that class teachers compel parents to sign their child's homework book every day. Research should be conducted on reasons for parent's non-assistance with homework. This would reveal whether it was because of time constraints or because they felt they were inadequately educated themselves and were therefore not in a position to offer any assistance.

6.3.6 Counselling for Single Mothers

Raising a child alone is stressful and requires the single parent to monitor their own spiritual and emotional needs. Mothers need counselling in order to be more sensitive towards their children. Most parents felt that it would be acceptable to leave their children in the care of another family member and accept a job which would take them away from their children on a permanent basis. This situation would not be conducive to maintaining a good relationship and bond with their children. However, it must be accepted that pressing issues like income led to them having to do this. Proper counselling would open their eyes to the fact that income cannot take priority over their children. A study on the types of assistance that single mothers require to cope with their situation, besides money, should be conducted.

6.3.7 Participation in School Activities

To encourage parental participation in school activities, the schools should provide child

care facilities when meetings are being held. The time for meetings should suit the parents and should not be at the teacher's convenience. A study on the methods available to encourage parents' participation in their children's education should be conducted to assist parents in this regard

6.4 Suggestions for Future Study

- Younger single parents seemed to barely cope with their responsibilities. This would be an interesting area to explore to determine reasons behind this and the impact it has on children.
- Single parents did not cope with having to help children with their homework and maintain steady careers at the same time. Researching this further with the aim of determining alternative methods of getting children's homework done, and the effect this has on the children's grades would be worthwhile.
- Single parenthood was a growing phenomenon as confirmed by the studies. Therefore it would be fascinating to hear from the children of single parent families how this has impacted them. The question that would be asked is how do you feel about growing up without a father? How does this affect them at school?
- Also it would be interesting to hear from the support system for these parents how they feel about being the crying shoulder, and what impact this has on them: are they burdened by this or do they feel they have an obligation to assist?

6.5 Summary

The study set out to determine the attitude of single mothers towards their children and career and to determine which one is more important than the other. Factors affecting single parenthood like parent's economic position and the extent to which single parenthood affects career advancement were explored.

The problem statement indicated that the study was aimed at finding a preliminary understanding of single parent family problems, and further to determine if parents prioritized their career to the detriment of their children's education. The results showed that not all parents had a problem balancing their career needs with those of their children. Data analysis revealed that this depended largely on a parent's age. However, parents in all age groups indicated an interest in accepting job offers outside of the KZN province, irrespective of the consequences this may have for their children. Parents were concerned over the academic achievement of their children, but did not ensure that this happened by assisting with homework. Data analysis for Question 17 of the questionnaire revealed that 95% of single parents were faced with the dilemma of having to choose between their children and career and if faced with this situation, they were likely to prioritize their career.

The research questions were addressed as follows

- What factors motivate or disrupt single mothers in the workplace?

The literature review showed that single mothers were demotivated by the stigma attached to them in the workplace which presumed that they were unable to perform as well as other employees because they had children to look after. The data collected and the Chi square test showed dependence between the age of a single mother and her being employed. It showed that single mothers' age and status determined if they were employable.

- To what extent do single mothers have economic difficulty and experience an adverse standard of living?

The data collected showed that not all single mothers had adverse economic positions and poor standards of living. The majority of younger parents had this problem but the older parents had stable economic conditions and standard of living. Poverty amongst single parents in the sample was not as severe as the literature review suggested.

- To what degree does single motherhood affect career advancement in the workplace?

The data collected showed that parents, especially the younger ones, believed that being single hindered their progress at work. However, the question on the level of education revealed that younger single women were not as educated as the older ones. Of the 38 parents aged between 21-34 none had post graduate degrees, 17 had Diplomas, 10 had certificates only 4 had degrees. Education, rather than single parenthood, could be the factor that hinders their promotion.

- To what extent is the career most important to single mothers than their children?

The data collected showed that single parents placed greater emphasis on their careers than on their children. They did this because they felt that they had to earn as much as they could to sustain the family. A worrying 95.41% of parents were keen to accept jobs outside the province and they felt that the children would eventually adjust to the move. If children had difficulty adjusting, they would utilize counselling and their support system to assist them. A plan would have to be made as long as the job offers more income.

6.6 Conclusion

The study set out to determine single parents' involvement in their children's lives and the relationship shared with their children, assistance offered with homework and involvement in their children's school activities. Further to this, the study wanted to determine to what extent single parenthood hindered progress at work and to ascertain whether single mothers' economic positions and standards of living were below par.

Data analysis revealed that parents placed their careers before their children. They were prepared to leave their children at someone else's care just because they wanted to earn

more money. Although parents were going to utilize counselling services and the support system to ensure that the children coped with the move, this did not justify their actions, and showed that the relationship shared with the children was negative. Parents were concerned about their children's school careers but did not make sure that this was nurtured by assisting them with homework.

This study revealed that parents believed that single parenthood hindered their progress at work, although those in the age group 21-24 seemed to be undecided in this regard. A recommendation for counselling and training on single parenting was revealed to assist parents balance their careers with their responsibility, so that single parenthood was not to be regarded as a stumbling block in the single parent's career path.

The majority of parents did not participate in their children's school activities. Another recommendation that stemmed from this study is that schools should provide child care facilities when parent meetings were being held to assist mothers to participate in school activities. The time for holding meetings should suit parents and should not only be at the teachers' convenience. This would then accommodate those parents who quoted time as reason for non attendance.

Older parents' economic positions and standards of living were fairly stable, but younger parents struggled financially. The younger ones showed that they were not coping with the balancing act to be performed between the career and children. The study revealed that parents should ensure that they have a stable career before starting a family.

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Appendix A

The questionnaire

Dear Respondent

Thank you for participating in this study! The purpose of the study is to determine factors that motivate and disrupt single mothers at work and whether being a single mother mean economic difficulty and no time to yourself and also whether being a single mother means that you will never advance in the workplace, and finally whether most single mothers put their career first before their children.

The study will utilize structured questionnaire as data gathering instrument for self completion by single mothers. The questionnaire consists of four sections Section A which is general information, Section B which tests parents involvement in their children's school, Section C which tests whether single mothers feel they do not advance at work because of them being single, and Section D which tests the economic difficulty aspect.

It will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete this questionnaire. The university and those who conduct this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all time of the interests, comfort and safety of respondents. Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to decline to participate or to withdraw from research at any time. Please be assured that no reference will be made to any respondent as an individual and that all questionnaires are treated confidentially during analysis and reporting. No raw data will be given to any third party.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to call me.

Yours Truly

Thobeka Ndwandwe

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A GENERAL INFORMATION

		Yes/No
1. Are you:	Male	
	Female	
		Yes (Where applicable)
2. Aged :	21-24	
	25-34	
	35-49	
	Over 50	
		Yes/No
3. Are you:	A single mother?	
		Yes Where applicable
4. How many children are you parenting	One	
	Two to three	
	More than three	
		Yes Where applicable
5. Describe the current support system that you have	Friends	
	Relatives	
	Professionals	
	Other	

SECTION B RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD

Which of the following are concerns you have about your child at school?

		Very Concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not Concerned
6.	Academic progress at school			
7.	Homework			

8. Which way are you involved in your child's school?

- Fund raising
- Helping in the classroom
- Assisting with School Trips
- Supporting sport teams
- Learning alongside your child in school
- Parent Forum / Body

Please indicate "Yes" in boxes that apply

9. Do you attend the School Governing Body AGM for parents?

Yes/No

10. If you do not attend the School Governing Body AGM for parents which of the following makes this difficult:

- Difficulties with transport
- Don't have the time
- Don't see the need to attend
- Not interested
- Other reason Please Specify

Please indicate "Yes" in boxes that apply

11. What is your highest level of education

Please indicate "Yes" in boxes that apply	Matric	
	Degree	
	Diploma	
	Certificate	
	Post Graduate	

12. Do you have a job?

Yes/No

13. Do you feel that single parenthood hinders progress at work

Yes/No
14. Do you feel that sometimes you are overlooked for promotion because of being a single parent

Yes/No
15. Considering the current global meltdown. Are you confident that you will retain your job when your employer decides to retrench

Yes/No
16. Do you have any concerns about relocating

Yes/No
17. Would you accept a job offer that will make you move to another Province

Yes/No
18. If answered “yes” to 17 how do you think your children will adjust to this move

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SECTION D
STANDARD OF LIVING

19. Do you own/ rent your home
- | | |
|------|--|
| | Please indicate “Yes” in the box that apply |
| Own | |
| Rent | |

20. Do you own a car

Yes/No

21. What is your Monthly household income

Please indicate "Yes" in the box that apply

Under R 10 000	
10 000 – 19 000	
20 000 – 29 000	
30 000 – 40 000	
Above 40 000	