

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING PARENTING AMONG SINGLE  
PARENTS' HOUSEHOLDS IN KAPTEMBWA WARD, NAKURU WEST SUB -  
COUNTY, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

**EUPHEMIA AWUOR ODERO**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts in Gender and Development Studies of Egerton University**

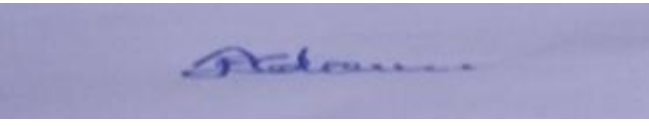
**EGERTON UNIVERSITY**

**OCTOBER, 2025**

## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

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This is my original work and has not been presented for any award of a degree in this or any other university.

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Date 29/10/2025

Euphemia Awuor Odera

GM11/13657/19

### Recommendation

This work has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors;

Sign .....  .....

Date 28/10/2025

Dr. Lilian R Chesikaw, PhD

Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies

Egerton University

Sign .....  .....

Date 28/10/2025

Dr. Charles K., Wambu, PhD

Department of Community Development and Environmental Management

The Cooperative University of Kenya

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my parent Mrs Jane odero, my husband Wickliffe Anyango, my sisters Nancy, Valentine, Julie and Nancy and my children Samuel, Ramcy and Nadya always believing in me in every step I took.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

Single parents face great challenges in raising children like struggling to meet their physical, emotional and cognitive development. In Kenya single parents' households are at greater risk of poverty which can lead to health and mental problems. These challenges are usually combined by parents' inability to meet children's basic needs due to being the sole breadwinner and balancing gender roles. Study aim was to determine socioeconomic factors affecting parenting among single parents. The study main the objective of the study was to focus on variables such as parental sex, income level, occupation, and age which are key in shaping overall family wellbeing. The study grounded itself on the Structural Functional Theory and Social Learning Theory. The study used a mixed-methods research design to integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The survey tool was reviewed and validated by the supervisors and educational specialists. Data was collected from 530 target population consisting of single parents' household heads, comprising men, women, and youths above 18 years in low-income areas of Kaptembwa Ward. The total sample size of 121 respondents was derived using strattified sampling methoug by grouping respondents into strata. Closed-ended questionnaire was was employed in collecting quantitative data while an interview guide was used in the key informant interviews and Focused group discussions. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software to generate descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The results showed that 77% of the respondents earn a daily income of not more than Ksh 300. The 66.1% of the respondents howed that low income directly hinders parenting. Single mothers were 41.3% of the respondents were found to face greater challenges such as social stigma and limited access to employment opportunities compared to single fathers (49.6%) while the occupation of the respondents show that it plays an important role in parenting. The 74% of respondents were in agreement that their job responsibilities affected their ability to care and quality time for their children. The qualitative data employed in the study further revealed that single mothers, as a result of their double roles as caregivers and breadwinners. This heightened stress and burnout among the women. The Study helps in contributing to the Institute of gender and Development in informing research; knowledge building and advocacy aimed at enhancing gender equity and sustainable development. The study recommends that the Kenyan government develop policies such as accessible public daycare, child support, psychosocial support and flexible work program to enhance economic empowerment and wellbeing of single parents' households.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>AIDS</b>    | Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome                       |
| <b>CBO</b>     | Community Based Organizations                            |
| <b>COVID</b>   | Corona Virus Disease                                     |
| <b>FGDs</b>    | Focus Group Discussions.                                 |
| <b>GBV</b>     | Gender Based Violence                                    |
| <b>IGA</b>     | Income Generating Activity                               |
| <b>KII</b>     | Key Informant Interview                                  |
| <b>MOH</b>     | Ministry Of Health                                       |
| <b>NACOSTI</b> | National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Non-Governmental Organizations                           |
| <b>SMAC</b>    | Single Mother Association                                |
| <b>SPSS</b>    | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences              |
| <b>STIs</b>    | Sexually Transmitted Infections                          |
| <b>WHO</b>     | World Health Organization                                |

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Good parenting and ample time with children are key to facilitating growth and development. This becomes even more effective when both parents actively participate in child rearing. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century children's upbringing was a communal responsibility, therefore the parents and the entire community spent time with their children influencing their cognitive and social skills, family was considered as the basic socialization unit (Baferani, 2015).

Single parenting is where children are born to parents who are not married to each other or married then separated through divorce, unplanned pregnancy or death (Ali & Soomar, 2019). Single parenthood has been in existence since ancient times though it has steadily increased in contemporary society (Weinraub *et al.*, 2019).

African system of raising children in extended family which was commonly embraced has changed a great deal because of modernization and industrialization (Darling & Steinberg, 2017). Many of the cultural practices and customs that discouraged single parenthood is meaningless in the current society, what was discouraged is now widely accepted because of the changing dynamics of society. Being single was only accepted because of death and in some instances, individuals were allowed to remarry; currently an individual can opt to choose single parenthood. The modern culture has changed and outgrown values and benefits that were thought to be core beliefs and culture of the society. In Kenya this has improved due to factors like empowerment, changing societal norms and COVID 19 pandemic (Odicho *et al.*, 2021). Issues of single parent families are one of the most relevant topics in the contemporary family (Kitheka, 2016).

Out of almost 12 million single parent families with children under the age of 18, more than 80% were headed by the single mother (Stephen *et al.*, 2016). Maldonado and Nieuwentius (2015) state that Poverty risks among single – parent families are substantially higher than those among coupled-parents' families. Constant evolving challenges and experiences of single parents results to impaired wellbeing as compared to coupled parents' households. Single parents play the role of being the breadwinner and performs all the gender roles for both the male and females because of limited quality time for the children.

There is rising number of single parenthood either by choice, death, separation or divorce (Ramos & Tus, 2020). Divorce is common particularly in developing and developed countries. For

example, in Ethiopia, girls who marry before the age of 15 are significantly more likely to get divorced (Tafere *et al.*, 2020). While in Mozambique women who marry before the age of 18 have a higher risk of getting divorced than those who marry at age 25 or older (Nhampoca & Maritz, 2022). In Kenya single parents have gained momentum especially in the urban centers (Mbithi, 2019). Several studies find a large and positive effect of being childless on the probability of divorce (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015).

Single parenting causes and consequences have not received considerable attention in Kenya despite the increasing number of this type of parenthood instead more focus has been on single mothers' households (Mwangi, 2018).

The female households are common in the society but on the other hand the male headed household is also on steady increase (Ichwara *et al.*, 2023). This type of parenting is usually characterized with young women and men who lack adequate parenting skills, income and in some instances not ready for parental responsibilities. The challenges facing single parents are numerous, these include high level of unemployment, poor parenting skill, loneliness, stigma and extreme poverty (Boominathan *et al.*, 2024). These places parents in a confusing situation struggling to pay for the bills, shelter, basic need and provision for the wellbeing of children. Single parents always struggle between earning an income and raising their children (Gitonga, 2025). Children usually have limited quality time with their parents resulting in limited supervision and increased rate of vulnerability, especially in low-income households who are exposed to poverty.

In Nakuru County several studies have indicated that there is an increase in single parenthood, and they face socioeconomic challenges when bringing up children (Manyara *et al.*, 2016). Despite several NGOs and the government through the new constitution in 2010 by establishing the marital and property act to protect the partners in case of separation or divorce, single parents are still exposed to a lot of challenges in the society ranging from gender roles which they solely do without support from the partner. The ailing economic system because of COVID 19 and high inflation rate have also created a negative impact on single parents' household, income is limited with no or little Income Generating Activities and high standard of life subject the single parents to poverty (Suleiman, 2020). Kaptembwa ward is highly populated, and majority of households are headed by single parents (Manyara *et al.*, 2016). This exposes the children to lack parental guidance, neglect, drug abuse, poor health and malnutrition, behavior change, Gender

Based Violence (GBV) and irregular schooling because of limited quality time and inadequate income.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Single parenting has been on increase in Kaptembwa, this presents a lot of challenges that affect both the parents and their children, particularly in this environment with limited resources especially social amenities and finances (Chepkoech *et al.*, 2019). In Kaptembwa ward, single parents often face the dual burden of being the sole provider and the primary caregiver. This leads to imbalance in gender role and inadequate quality time with the children; Parent have to actively participate in productive activities in the expense of naturing activities since they are single handed with little or no little or no support from the partner. Many single parents are forced to leave their children unattended while they engage in labor to meet the family's basic needs. This situation exposes children to various risks, including malnutrition and childhood infections, due to limited financial resources and parental availability. Other studies that were conducted at Kaptembwa found that low income markedly undermines parenting capacity. Most participants in the area earned under KES 300 daily from the study, reflecting widespread low-wage employment, and 66.1% reported that their limited earnings hindered effective parenting. Work demands further challenged parenting, with 74% indicating their jobs interfered with caring for their children. The study aimed to investigate the socioeconomic factors that influence parenting among single parents.

## **1.3 Purpose of Study**

The main purpose of this study was aimed at gaining a thorough understanding of how socioeconomic factors influence parenting among single-parent households in Kaptembwa Ward, Nakuru County.

## **1.4 Specific Objective**

The following were the specific objectives:

- i. To examine how parent income level affects parenting among the single parents' households in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County.
- ii. To analyze how experience in child nurturing affects parenting among the single parent households in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County.

- iii. To determine how occupation of the single parent affects parenting among the single parent households in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County.
- iv. To find out how age of a single parent affects parenting in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. How does parent income level affect parenting among the single parents' households in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County?
- ii. In which ways do experience in child nurturing affect parenting among the single parent households in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County?
- iii. How does occupation of single parent affect parenting among the single parent households in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County?
- iv. How does the age of single parent affect parenting in Kaptembwa ward, Nakuru County?

### **1.6 Justification of Study**

Practical and newspaper reports show that there is a steady increase of single parenting in Kenya (Mbithi, 2019). Kenyan government and the non-governmental organizations like Single Mothers Association (SMAK) have tried by managing the interest of the single parents but these efforts have not transformed the change of parenting technique which comes with a lot of demands and expectation from the society and the children.

The Kenyan constitution of 2010 gives room for co-parenting and sharing of property in case of separation in the matrimonial property act, but this is not usually the case; because of poverty and conflict some partners separate and not share parenting responsibilities hence overwhelming one partner like balancing nurturing and productive activities. Single parents have great responsibility and at times become emotionally drained and lack support. Daily stress, absentee parents and failure to fully meet the physical, socio-emotional and cognitive needs of the children by the single parent can result in behavior change, drug abuse and truancy in children.

The study will contribute to development of programs and recommendations to support and protect single parents, bridging the gap in positive parenting skills and coping mechanisms. It justifies the need for public daycare centers to enable single parents to actively engage in socioeconomic activities without worrying about their children or being overwhelmed by family

responsibilities. The study will also support in advocacy for rescue center construction which will serve as a temporary shelter for victims of gender-based violence, offering skills training and psychosocial support. This study will facilitate the achievement of sustainable development goals by reducing inequality, improving economic growth and decent work for single parents through policy development.

The study will contribute to provision of evidence to the department of Gender to facilitate formation of policies, strategies for advocacy and education initiatives on coping mechanisms for single parents' households and resource allocation.

### **1.7 The Scope of Study**

The study was conducted in Kaptembwa Ward, an overpopulated area with semi-permanent and temporary housing. According to the KNBS (2019), most parents in the area are single, comprising of 101,797 women and 96,854 men, who are primarily the breadwinners. Due to unemployment and limited income sources, single parents in this area depend on informal businesses to raise their children, making Kaptembwa an ideal location for study. The research focused on socioeconomic characteristics such as income levels, age, child-nurturing experience, and occupation. Regarding parenting, the study examined issues related to morals, character development, schooling, nutrition, and the security of children. The study targeted 530 individuals in population then drawn 121 respondents who were single parents' household eighteen years and above. Data collection was done for one month in the study area.

### **1.8 Limitation of Study**

- i. The findings of this survey may not be generalized for the whole country because not all single parents experience the same dynamics.
- ii. Post COVID 19 pandemic effect, the disease was highly contagious this limited engagement of the responded since some feared being infected even after the vaccination. Delimitation to this, the researcher will use digital platforms like mobile phones to conduct the survey and assure the respondents.
- iii. Single parents' households who were headed by respondents who were below 18 years were not engaged in the research.

### **1.9 Assumption of Study**

The study assumed that data collected was reliable and valid, all the participants provided truthful and accurate information about their socioeconomic situations and how those factors

affected their parenting. The study also assumed a complete usable database, by ensuring all questionnaires were fully and correctly filled by the respondents. Finally, the study assumed that the chosen research instruments were the most appropriate and effective tools for data collection by ensuring that the study's design and methodology produced high-quality data suitable for analysis. These assumptions collectively form the foundation of the study's credibility, allowing for the analysis and conclusions to be considered dependable.

### **1.10 Definition of Operational Terms**

**Culture:** Referred to as the way of life of a particular life of single parents' household and how the community brings up the family in terms of passing values and beliefs from one generation to another.

**Domestic violence:** Are any physical, mental, or sexual harm committed in the household or family against family members such as the spouse, children or parents.

**Dual parenthood:** This is a type of parenting where both mother and father stay together and actively get involved in child or children upbringing.

**Gender roles:** These are socially constructed roles and responsibilities of men and women for example the general household roles performed in relation to the husband and wife such as being a breadwinner, washing, cooking and serving his meals.

**Gender:** These are socially constructed roles of both men and women in each society for example women do nurturing activities like taking care of children while men are breadwinners.

**Household:** This is a group of people residing in the same house, have the same cooking arrangement and are answerable to one household head who can either be a male or female.

**Level of income:** Involves all amount of either monetary or other return, which are earned, or accruing over a given period to meet the household needs.

**Low income:** Includes all households that live in less than a dollar a day and cannot meet all the basic needs of the family.

**Matatu:** This refers to public means of transport by use of a motor vehicle, bicycle or vehicle.

**Occupation:** This means an individual's regular work or profession, for example teacher, lawyer, hawkers, doctor, service, trade etc that provides income for the family.

**Parenting:** This is the process of raising a child by a male or a female and providing them with protection and care to ensure their healthy development to adulthood.

**Poverty:** Is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living.

**Sex:** Biological condition or characteristics of being male, female or intersex, this is assigned at birth by the male or a female parent.

**Single parent:** Refers to a person who lives with his/her child or children without living with a spouse, they can either be male or female. Reasons for being single may include divorce, break-up, abandonment and death by a parent.

**Socio-economic factors:** Refers to activities that generate income for a household and these are determined by employment, education and level of income.

**Women:** Refers to a female who is an adult in her reproductive age.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviewed existing information about Socio-Economic factors affecting parenting households among the single parents in Kaptembwa Ward. Particularly on how gender roles of the single parent affect parenting, how level of income of the single parent affects parenting, occupation and how age of the single parent affects parenting. Similarly, it relates the theoretical framework and its rationale to the study.

#### **2.2 History of Single Parenthood**

Filipek (2020) states that “most important institution in peoples’ social lives is certainly the families yet the structures have significantly changed”. The study focused on the growing phenomenon of today’s single parenthood and asserts that six out of ten Kenyan women are more likely to be single either by divorce, desertion, separation, death or by choice by the time they become 45years of age. Single parenthood is strongly gendered; first and foremost, large majorities of approximately 85% of single parent families are headed by women (Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis, 2018). Single mothers are more likely to face poverty than single fathers. According to Izugbara (2015), few men who are single parents are more likely to be exposed to stigma by the society at times they are viewed as weak and not being able to exercise their authority because of masculinity.

#### **2.3 Causes of Single Parenting**

Children are usually nurtured by different parents; some may have an experience of being raised by both parents and others by one parent who can either be male or female. There are several factors which are responsible in determining the status of single parenthood. These are the facilitating factors which can make individuals to resort to single parenthood which includes premarital sex, generation gap, divorce, separation & conflict, personal choice and death.

According to Panting *et al.* (2019) societal increase in acceptance of premarital sex has resulted to an increase in premarital sexual activity hence the increase of single parent children and in some instance causing school drop- out. Unintended pregnancies where children are born out of wedlock are currently accepted by society, this also may result to single parenting. A partner may also leave because he or she may not want to bear the responsibility of child upbringing. In some instances, unwanted pregnancies may also result in marriage; however, such fail more often

than others (Gomez *et al.*, 2018). Youths have normalized premarital sex despite the consequences as compared to the ancient society where sexual purity was highly upheld this is because of modernization and globalization; social structures have change what was not accepted and encouraged like having children out of wedlock has been normalized.

Generation gap facilitates single parenthood. Way of life has changed because of civilization, what was valued in the past is currently irrelevant. Individuals are doing things differently, dress code, improvement in technology and behaviors have changed. Kinship ties were highly embraced, and society was cohesive as compared to contemporary society where families have embraced private lifestyle and extended family no longer matters. Single parenting is currently on the increase despite the challenges parents and children experience in coping up with life. In African societies such as Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda etc. Women were never allowed to bear children outside their wedlock currently this situation has become very common in recent years (Wimperis, 2024). Decreased moral standards and advancement of science and technology could be the reason.

Compared to their elders, younger generations hold vastly different moral standards and ideals (Rosow, 2018). Young adults living together as a pair without being married is therefore common resulting in unanticipated parenthood, where one partner eventually departs and the other stays to raise the kids by themselves. In developed nations, divorce is one of the primary causes of single parenting (Weaver & Schofield, 2015). Due to unresolved marital difficulties, divorce has become more common, making it easier for families with single parents. In certain cases, couples have chosen to dissolve their union formally. Misbehavior inspired by parents and relatives, infidelity, low income, drug misuse, infertility, and unmet expectations from one partner can also lead to conflict and misunderstanding in a marriage.

Children of divorced parents typically live with their mother or father as the lone parent. This has detrimental effects on the parents as well as the kids. Due to the sharing of newly acquired family property that comes with a formal divorce, some couples prefer it (John & Ehigie, 2015). Claims that divorce brings about a crisis in the family life cycle, with everyone in the nuclear and extended family system experiencing a condition of balance. Families split up because of divorce, and the children typically lose one parent's care, such as the mother or father. Children typically lose their parents' resources, knowledge, and abilities (Cohen *et al.*, 2016). Claims that every year, more than millions of children and young people live in divorced or separated households.

Separation and conflict usually facilitate divorce because of unresolved issues resulting to single parenthood. Couples may decide to separate formally or informally without following legal procedures. Separation happens when one partner either male or female who was married decides to leave a marriage by moving out from a household willingly or by force. Based on Simpson, (2020) stated that separation and divorce are common phenomena in the community today but still represent a major life stressor for involved individuals with strong mental and physical health consequences, especially the children who are left between the rock and a hard place without knowing which side to belong.

Domestic violence and crime of passion is on the rise in Kenya, and victims have occasionally died as well as suffered physical and psychological harm (Kasyoka, 2018). This has made people less likely to get married. To prevent problems with their spouse, women have opted to have children before being married. However, males have also challenged society by becoming completely active in parenting and gaining full custody of their children without the mother's help. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) reported that women outnumber men and that most single parents are women. Some women decide to become single moms because they want to be independent (Budgeon, 2016). Some parents choose to become single parents without getting legally married because they have careers and make good money. When deciding to become single parents, some people may choose to adopt or have an unwed child.

According to Ali and Soomar (2019), a parent may become a single parent because of death, in this case the parent continues to raise their children by themselves. A parent's death can have a significant impact on a child's physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive development since the family is the fundamental social unit in our society. Economic constraints and limited time for gender role balance emerge when children or a kid raised by one parent assume all the obligations of the deceased parent. Furthermore, a child's psychological well-being is impacted by the death of one parent, which typically results in a shift in behavior and subpar academic achievement. One path to being a single parent in our culture is also defection. It's a scenario in which one parent leaves the marriage, leaving the other parent unsupported and unaided. Another name for desertion is "poor man's divorce." This occurs when one spouse dissolves their union without filing for divorce (Stephen & Udisi, 2016).

## 2.4 Gender and Parenting

Parenting is demanding and requires a lot of skills and devotion even in the presence of both parents because it is the basic unit of socialization. Good parenting skills influence a child's growth and development with facilitation of the environmental factors like family, culture and the environment. When both parents are present, they act as the role model for both female and male children, they learn from observation and reinforcement of behavior from both parents, they also get an opportunity to bond with their parents, and this facilitates identity. When a child is born the first few days of motherhood, they have an opportunity to develop maternal instincts since the father takes minimum time with the baby. The mother takes more reproductive roles than the fathers and her duties are more related to home making and confines her at home environment while the father performs external activities outside the home area related to breadwinning.

Beliefs that certain tasks and responsibilities are appropriate to women or for men explain why women are more likely to take on certain tasks, while men are more likely to do others (Muthuri *et al.*, 2017). Time availability explanation also suggests that childcare and domestic labor should fall to the person who has the most time available (Chatot *et al.*, 2023). Gender division of labor in children is also facilitated by the role of the primary caregiver for example if a young girl is in a family where the father is the only primary caregiver, she will reinforce her father's masculine behaviors and responsibilities. With the absence of one partner parenting becomes more challenging and demanding and this affects both the child and the parent, the parents must balance parenting and meeting the family needs. Single parents' family occurs when the family bond between parents is broken (Van Gasse & Mortelmans, 2020). In the contemporary society single parenting has been on the steady increase with majority being female (Muthuri, 2017). Found out that single mothers have more parenting problems than single fathers.

According to Akella and Jordan (2014), poverty and teenage pregnancy leads to rise of single parent families. Change of sexuality view by the current society whereby youth get involved in sexual activity without fear of the consequences like diseases and unwanted pregnancy have also fueled up single parenthood. Teenage pregnancy results in early parenthood without necessary parenting skills and limited income because of inadequate education and skills for a good job opportunity. When a young teenager gets pregnant, she is forced to drop out of school to nurse the child if there is no proper support from the parents, other youths are also forced to start a family at a very tender age. According to Muthuri *et al.* (2017) states that some single mothers have

challenges in reading to their children due to busy schedule trying to meet the needs of the family and the fact that they never completed their studies in school resulting in limited literacy. Inadequate education also exposes the parent to poor working conditions, low payment with no job security resulting to unmet needs of the family, hence poor health for the mother and the children.

## **2.5 Parenting and Level of Income**

Single parents have a high risk of experiencing poverty even if they are employed or have an Income Generating Activity as compared to dual parenthood whereby both parents contribute to families' welfare. Single parents' families are often in full time employment (Nieuwenhuis & Maldonado, 2018). Yet, on average 21% of single parents are employed, and their families live in poverty. Employment is an important factor to reduce poverty for single parents but it's not usually the case because for many earnings from employment are not usually sufficient to lift their households above the poverty threshold. Children are also victims of low income because they don't get enough to satisfy their needs, because of food insecurity. As the parent does productive work, children are usually deprived parental care and relationship this exposes them to behavior change and poor health some can get exposed to drug abuse and early pregnancy resulting from lack of parental guidance and peer pressure. On the other hand, the parents are also exposed to depression, fatigue, diseases and stigma by society.

Single parenting is usually gendered; single mothers are more likely to face economic disadvantages as compared to the male single parents. Women are disadvantaged in economic fields because of inadequate skills and cultural factors like patriarchy and stereotypes, to add on to these factors like gender wage gap and occupational segregation which is stronger according to Boeckmann *et al.*(2015), a few women who advance progressively are at times victims of glass ceiling whereby they get better job opportunities and upgrading through sexual advances from the seniors, this puts them in a compromising situation since they need the income for the family and also risk contacting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV and AIDS. Women are nowadays being increasingly more likely to graduate with university degree as compared to men (Hammad, 2016). Unfortunately, they only graduated with humanities which have lower earnings than sciences.

Majority of single parents who are women prefer part time jobs which have low wages which cannot fully meet the family needs exposing them to poverty. Part-time jobs are usually less flexible and there are no paid leave and benefits (Ewing-Nelson, 2020). Single parents usually lack

support from their partner hence they are more exposed to poverty as compared to dual parenthood whereby both partners support one another in meeting the family needs and nurturing the children. Single parents are also exposed to a deficit of quality time with children and money since they must achieve a lot with limited resources from a single source. Taking the child to day care adds more financial constraint to the single parent because the services require money which is already limited while where both parents are present childcare can be shared without one partner being overwhelmed.

## **2.6 Single Parenthood and Occupation**

Lack of formal education and early school drop out because of various reasons like early pregnancy limits the single parents in acquiring jobs that can sustain the family and improve the families' living standards; this is because of inadequate education and proper skills. Poverty is closely linked to single parenthood households especially those headed by women (Weinraub *et al.*, 2019). Childcare is an issue of both parents, majority of single parents find it challenging to decide who will take care of and guide the children, remaining with one option which is paying for day care, which is quite expensive. Long working hours with tight schedules characterized by low pay, nonflexible working hours, little or no benefits, this makes the parents not perform well at work because of poor concentration and how to meet the family needs.

Children growing up in single-parent families were found to experience lower levels of well-being compared to children growing up in coupled families (Dinisman *et al.*, 2017). Material deprivation among single parents because of a single source of income and balancing family needs has been the leading challenge for the parents. The children have limited time spent with their parents, most of the time they are left alone when the caregiver or the parent has left to look for income to meet the family needs. The parent has the responsibility of creating a balance between career or employment and parenting. Some children usually face poor physical health, emotional and social wellbeing.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

This research was based on Social Learning Theory and Structural Learning Theory. Study hypothesis that socioeconomic environment directly impacts a single parent's ability to engage in effective parenting. This was intervened by the parent's ability, which is a key concept in Social Learning Theory. Daily challenges with limited income and lack of support limit a parent's capacity to balance gender roles and provide effective parenting. Hence, parents adopt behaviors

learned from their environment as a reaction to stress. Parenting behaviors were because of observation from the environment through learning from models or because of stress reaction to the environment (Bradley, 2019). The study, therefore, investigated how socioeconomic factors like age, income and culture impact parenting among single parents' household's and adoption of specific parenting behaviors.

### **2.7.1 Social Learning Theory**

A study by Bandura and Hall (2018) states that environmental influences have an impact on development. This unmistakably indicates that a person's personality is shaped by the ways in which their inner processes and external surroundings interact. According to Bandura, cognition, environment, and behavior all interact to influence one another. According to Bandura, people and kids in particular learn by watching others, whether firsthand or through their surroundings. "Most human behavior is learned by observation and modeling: One learns new behaviors by seeing others in action, and later on, this coded information acts as a guide for behavior."(Bandura). According to this research, kids pick up on and observe information from their parents. For instance, males and girls typically pick up on gender norms. Effective parenting is therefore necessary in today's world because parents provide the atmosphere that children require to successfully navigate their journey from infancy through adolescence and maturity.

The absence of one parent often causes identity challenges for children from single-parent households. For instance, a boy who looks up to a male parent may experience behavioral problems and low self-esteem, especially if he lacks a positive role model. Additionally, financial hardship and stress can lead to aggression, stress, and negative behavior, which can hinder a child's ability to learn appropriate parenting techniques. Youngsters pick up on the behaviors of those around them, or models, and emulate such behaviors after observing them in action. The renowned bobo doll experiment serves as an illustration of this (McLeod, 2023). People in the child's immediate environment will either reward or penalize the mimicked conduct, with reinforcement strengthening the behavior and increasing motivation. There is a need for another theory because this one is unable to address socioeconomic problems.

### **2.7.2 Structural Functionalism Theory**

According to this theory, which was put forth by Talcott Parsons and Herbert Spencer, society is a complex system whose components cooperate to foster stability and solidarity. This method assumes that society has evolved like an organism and views society through a macro-

level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society. This has to do with how the African traditional family, where kinship was strongly valued, gave way to privatized nuclear families in our contemporary culture. This method examines both functional roles and social systems. Functionalism views society in terms of the roles played by its constituent parts, which are institutions, norms, practices, and traditions. According to Herbert Spencer, these societal components are like "organs" that contribute to the healthy operation of the "body" as a whole. In essence, this idea stresses the importance of cooperating as a system to foster stability and solidarity. Frustration and stress can erupt in an individual due to limited resources because of broken family solidarity hence effective parenting is not guaranteed. When the family structure breaks down from dual parent to single parent, one partner is left to struggle alone without the support of another. Effective parenting is also not guaranteed. For these reasons, the theory is relevant to the research.

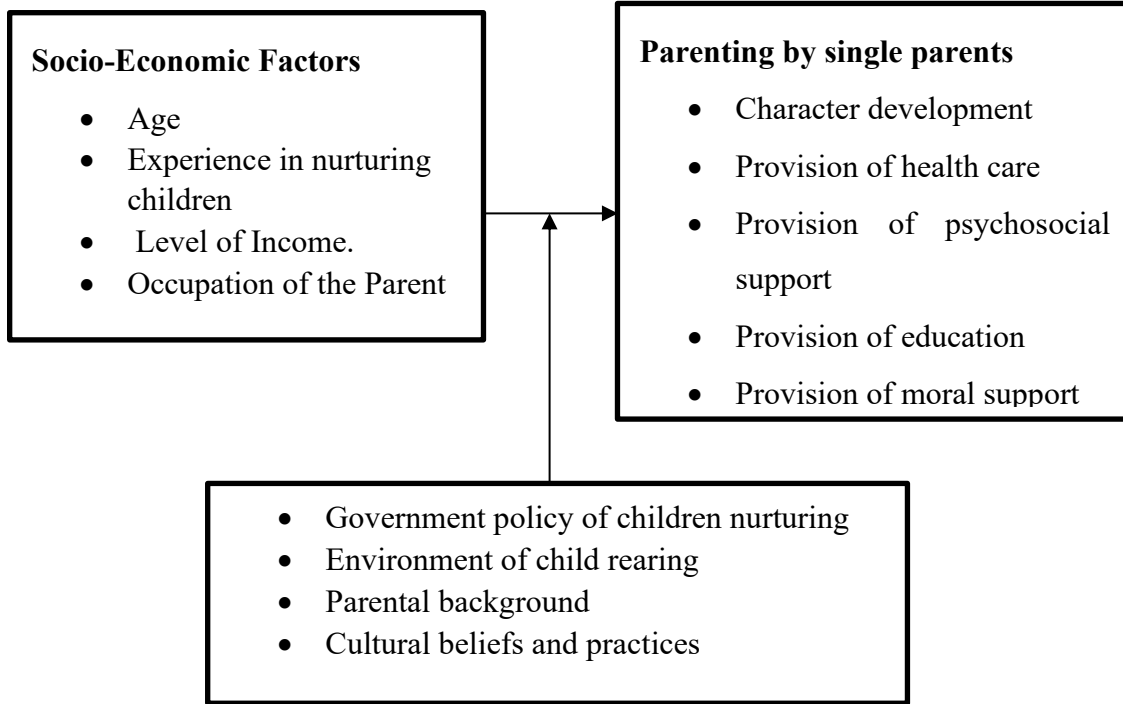
Social learning theory explains the importance of learning and modelling behavior in single parents' households while structural functional theory explains the roles of socio-economic factors in explaining the overall parenting functionality of parenting within the single parents' households. The two theories provide a comprehensive framework on how socioeconomic factors interact with parenting behaviors and contribute to child wellbeing from single parent's families.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

The nurturing process is to help children acquire good morals and behavior that will make them accepted by society. Being a single parent is a difficult job because of the duties involved, which might include having little money and occasionally needing assistance from the divorced spouse to get by. The socio-emotional development of children is harmed by the harsh discipline and bad parenting styles of single parents (Lestari, 2017). A conceptual framework indicates the relationship between the independent variable-socio-economic factors in a household and the characteristics and how they influence the dependent variable-perceptions of factors affecting parenting among single parents.

**Independent variable**

**Dependent variable**



**Intervening Variables**

**Figure 2.1:** Relationship between independent, dependent and intervening variables

Most social and economic factors like education, age, gender roles, sex, level of income and occupation affect parenting among the single parents in one way or the other hence the study will only select female respondents and male in low-income households and are single to control the intervening variable, as the population will be homogenous. The Socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parenting depend on the level of income, age, peer influence, parenting, level of education and belief custom and way of life of a specific individual thus preference of single parenting. Figure 1 shows the relationships between the variables.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines how the research was conducted and the methods used to collect information about Socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents. The chapter also contains research design, study area, population, sampling procedures and sampling size, data collection procedures, instrumentation and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

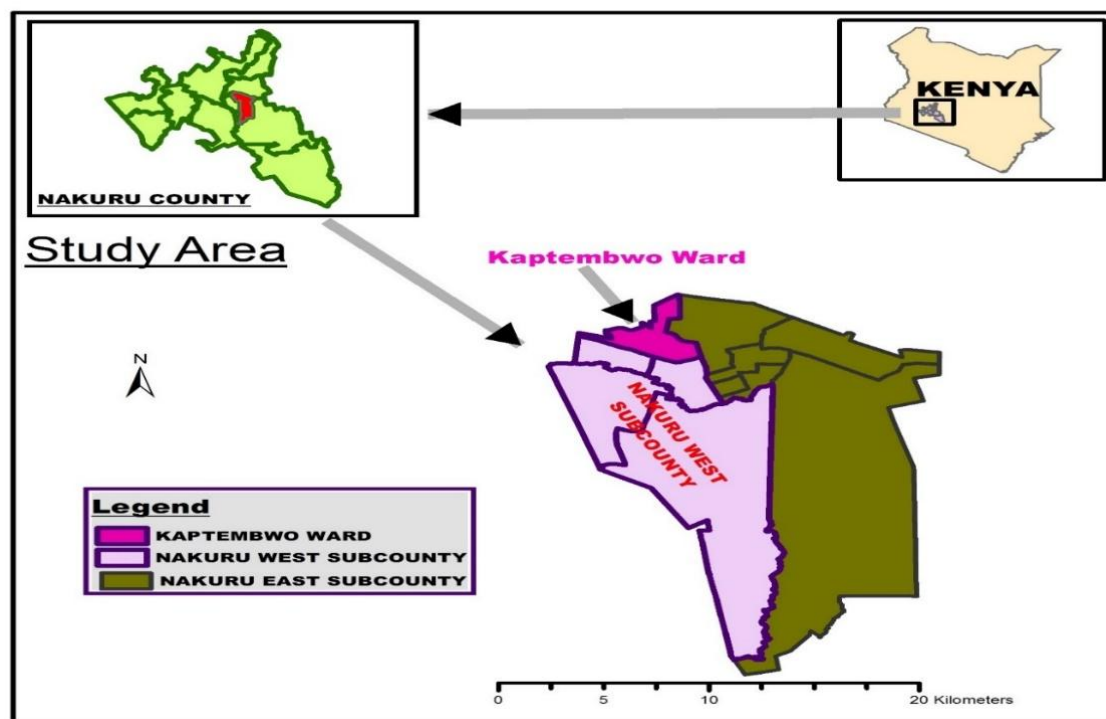
The study adopted mixed methods of research design in investigating the socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents. Mixed methods research design answers questions of who, what, when, where and how of the topic (Guest & Fleming, 2015). The design is appropriate for the study since it is flexible and interactive research design using structural questionnaires. The design enabled the researcher to collect data from the desired population. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.

#### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was conducted in the Kaptembwa ward in Nakuru west Sub County, which includes Rhonda and Kaptembwa estate as shown in Figure 3.1. Nakuru town's Kaptembwa estate is a mix of suburbs and slums. It is situated in the 97.6 KM<sup>2</sup> Nakuru County suburbs of Nakuru Town. The population's characteristics include a high population, ineffective parenting, subpar housing, inadequate infrastructure, low income, limited access to family planning and health care, as well as parents' and caregivers' lack of formal education and illiteracy.

The growing number of single parents in Kaptembwa ward is the primary focus of interest for this field of study. This region's primary sources of income generation are small-scale income-generating activities (IGA) and casual labor. Over the previous thirty years, Nakuru town's population has increased dramatically (Mogire *et al.*, 2022). Particularly in Kaptembwa Ward, rural migrants frequently establish themselves in existing densely populated informal settlements. Due to this, there is a greater need than ever for infrastructure and essential services including roads, water and sewage systems, and proper housing. The major modes of transportation in Kaptembwa estate are motorbikes and matatu. The state is composed of permanent, semi-permanent, and temporary structures. Majority of people are single parents, and both male and female heads of household are common (Kamande, 2015).

The government has not enacted laws or regulations to adequately safeguard the interests of single parents, despite the growing number of single parents; for this reason, research is necessary. Thus, Kaptembwa was chosen because it is situated in a narrow area inside a town, has a large population, and is home to several tribes; as a result, the results will be able to capture all the dynamics.



**Figure 3.1:** Study area map

**Source:** Department of Geography, Egerton University (2025)

### 3.4 Target Population

The population is a group of people that have one or more characteristics in common, and which are of interest to the researcher (Willie, 2024). The target population comprised of 530 single parents' households residing in low-income areas of Nakuru County. The study focused on single parent's households headed by men, women and youths above 18 years in Kaptembwa and Rhonda estates of Kaptembwo ward, Nakuru West Sub-County. We are set to find out the socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents in Kaptembwa estate. The research sample size was determined according to Creswell *et al.* (2007) as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1:** Accessible Population

| <b>Estates</b> | <b>Accessible population of men, women and youth</b> |
|----------------|--|
| Kaptembwa      | 229  |
| Rhonda         | 301  |
| Totals         | 530  |

**Source:** Nakuru West Gender Office (2022)

### 3.5 Sampling Method and Sample Size

To get respective samples for the study, the researcher used non-probability sampling procedure to get single parents' households in Kaptembwa ward. Snowballing technique was employed to reach out the single parents. The respondents who are the single parents in this case either male or female, youth recommended other single parents in the study who were willing to participate in the research. The process continued till the research was saturated. In the study, the household head who was the respondent was taken as the father or mother of the household. In absence of both parents in the household caregiver who is above 18 years was selected in the study to represent the household. A total of 121 single parents were selected.

To determine the sample size, the following formula was used according to (Creswell *et al.*, 2007).

The following formula for proportions was applied to confirm the sample size required.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

Where n=Sample size.

N=Population (accessible population of 530)

C=coefficient of variation (25%)

E= standard error (0.02)

$$N = \frac{530 \times 0.25^2}{0.25^2 + (530 - 1)0.02^2} = 120.85 \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

$$\frac{530 \times 0.25^2}{0.25^2 + (530 - 1)0.02^2} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$= 120.85 \sim 121 \text{ Respondents} \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

Therefore, the required sample size for the study is 121.

The two assistant chiefs from the two estates within Kaptembwa ward, medical officer of health, Customers, education officer and police officer from London, police station participated in the study as key informants.

**3.6 Instrumentation**

Data was collected using semi structured questionnaires for single parents and Key Informants Interviews (KII) which were administered to chiefs, community volunteer workers and social workers in Nakuru west Sub-County.

**3.6.1 Questionnaires for Single Parents**

As stated by McLeod (2018), a questionnaire is a research tool used to collect data from respondents, consisting of a list of structured questions. In this study, a self-administered structured questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended items was distributed to the heads of single-parent households. This method proved time-efficient and cost-effective, enabling the coverage of more households within the specified period. The questionnaire was non-discriminatory, allowing all adults (18 years and above) within the sampled area an equal opportunity to participate.

The research assistants (RAs) helped household heads with limited literacy complete the questionnaire, ensuring thorough data collection on socioeconomic factors influencing parenting including income, employment, education, domestic violence, and government involvement. The survey used a Likert scale allowing respondents to express their level of agreement with statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Additional items measured extent, ranging from very low (1) to very high (5). The questionnaire was designed to capture data across different sections to support a comprehensive analysis.

**3.6.2 Key Informants Interview (KII)**

The study employed key informant interview guides to engage Chiefs, community health volunteers, and social workers who possessed deep knowledge of the topic. These interviews gave the key informants a chance to expand on issues related to socioeconomic factors influencing single parents’ ability to parent. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are valuable for gathering

detailed views from individuals well acquainted with the subject, as Creswell *et al.* (2007) explain. The interviews featured open-ended questions designed to collect thorough, insightful information. Through these discussions, the study gained important perspectives on the challenges single parents face by offering a richer understanding of how socioeconomic factors shape parenting in the community.

### **3.7 Pre-Testing**

In this study, pretests is done to assess the validity and reliability of data collection instruments. Before the main study, the researcher conducted a pretest in Pondamali Estate, Nakuru West which is an area with characteristics similar to the study location, to check how well the questionnaire worked. According to Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003), pretest involves 10% of the sample size. The study used a sample of 12 heads comprising of single-parent households and their children. These pretest participants were not part of the actual study. To maintain fairness between genders, participants for the pretest were chosen through simple random sampling.

#### **3.7.1 Validity of Instruments**

Validity entails the degree to which a test captures the information that it is supposed to capture and in this study, emphasis was focused on content validity and face validity (Bryman, 2004). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), internal validity is referred to the degree to which a study proves that a factor or variable is the genuine source of the observed effect, and extraneous variables were controlled properly. A study by Creswell *et al.* (2007) posit that appropriateness, significance, and relevance of conclusions to the target audience are referred to as external validity. The validity assessment involves subjective opinions based on the researcher's assessment (Orodho, 2003). Items that were relevant and appropriate were created in accordance with the goals of the research to guarantee accurate and trustworthy results. As suggested by Orodho (2003), validity was further verified through expert opinion. The research instruments were assessed by supervisors and educational specialists from Egerton University's Institute of Gender, Women, and Development Studies. The research instruments' ability to gather pertinent data was enhanced by the validation procedure.

#### **3.7.2 Reliability of the Instruments**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a measuring instrument is considered reliable if it consistently produces the same results across repeated tests. A study by Orodho (2003) confirms that reliability means the tool accurately and steadily measures what it is supposed to,

yielding consistent outcomes under the same conditions over time. The Measurement theory explains that each response not only reflects the true score of what's being measured but also includes some random error. Therefore, for a tool to be dependable, there should be a strong correlation between the true score and the observed score, as this indicates that the measurement error is minimal.

Pretesting in this study took place at Rhonda Estate. This helped the researcher to evaluate whether the questions were clear and to make any needed changes that would improve both the quality and reliability of the research tool. After pre-testing, the Cronbach's Coefficient formula was used to estimate the instruments' reliability. The Internal consistency was found to be within the acceptable range for reliability testing, is shown by a coefficient of 0.7 or higher, indicating that the test items consistently produced the same results (Bryman, 2006).

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

After the Board of Postgraduate Studies approved the study, the researcher was able to perform it in the sub-county by obtaining research permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI) prior to data collection. Letters for NACOSTI were issued by the Graduate School, and the researcher also received letters for NACOSTI from the Nakuru County commissioner and the education chief executive officer. To get to know the area and explain the goal of the study to respondents, the researcher went to see the local authorities that were part of the study sample. Building rapport and facilitating improved information flow, the local authorities paired the researcher with the target community. The study was introduced and the methods for data collection including guarantees of secrecy and privacy were discussed with the single-parent households and the neighboring low-income areas by the researcher before the study officially started. Respondents received a series of questionnaires along with an interview schedule. Each identified responder was visited in person by the researcher, who also gave the instruments to guarantee a high response rate. This method fixed problems with time and expense and decreased the possibility of illiteracy-related misinterpretation. Next, after ensuring participant confidentiality, the instruments were arranged, graded, and ready for analysis.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaires was cleaned, coded, and keyed into the computer using Epidata, data entry software. It was then exported to SPSS V.27 for statistical analysis. Frequency tables were generated for categorical variables while measures of central

tendency for mean, and median will be generated for continuous variables after performing normality tests. Data from KII was analyzed qualitatively by use of themes regarding objectives of the study. The quantitative and qualitative approach was used to present the results. In this case, insights from key informant interviews were justified or disapproved by assessing their relationship with quantitative data results from the survey. Therefore, the impact of demographic, social, and economic factors associated with single parenthood on parenting was comprehensively assessed.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

Ethics is the area of philosophy that deals with a person's conduct and acts as a manual for personal conduct (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It is essential to guarantee the confidentiality of the information provided by human subjects in social research and to provide them with a sense of security. The necessary letter of authority was received from the Egerton University Ethical Committee prior to starting the project. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) required that participant protection regarding hazards to safety, privacy, and welfare is guaranteed. A thorough explanation of the goal and aim of the study was given to the participants. Important information was included in a consent form, such as (a) participant confidentiality, (b) anonymity, (c) ability to discontinue participation at any time without cause, and (d) researcher contact information. The researcher did not ask participants to fill out the questionnaire with their identities for data protection. The researcher maintained all the material, statistical analysis, and raw data on a hard drive and safely stored it in password-protected SPSS templates.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This research sought to determine the socioeconomic factors affecting parenting among single parents. The specific objectives of this study were to find how parent's sex, level of income, parent's occupation, and the age affect parenting, based on the structural functional theory and social learning theory. A total of 121 single parents from Kaptembwa Ward within Nakuru County were selected. Additionally, qualitative data was collected from the two assistant chiefs from the two estates within Kaptembwa Ward, a medical officer of health, customers, education officers, and police officers from Kaptembwa Police Station participated in the study as the key informants. Since all the 121 single parents responded to the questionnaires, this study's analysis entails a review of their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The analysis will be followed by the analysis of qualitative insights, which are then tested or refined with quantitative methods.

#### **4.2 Characteristics of Respondents**

The survey questionnaire entailed questions about the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The results in Table 4.1 show that among the 121 respondents, 23.1% were aged between 18 and 20 years, while another 23.1% were aged 21 to 26 years. The largest age group was 27 to 32 years were 28.9% while 24.8 % were 33 years old. This indicates a varied age range, with the majority falling within the late 20s and older age brackets. The relatively even distribution across ages suggests that single parenthood spans across different stages of life. Younger single parents, especially those in their late teens and early twenties, faced notable difficulties related to limited life experience, financial constraints, and smaller social support networks. Most of the respondents were still completing their education or working in low-paid, entry-level jobs. This made it difficult to pay for the costs of raising a child. Furthermore, a small number of younger parents also faced legal issues with custody, co-parenting, and child support. 49.6% of respondents identified as male, 41.3% as female, and 9.1% as transgender. The significant number of transgender people emphasises how crucial it is to recognise gender diversity when discussing single parenthood. Parents are influenced by a wide range of social and economic factors. The experiences of single parents may be influenced by discrimination, social stigma, or restricted employment opportunities.

**Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Features of the Respondents (n =121)**

| <b>Demographic features</b>       | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Age</b>                        |                  |                   |
| 18-20 yrs                         | 28               | 23.1%             |
| 21-26 yrs                         | 28               | 23.1%             |
| 27-32 yrs                         | 35               | 28.9%             |
| 33 yrs and above                  | 30               | 24.8%             |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |
| <b>Gender</b>                     |                  |                   |
| Female                            | 50               | 41.3%             |
| Male                              | 60               | 49.6%             |
| Transgender                       | 11               | 9.1%              |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |
| <b>Education</b>                  |                  |                   |
| College                           | 19               | 15.7%             |
| Never Completed Primary Education | 24               | 19.8%             |
| Primary                           | 17               | 14.0%             |
| Secondary                         | 27               | 22.3%             |
| University                        | 34               | 28.1%             |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |
| <b>Cause of Single Parenthood</b> |                  | 0.0%              |
| Death of partner                  | 45               | 37.2%             |
| Personal Choice                   | 35               | 28.9%             |
| Separation                        | 41               | 33.9%             |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |
| <b>Household Size (N =121)</b>    |                  |                   |
| 11 children and above             | 42               | 34.7%             |
| 1-5 children                      | 37               | 30.6%             |
| 6-10 children                     | 42               | 34.7%             |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |

**Table 4.1: Socio-demographic Features of the Respondents (n =121) (Continuation)**

| <b>Demographic features</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Occupation</b>             |                  |                   |
| Bodaboda                      | 18               | 14.9%             |
| Business                      | 19               | 15.7%             |
| Casual labour                 | 7                | 5.8%              |
| Cleaning services             | 11               | 9.1%              |
| Construction                  | 16               | 13.2%             |
| Consultation                  | 7                | 5.8%              |
| Employed                      | 13               | 10.7%             |
| Farming                       | 11               | 9.1%              |
| Hawker                        | 12               | 9.9%              |
| Juakali                       | 7                | 5.8%              |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |
| <b>Estimated Daily Income</b> |                  |                   |
| Ksh 101-200                   | 31               | 25.6%             |
| Ksh 1-100                     | 27               | 22.3%             |
| Ksh 201-300                   | 40               | 33.1%             |
| Ksh 301 and above             | 23               | 19.0%             |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>121</b>       | <b>100.0%</b>     |

Respondents' varying levels of education are displayed in Table 4.1. 22.3% of students completed secondary school, compared to 28.1% who finished college. However, 14.0% of the respondents only completed primary education, and 19.8% of the respondents did not complete primary school. This implies that a large number of single parents might have low qualifications, which could limit their access to better employment.

A partner's death accounted for 37.2% of the respondents' reasons for being a single parent. 33.9% were separated, and 28.9% chose to become single parents. The high death rate indicates that some single parenthood is unintentional. This emphasises the necessity of financial assistance, counselling, and support. Co-parenting, social stigma, and legal concerns are just a few of the difficulties that people who are single by choice or separation may encounter.

The size of households varied, with 34.7% having between six and ten children and 34.7% having eleven or more, including extended family. This demonstrates the significant caregiving burden that single parents bear. Their employment, ability to provide, and access to social services are all impacted. Additionally, employment varied. Motorcycle taxi work (14.9%) and business (15.7%) were prevalent. Additionally, 35.2% of the respondents held low-paying or informal jobs like cleaning and casual labour. This indicates that many people are experiencing financial instability. The size of households varied, with 34.7% having between six and ten children and 34.7% caring for eleven or more children, including extended family. This emphasises the significant caregiving burden that single parents bear. Their employment, access to social services, and capacity to provide are all impacted. Employment also differed. Motorbike taxi work (14.9%) and business (15.7%) were prevalent. Additionally, 35.2% of the respondents held low-paying, informal jobs like cleaning and casual labour. For many, this indicates economic insecurity.

### **4.3 Community Perceptions on the Causes of Single-Parenthood and Its Impacts**

The interview investigated how education influences people's attitudes towards sexuality and the decision to become single parents. Informants emphasised education as an important factor in this decision. For example, the first assistant Chief stated that a lack of education and early pregnancies frequently lead to single parenthood. The second assistant Chief agreed, citing a link between limited education and higher rates of single parenthood. The Medical Officer of Health also stated that a lack of education and awareness about contraception frequently leads to unplanned single parenthood. Other respondents, including customers, an educational officer, and a police officer, agreed that low education is closely linked to single parenthood due to factors such as fewer opportunities, higher risks, low income, and early parenthood.

The impact of marital status on behaviour and parenting difficulties was another topic covered by the key informants. It was evident that economic hardships frequently result in financial difficulties for single parents. Stress levels are higher for single parents, according to the Medical Officer of Health. Different behaviours than others may result from this stress. Customer 1

clarified that survival is frequently the primary concern of single parents. These parents face additional challenges in trying to give their kids a stable home because they have little social support.

Significant parenting differences between single parents and other parents were found in the responses. Single parents frequently face greater challenges with discipline and money, according to the first assistant chief. This was endorsed by the second assistant chief, who pointed out that single parents typically have fewer resources and support systems. The interviews also revealed that single parents experience more stress, which has an impact on both their health and the wellbeing of their kids. Customer 2 stated that single parents face more difficulties juggling work and childrearing. Therefore, single parents are unable to balance work and discipline and offer the same level of educational support as others due to factors like altered financial well-being, emotional stability, and socioeconomic statuses.

An analysis of whether poverty contributes to single parenthood was also carried out. The key informants were required to share their views on whether poverty facilitates single parenthood. All the informants agreed that single parenthood is caused by poverty. Assistant Chief 1 said, *“poverty often leads to single parenthood due to financial strain and lack of resources.”* The reason, as added by Assistant Chief 2, is that poverty limits opportunities and may increase single parenthood rates. The Medical Officer of Health asserted that poverty contributes to single parenthood by limiting access to education and employment. In most cases, limited resources make it harder to maintain a dual-parent household. Therefore, in agreement with Akella and Jordan (2014), poverty can lead to situations that increase single parenthood.

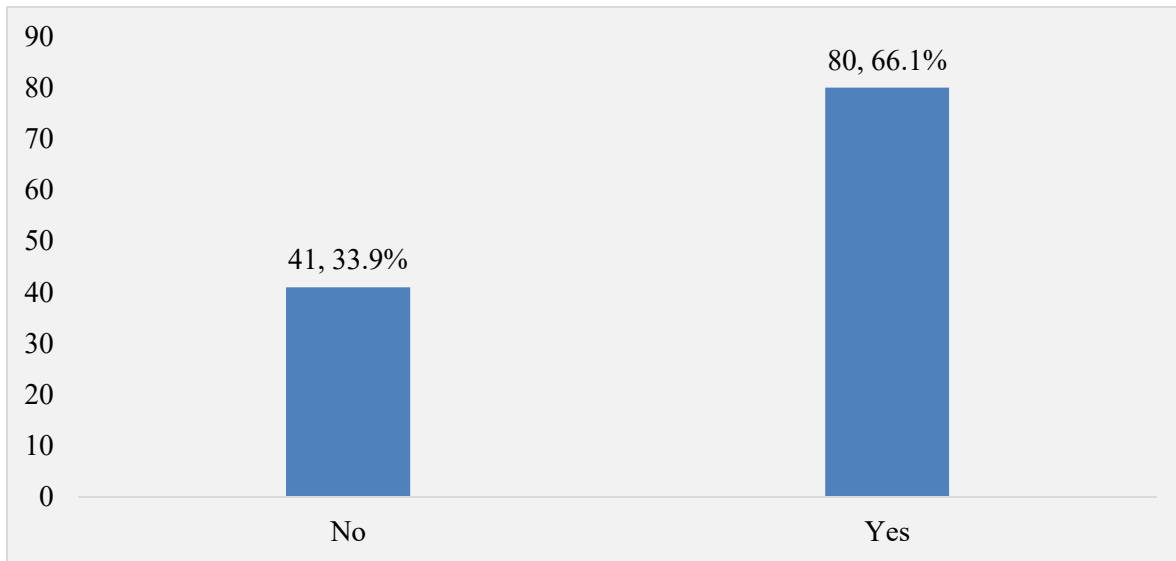
During the interviews, key informants were requested to indicate whether they believe single parenthood has an impact on children. Generally, the respondents agreed that single parenting has a negative impact on children’s behaviour. For instance, the first assistant chief said, *“single parents’ children may struggle with discipline and have lower academic performance.”* According to the key informants, children brought up in a single parent setting have a higher likelihood of behavioral problems and dropping out of school. Customers 1, 2, and 3 indicated that children from single-parent families may be aggressive or withdrawn, face emotional and behavioral issues, and face difficulties in school due to emotional stress. The Educational Officer indicated that in some cases, children from single-parent settings exhibit lower educational outcomes. The reason is that some of such children struggle academically due to less support. The

police officer also said, "*Children from single-parent homes may be at higher risk of delinquency.*" The general implication is that single parenthood affects children's schooling and behaviour negatively.

It was also found that single parenthood has a health implication for children. The key informants linked the health challenges that children from single-parent families face to economic conditions. For instance, Assistant Chief 1 stated, "*single parents' children may face health issues due to inadequate resources.*" The second assistant chief indicated that the cause of compromised health among children from single-parent families could be financial constraints. *The children also have less access to care and proper nutrition.* Generally, the economic limitations that single parents face subject their children to challenges in accessing healthcare.

#### **4.4 Impact of Income on Parenting in Single-Parent Households**

The first objective of the study was to assess how income affects parenting among single parents. Therefore, an examination of the impact of single parenthood on household income and expenditure was also carried out. According to the key informants, single-parent families face challenges in this regard. The second assistant chief said, "*single parents often struggle to meet basic needs, and this impacts the child's well-being.*" The reason cited was the insufficiency in income, which means such families may fall short of covering all the expenses. On the other hand, the Medical Officer of Health stated, "*Low income affects overall health and educational opportunities.*" Therefore, the economic stability of single-parent families is often low. Given that single parents often have higher expenditures relative to income, their budgets are usually stretched thin. As stated by the Educational Officer, the overall implication is that; "*income in single-parent households is often insufficient for quality education and health.*"

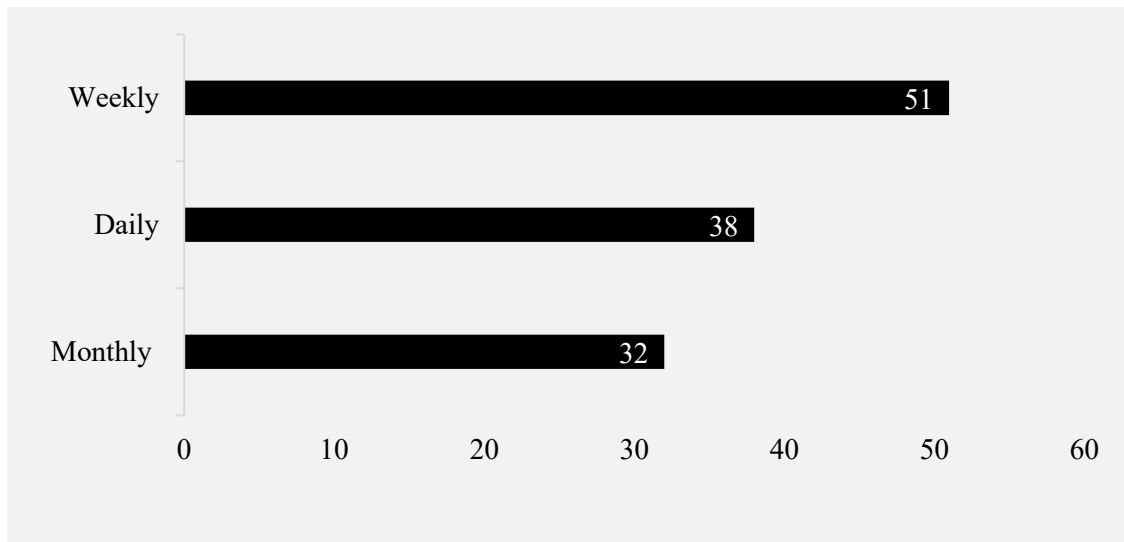


**Figure 4.1:** Whether level of income affects parenting

Therefore, single-parent families often face financial difficulties, which affect their overall well-being. The interview findings that the level of income earned by single parents affects their parenting concur with the survey responses. The survey results are shown in Figure 4.1.

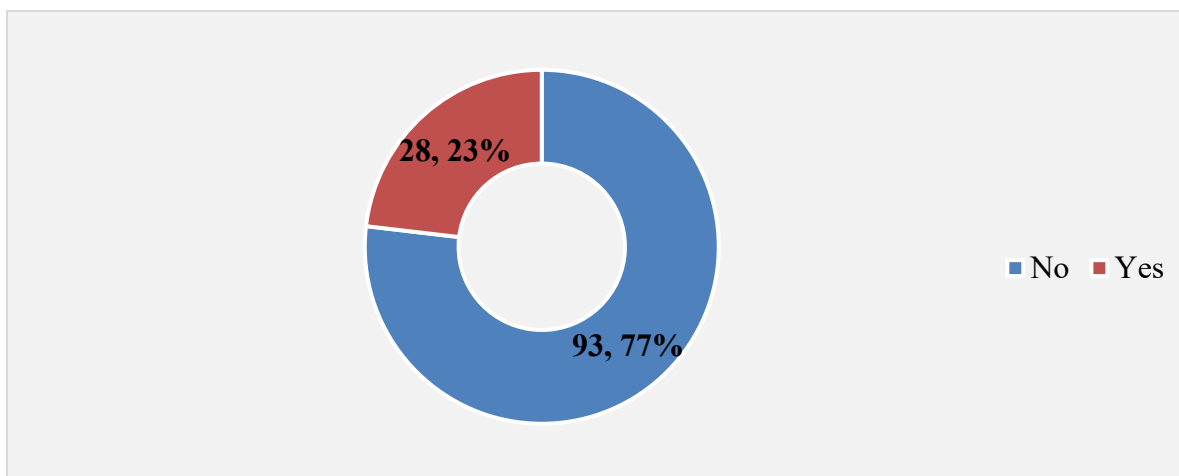
As shown in Figure 4.1, (80) 66.1% of the survey respondents agreed that that the level of income affects parenting. Therefore, single parents' income level influences their parenting in terms of funding household needs. On the other hand, an assessment of the earning frequency was carried out to determine if it affects single parents' parenting in Kaptembwa. The results are summarized in Figure 4.2.

In the case of single parents in Kaptembwa, it was found that most of them earn their income weekly, with 51 individuals reporting this frequency. Therefore, most single parents earn their income on a weekly basis (Figure 4.2). Daily earnings were the next most frequent, with 38 individuals receiving income each day. Monthly earnings were the least common, with 32 individuals reporting this frequency. Given that most people said they earn weekly, there could be challenges in budgeting for family expenses. In this instance, single-parent households are the most affected.



**Figure 4.2:** Frequency of earning

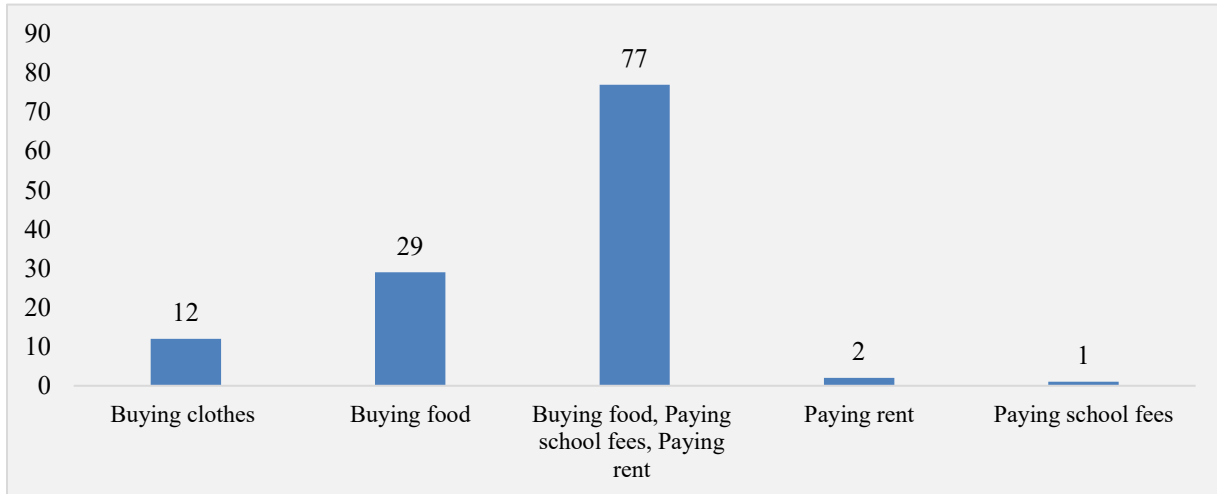
In line with income, it was also assessed whether the amount earned was sufficient to cover all the household needs. The results are summarized in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3:** Income level and household needs

According to the results irpresented in Figure 4.4, most respondents (77%), said their income is not enough to cover their household needs while only 23%, feel their income is sufficient. This indicates that the majority of Kaptembwa's single parents find it difficult to pay for their families. Everywhere, families' well-being and quality of life are significantly impacted by income. Financial stability is challenging for single parents because they frequently bear the heavy burden of being the only provider and carer. Limited income can restrict access to essentials like healthy food, good education, healthcare, and decent housing. Many single parents face tough

choices when trying to balance basic needs, which can hurt their long-term financial security and emotional health. Figure 4.4 summarizes how single-parent families manage their income.



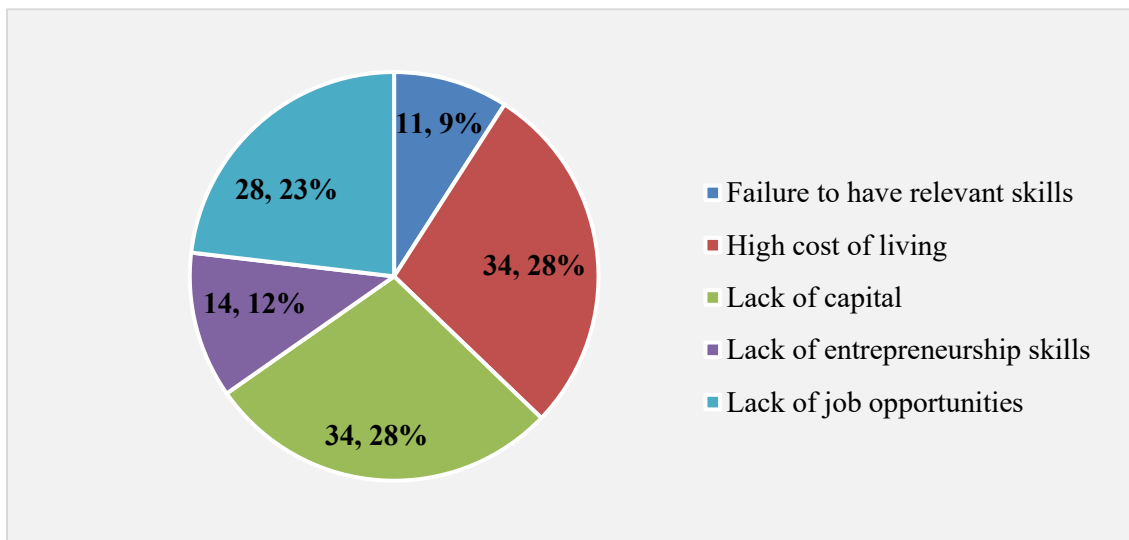
**Figure 4.4:** How income is used

The data shown in Figure 4.4 reveals that many families struggle financially because most respondents, whereby 63.6% (77 respondents) were using their income to cover several essential needs all at once. These include buying food, paying school fees, and covering rent. This pattern of expenses is the most common, especially among women, and matches findings by Budig and colleagues in 2015. Whereby 30% (29 respondents) spend their income on food only. Furthermore, 12 respondents, or 10% of the sample, stated that they only spend their money on clothing. There are very few people who only use their money for school fees (one respondent) or rent (two respondents).

The distribution point on the results indicates that most of the families and individuals are struggling with multiple financial demands at the same time. They use majority of their finances in basic needs such as shelter, food and education. This situation shows how difficult it is to them to make ends meet on their meager income to cover different basic needs. It is even more of a challenge to people who are the heads of a household or in charge of some people, as they have to balance the numerous competing needs. This strain can be a threat to their overall health and financial security. These findings indicate that there is a critical necessity of specific financial support and governmental policies to ensure that one-parent households can be supported. These would reduce the burden caused by economic instability and enable them to spend their money in a more efficient manner. Lack of this type of assistance will keep many families suffering, and this

may have negative effects on their lives. Also, the interviews conducted with participants revealed that such financial constraints awaiting single-parent families are increased by unemployment and lack of business opportunities. When they are not guaranteed of a consistent income source or a steady job, they find it harder to establish a stable home environment and even satisfy their basic needs.

The key informants indicated that single-parent families face difficulties because of unemployment and limited economic opportunities. For instance, Assistant Chief 1 stated, “children from single-parent households face limitations in unemployment and business opportunities due to the parents’ economic situation.” Lack of resources and support contribute to the situation. It was also noted that the economic hardships create financial problems for both the parent and child. Customer 3 said, “it is usually difficult for a single parent to find stable work.” On the other hand, the Police Officer stated, “opportunities in employment and business for single-parent household members are limited by economic and social barriers.” Therefore, single parenthood is associated with economic challenges. The findings concur with survey responses regarding the challenges that single-parent families face in generating income. A summary of questionnaire responses to the income generation-related challenges that single-parent families face is provided in Figure 4.5.



**Figure 4.5:** Income generation-related challenges

As shown in Figure 4.5, majority of single-parent households have significant challenges in generating income. The problem affects both the children and their parents. As per the survey

results, the main causes of income generation difficulties among single-parent families are lack of capital and high cost of living, each contributing to 28% of the total challenges. The implication is that most single-parent families cannot fund and support economic activities due to lack of start-up funds. Moreover, the few resources that such families have are used up to cater for basic needs, given the high cost of living. Lack of job opportunities among single parents and their children is also a significant challenge that contributes to 23% of hurdles single-parent households in Kaptembwa face in generating income. Other causes of problems are lack of job opportunities and entrepreneurial skills due to the constraints of funding training.

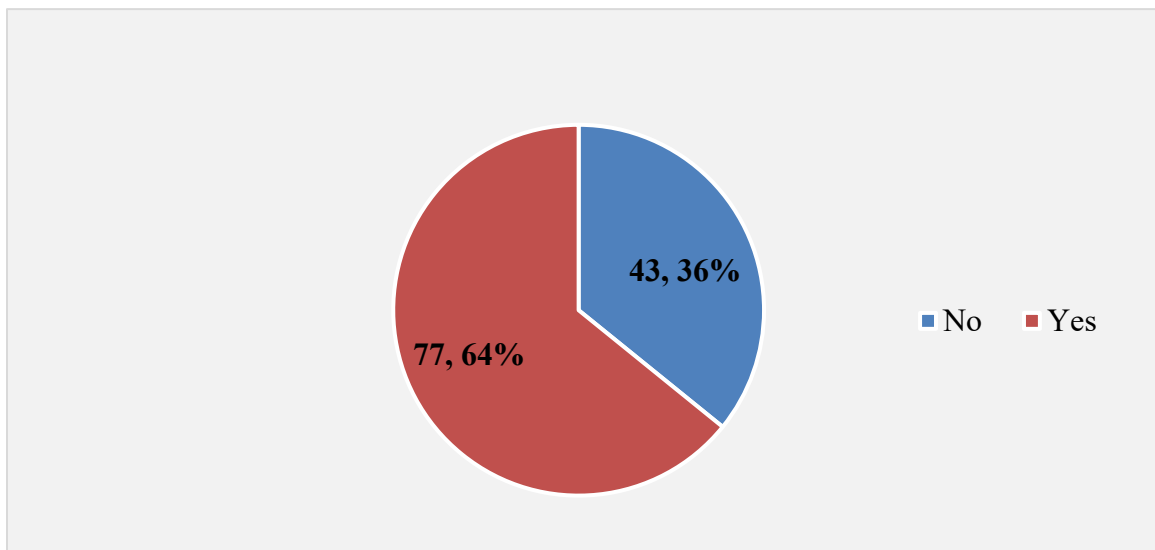
#### **4.5 Effect of Child Nurturing Experience and Gender on Single-Parenting**

The second objective was to find the effect of child nurturing experience and gender on parenting among single-parent households. Various community members have different views on how a single parent's child nurturing experience and gender affects parenting. Therefore, key informants were requested to share their opinions on how they think the community views single parenthood. The key issues that the informants were required to cover in their responses were stigma and stereotypes, coping mechanisms for single parents and their children, and why some people prefer being single parents. Each of the key informants provided their opinions. The replies to the interview questions were documented and presented according to themes.

As per the results, Assistant Chief 1 affirmed that single parents face stigma in society. The informant said, *"there is still a strong stigma against single parents, especially women. They are often perceived as irresponsible or morally loose, and the men are seen as incapable of raising children alone."* The views were supported by Assistant Chief 2, who said, *"the community sees single parents as people who failed in their marriage or relationships. In most cases, single mothers face economic challenges and social isolation."* The findings concur with those of Chatot *et al.* (2023) and Muthuri *et al.* (2017) that single parenthood is gendered. According to the medical officer of health, *"single parents, especially mothers, are often stigmatized for perceived promiscuity, while men are seen as unable to nurture properly."* Customer 1 stated, *"people here think single parents are either too weak to hold their families together or too independent to settle."* The findings concur with those of Budgeon (2016). However, Customer 2 pointed out that while single fathers are praised, single mothers appear to be condemned by the community. The latter client lamented that there are still individuals who believe that single parents (especially mothers) had made poor choices in life. Single fathers on the other hand are often viewed in a better light

and are believed to be doing their best despite having to face many difficulties. The informants pointed out that the society views single parents and especially women as people who are in need of help all the time. These sentiments were corroborated by the Educational Officer, who explained that single parents are usually stigmatized, since they are considered unable to offer a stable environment to children. The police officer added that single parents might not be able to keep their kids disciplined. The officer stated, *“single parents are often seen as struggling to maintain discipline, especially if they are women.”*

Results from the key informants tally with the survey findings that gender affects parenting among single parents. Although some people agree that gender roles, irrespective of whether male or female, have an impact on parenting, females tend to face more financial and stigma-related challenges than males. They also face difficulties in disciplining their children (Table 4.2). On the other hand, male single parents encounter problems in taking care of or raising the children in terms of attending to their physical needs. As noted from the survey, 64% of the respondents agreed that gender has an impact on parenting among single parents, while 36% believed that gender has no impact on parenting. The results are summarized in Figure 4.6.



**Figure 4.6:** Gender and parenting among single parents

As shown in Table 4.2 the mean score of the prompt on whether single parenting is challenging for both men and women was 3.81. The implication is that the survey participants agreed with the statement. The standard deviation of 1.14 also suggests a moderate level of

variation, showing that while most respondents agreed with the statement, there was some slight diversity in opinion. As for the second prompt, which sought to establish whether single men struggle more to raise children than single women, a mean score of 3.75 was obtained.

Based on the findings, respondents are of the opinion that single-parent males have more challenges in raising children compared to females. Besides, the standard deviation of 1.07 implies that the opinions of the respondents are within the same direction around this statement. Conversely, it was established whether single women have more challenges in disciplining and taking care of their children compared to single men. As per the findings, the average response to this prompt was 3.75 which implies that there was a common consensus on the statement. Even though it remains relatively low, the standard deviation of 1.11 indicates that there is certain variation in the responses, which indicates a decent amount of agreement among the respondents. Also, the research determined whether mothers who are single find it more difficult than their male counterparts in terms of supporting and punishing children. The average rating that was given to this statement was 3.75, indicating that this is generally the response of the majority of the respondents. The standard deviation is a little bit larger (1.07), thus there is a slight difference in the opinion, but the overall picture of the other studies is still high. With a slightly higher standard deviation of 1.07, there is some disagreement, but overall, the consensus from other studies is still strong.

**Table 4.2:** Descriptive Statistics on Impact of Gender on Parenting

| Prompt  | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | Total | Mean | Stdev |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|-------|------|-------|
| 1. Whether a male or female, single parenting is challenging  | 7 | 7  | 28 | 39 | 40 | 121   | 3.81 | 1.14  |
| 2. Single men struggle more to raise children than single women   | 4 | 14 | 21 | 51 | 31 | 121   | 3.75 | 1.07  |
| 3. Single women face more challenges in disciplining and providing for their children than single males | 3 | 18 | 20 | 45 | 35 | 121   | 3.75 | 1.11  |
| 4. Single women are more insecure than single men   | 2 | 10 | 26 | 48 | 35 | 121   | 3.86 | 0.99  |

5. Single women are more resilient than single males 6 16 23 37 39 121 3.72 1.19

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The results moreover show that while both single mothers and fathers face unique parenting challenges, there is a recognition that single mothers often experience greater pressures in managing discipline and daily provision for their children. The findings agree with the literature that the nurturing experience and gender of the single parent influence parenting as shown in Table 4.2.

It was also noted that single women are more insecure than single men, with a response mean score of 3.86. The respondents agree with this perception. Moreover, the standard deviation of 0.99 indicates low variability and a strong consensus among respondents. On the other hand, the mean score for the prompt, single women are more resilient than single males, was 3.72. The implication is that single women are perceived as more resilient than single men, though some respondents may have had slightly different opinions. The general indication is that nurturing experience and gender of the single parent affects their parenting. This is the reason the survey participants exhibited perceived differences between single men and women in terms of insecurity and resilience. The responses could be linked to cultural or societal stereotypes.

The study also found, through the key informants, that the community views single parenthood as a less stable system, compared to dual-parent families. Assistant Chief 1 said, "*there is a belief that children raised by single parents are more likely to face behavioral issues.*" On the other hand, Assistant Chief 2 said, "*some people feel that single parenthood is becoming more accepted, but there is still judgment in some areas.*" According to the medical officer of health, single parents face higher stress levels, compared to others, and this affects their overall well-being. One of the customers indicated that the community views single parenting as a challenge, though it is a choice made by some people. The other customers said that despite the judgement, single parents are often admired for their resilience. Moreover, single parenthood is not as negatively viewed as it used to be. The educational officer indicated that children from single-parent families are often perceived to have more behavioral and academic challenges, while the police officer linked single-parent families to social problems.

Responses regarding the preference for single parenthood indicated that the community is slowly accepting that people can make choices on the type of family they want. For instance,

Assistant Chief 1 said, *“some single parents may prefer it because they want to avoid conflict or abuse in a marriage.”* The sentiment was supported by Assistant Chief 2, who said that there are cases where single parents prefer their status to avoid a troubled relationship or marriage. It was also indicated that some people choose to be single parents because they want to have more control over their lives and their children’s upbringing. For instance, Customer 3 said, *“people want to be single parents because it gives them the independence and freedom that they want.”*

Being a single parent is frequently the result of a desire to stay away from unhealthy, abusive, and toxic relationships (Budgeon, 2016). Both parents and children may suffer long-term emotional and physical harm in such toxic environments. According to the police officer who was interviewed, a lot of people decide to become single parents in order to provide their kids with a more secure and stable home free from the risks associated with unhealthy relationships. This further demonstrates a conscious and deliberate choice to put their children's safety and well-being first, even if it means overcoming obstacles alone. It demonstrates that being a single parent can be a positive decision centred on nurturing and protection rather than just a situation imposed by external factors.

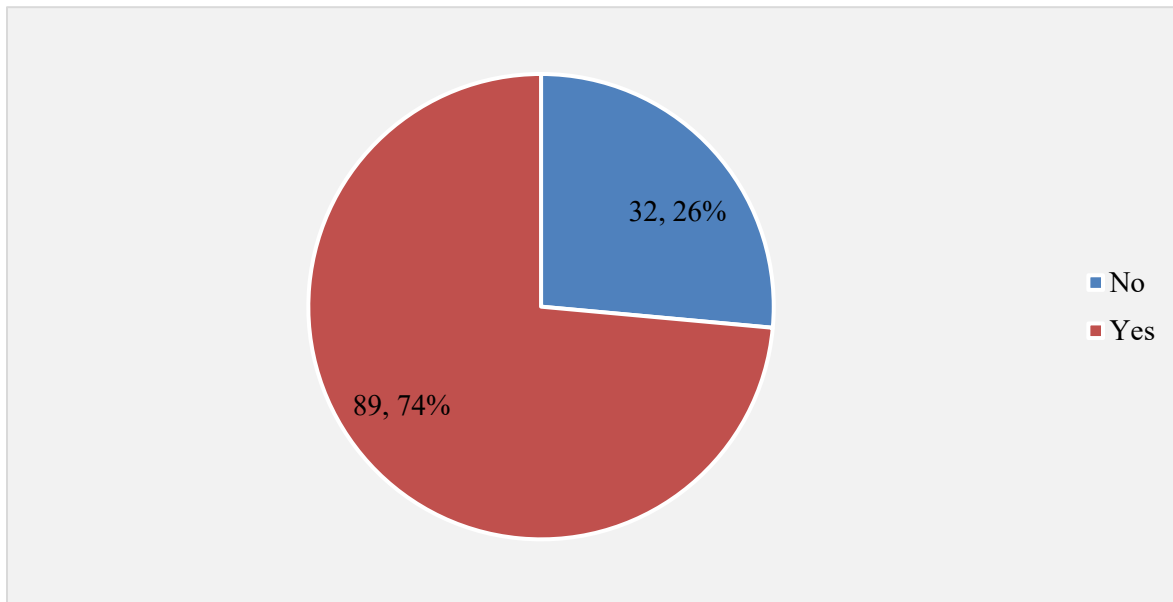
The interviewees also shared their observations regarding how single parents cope with the challenges that they face. Generally, the key informants indicated that relatives and friends help single parents to cope with their challenges. For instance, Assistant Chief 2 said, *“single parents cope through support from relatives, engaging in small businesses, and depending on community networks.”* In some cases, church organizations and community groups play a role in helping single parents cope with difficulties. On the other hand, the Medical Officer of Health stated, *“single parents often attend support groups and seek medical or psychological counseling when needed.”* According to Customer 2, when single parents network with others and share resources with them, they get the support they need to cope with parenting challenges. Therefore, single parenthood is characterized by difficulties that parents must endure or solve.

#### **4.6 Influence of Occupation of Parents in Single-Parent Households**

The third objective of the research was to assess the influence of occupation of parents in single-parent households. The key informant interviews conducted in Kaptembwa presented a range of views on how occupation affects parenting in single-parent families. The first assistant chief pointed out that the biggest challenge single parents face is finding a balance between work and childcare. The assistant chief further explained that many single parents struggle to find

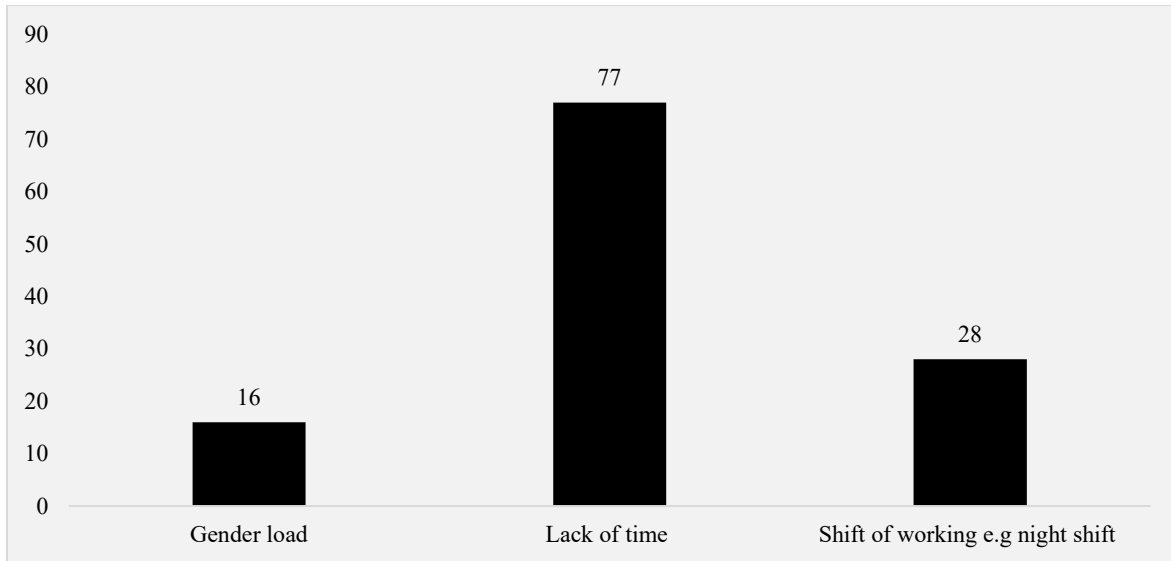
affordable and reliable care for their children while they are at work, which sometimes forces them to leave young children unattended. Assistant Chief 2 highlighted the emotional impact that this balancing exercise has, noting that single parents are often subjected to significant stress on both fronts as a primary carer and earner. The Medical Officer of Health proceeded to indicate that the strain may adversely affect the health of single parents since most of them neglect their health in bid to strike a balance between family and career requirements. These concerns were reiterated by customers 1 and 2 who indicated that it is so hard to get a single parent to attend so important school events and even doctor visits because of the unappealing working hours, not to mention the cost of work, the low-paying jobs with unpredictable hours, which makes it hard to afford their children. Customer 3 also added that most single parents have to work more than one job thus limiting the amount of time they can have quality time with their children. Following further deliberations, it was apparent that the behaviour of children and their academic success is closely tied to the line of work of their parents. The Education Officer mentioned that children in single-parent families often struggle in school, partially due to the fact that their parents are often too busy at work to provide support and advice. Also, the police officer noticed an increased rate of juvenile delinquency and risky behaviour in children of such households, a situation that he explained by no parental supervision due to work pressure. In general, it remains clear that the workload of single parents in Kaptembwa plays a significant role in the personal development of the parents, as well as the safety of their children. These results are supported by the findings of the surveys conducted in which the majority of the respondents affirm that the occupation of a parent is an important factor in the way they cope with the responsibilities of a parent. These

findings of surveys are outlined in figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7:** Whether or not occupation affects parenting

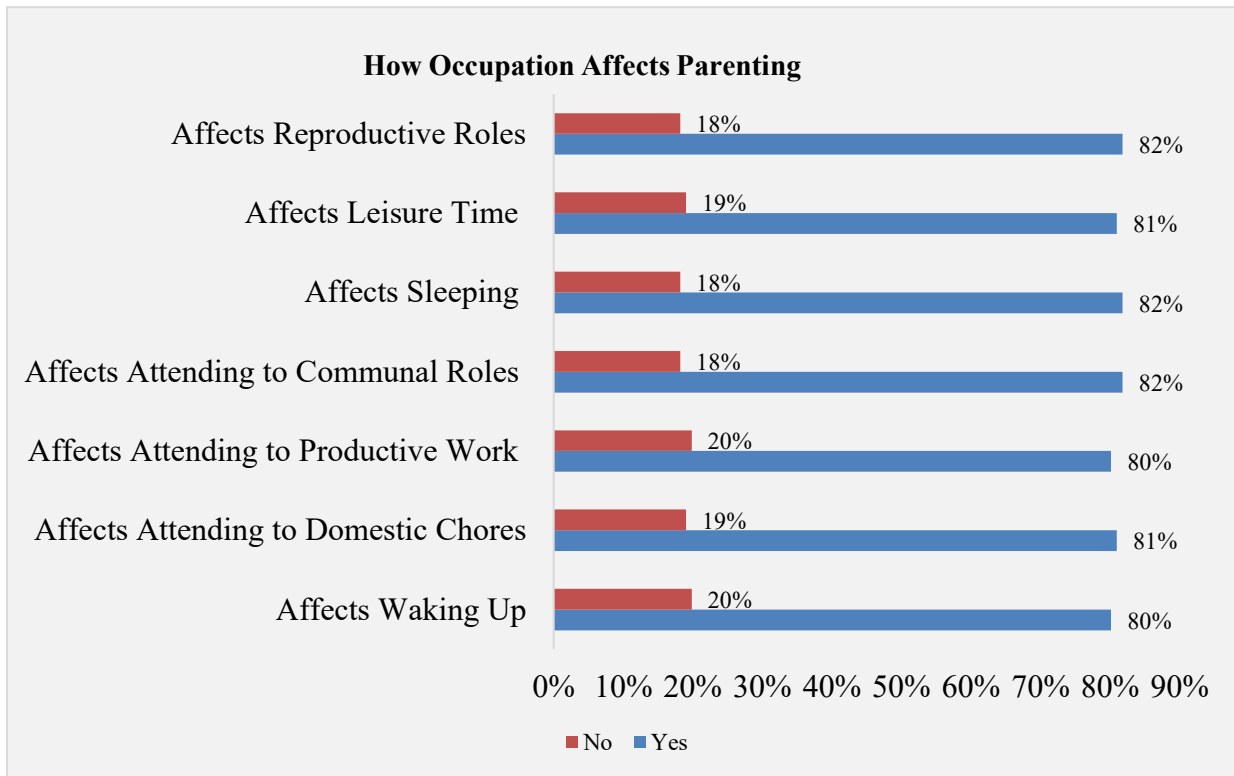
As shown in the research findings in Figure 4.7, most people (74) believe that occupation influences parenting. This means that they assume that the capability of a parent to take care of their children is highly dependent on the requirements and the flexibility of their employment. Thus, work demanding extended hours or weird shifts or being high-stressing can restrict the time and energy that the parents could allocate to their children and this could influence their participation and parental style. In general, the findings reveal that occupation has a great influence on single parenting. Nevertheless, a smaller sample of 26% think that occupation has no effect on parenting, which may be because they think parenting behaviour is more affected by personal values, decisions and family support than occupation. More detailed examination was carried out concerning the impact of occupation on everyday caregiving activities. Based on the results in Figure 4.8, 63.6% reported lack of time to be the greatest impact of their work on parenting. This proves that work time remains a major setback to single parents to offer good care since work hours and schedules are not flexible and have hindered the time that parents spend with their children which may influence the development of the child and the general health of the family.



**Figure 4.8:** How occupation affects parenting

Based on the results presented in Figure 4.8, the second factor that most often affected the issue of single parenting was the work shifts, particularly the night shifts, as 23% of participants indicated that it represented a clear barrier to single parenting. The non-traditional work schedules such as the nights or evenings shift may disrupt family schedules and reduce the time that the parents had to spend with their children in special occasions such as bedtime, dinner, and even homework. It is also found that 13 percent of employees are working an irregular or rotating shift, which often interferes with family cohesion, and the idea of parents in the daily life of their children becomes more challenging. Moreover, the respondents mentioned gender load as a major factor affecting 16 participants (13%). The term is typically used to describe the additional care and household tasks that women are inappropriately allocated through society gender roles. The load of this causes stress and inequitable burdens to the family members, which often introduces further stress to single mothers who must balance paid labor with most of the childcare. A detailed analysis of these parenting effects is summarised in figure 4.9 and depicts that the occupation influences

single-parent families in many complex ways.



**Figure 4.9:** Ways in which occupation affects parenting

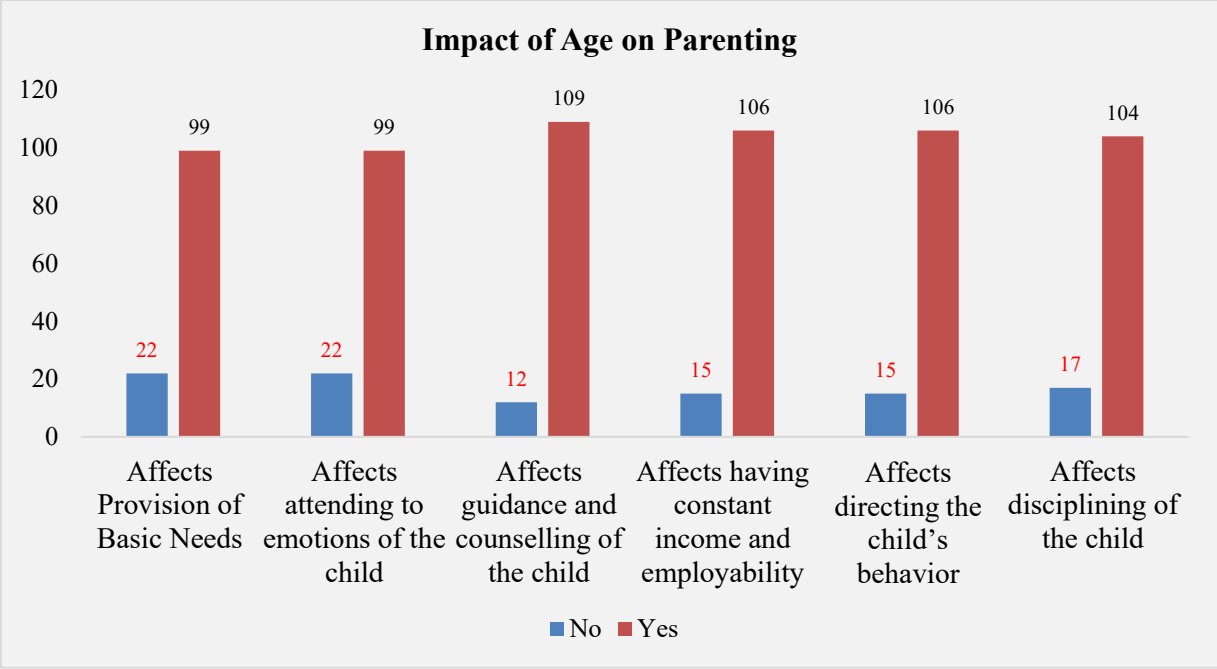
The results of Figure 4.9 indicate that there are numerous ways in which the respondents feel that their jobs do influence various parenting roles. A large majority (82) believes that their occupation affects their reproduction roles, which can involve their decisions on family planning, childbearing and childbearing times, and perform nurturing and childbearing roles. Such a high percentage is an indication that such personal and family related decisions are highly affected by work needs. On the same note, 81 percent agree that employment influences leisure time, which demonstrates that maintaining a work-life balance can be extremely demanding and leave little time to relax and, therefore, cause stress and deny people chances to improve their personal lives. The identical percentage of the respondents will say that their line of work is the cause of their sleep disturbance, probably due to uncommon hours, night shifts or work pressure. All these can be harmful to both the physical and mental health of a person, hence making it difficult to take good care of the children. Also, 82 percent think that their work restricts their social support and involvement with the community because it gets in the way with their communal duties, like going to school events or communal events. Based on the results, one out of five people feels that work

disrupts other productive things that they can or cannot do at home or without work, thus blocking them from earning more or growing personally. Finally, but not least, 81 per cent of people interviewed claim that they have less time to take care of their home because of work obligations, and it is harder to keep the house clean and may damage the family cohesion. Moreover, 8 out of 10 respondents indicate that they have difficulty attending regular wake-up schedules, which are often shaken by abnormal or delayed working hours, thus making everyday lives more challenging to both parents and children. These findings clearly indicate that occupation can significantly and extensively affect the lives and parenting skills of single parents. Thus, occupation possesses a rampant influence on the different parameters of parenting jobs.

#### **4.7 Impact of Parent Age on Single-Parenting**

Lastly, the study sought to find out how a single parent's age affects parenting in various households. The key informants indicated that the average age of the single parents they knew was between late twenties and early thirties. For instance, according to Assistant Chief 1, most single parents in the area were between 25-40 years old. The medical officer said, "*the age range varies widely, from teens to middle-aged adults.*" Customer 1, 2, and 3, said that the single parents they know are either around 30-45 years old, between 25 and 40 years, or in their early 30s. Additionally, the police officer and the educational officer agreed that the common age of the single parents around is between 20 and 40 years. The findings agree with survey findings on the age distribution of single parents. Figure 4.10 shows the survey results on how the age of the single parent affects parenting.

As shown from the survey results presented in Figure 4.10, a single parent's age mostly affects their parenting in that it influences how they guide and counsel their children. As per the results, 109 out of the 121 respondents agreed that the frequency and quality of the guidance and counseling provided by a single parent is determined by their age. When the parent is too young or too old, they are likely to fail in guiding their children.



**Figure 4.10:** How age of the single parent affects parenting

Other aspects of single parenting that are significantly influenced by age are income and employability and the ability to direct a child’s behavior. In each case, 106 respondents agreed that being too young or too old can decrease the ability to earn income or one’s employability. Additionally, it was found that elderly parents are less likely to direct their children’s behaviour more frequently, compared to young and middle-aged adults. On the other hand, 104 of the respondents agreed that age influences the parent’s capability in disciplining the child. Although significant, some 99 respondents indicated that the provision of basic needs and the ability to attend to a child’s emotions are determined by age. Therefore, a single parent’s age has a significant influence on parenting.

**4.8 Discussions**

This section critically discusses the findings that were obtained concerning the socioeconomic factors that affect single parenting. The discussion is structured to align with the research objectives.

**4.8.1 Socio-demographic characteristics**

**Age**

Most single parents' households consisted of young adults who became parents at a tender age because of early pregnancy. Households of youth parents were characterized with little skill and experience of bringing up children. A lot of demands and limited finance facilitates more pressure to the parent.

### **Occupation**

Most single parents were employed in the informal sector, which required basic skills with little experience. This was characterized by low pay, poor working conditions and inflexible working hours resulting in low income, poor living standards and absentee parent.

### **Gender**

Majority of the single parents were households headed by women, resulting to specific challenges when balancing the triple gender roles with participation in income generating activities to improve the family livelihood. Most single parents also face discrimination in society because of beliefs and myths.

### **Education**

The level of education of single parent's households contributed to the type of employment and engagement of income generating activity. Most parents could not get flexible job market to enable them effectively to bring up their children by being present in their lives. The majority did not have relevant skills to get well paid job opportunities. With high cost of living, inflation and unemployment, most single parents were overburdened on how to balance their responsibilities resulting to pressure and risk of poverty.

#### **4.8.2 Impact of Parent Income Level on Parenting in Single-Parent Households**

The findings of this study strongly indicate that income plays a pivotal role in shaping parenting experience among single-parent households. Many respondents earned between Ksh 101-300 per day, indicating income constraints. According to the literature, single parents are economically vulnerable since they must support their families and manage domestic duties (Boeckmann *et al.*, 2015). Low-income families decrease the access of children to high-quality housing, healthcare, and education, which affects their development and wellbeing (Ali and Soomar, 2019). Machebe et al. (2017) also state that the socioeconomic status of parents influences their parenting and the level of education of the child. Having a child as a single parent may offer several challenges that would affect the performance of the child adversely. Economic constraints,

such as financial constraints, may inhibit access to extra-curricular activities, learning resources, and learning among other things that are vital in enhancing academic performance. The difficulty that the respondents face in covering their rent, food, and school fees is not new as previous studies have shown that single parents, especially those in informal sectors are more susceptible to poverty and financial instabilities (Akella & Jordan, 2014). The respondents of this study reported that they are not earning enough money to support their family needs, which leads to family conflict and stress as Dinisman et al. (2017) found. Because parents are more interested in work than taking care of children, financial stress decreases their capabilities to fully interact with children (De Lange et al., 2014). A further finding of the study is that financial issues are associated with quantity and amount of earnings. Most of the respondents worked daily or weekly, which may indicate that unreliable income can complicate the budgeting process and put the family at risk of poor finances. Studies have indicated that because of the uneven income in single-parent families, financial planning is hampered, and therefore, child support is uneven (Kitheka, 2016). Indeed, lone parents have high-income frequency and stability as Maldonado and Nieuwenhuis (2016) discovered to determine their economic well-being. The survey says that single parents use a significant amount of their wage to take care of the necessities, and this leaves them limited to save and invest in long-term objectives such as real estate and education. This finding confirms earlier studies showing low-income households put immediate survival needs ahead of long-term planning (Edin & Kissane, 2010; Machebe et al., 2017). Financial instability affects children's long-term academic and emotional growth in addition to the parent's ability to provide a safe environment for them. This study also supports the findings of Igandu et al. (2023) that single parents have lower household incomes, are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, and have less education. Using theoretical frameworks from the social sciences, family income is understood to affect parents' financial and mental health, which in turn affects their ability to parent and the attributes that both help and impede children's development.

#### **4.8.3 Influence of Child Nurturing Experience on Parenting among Single Parents**

This study found that gender and caregiving experience impacted single parents' parenting skills. According to structural functional theory, societal roles and individual experiences affect parenting (Bandura & Hall, 2018). The research supports the study's finding that single mothers struggle more than single fathers with child discipline and finances. Single fathers have more trouble meeting their children's physical requirements. Developmental and social psychology

frameworks shape our understanding of how parental influences affect their children's proximal settings and interactions within them (Lombardi, 2021).

Gender influences how single parents raise their children, according to earlier studies (Budgeon, 2016). Being the main carers and income earners in the family, single mothers often may not find it easy to balance work and childcare, and they develop stress and burnout. These results correspond to a study by Chatot et al. (2023), who discovered that single moms usually encounter the expectation of the society, which leads to their perceived incompetence, or irresponsibility, and increases the difficulty of parenting. The study also shows that nurturing depends on gender and social support. According to the key informants, single parents especially women were dependent on the extended family and community. Kok et al. (2022) found that parenting, especially in the case of single parents, is essential due to the presence of social capital, namely extended family support. Dinisman et al. (2017) noted that social assistance does not always suffice, especially cases when the single parents are unable to maintain their families due to financial reasons or social stigma. Single parenting resilience literature is accepted by the respondents (Masten, 2014). A lot of single parents have passed through financial challenges and discrimination. Budgeon (2016) states that individual coping mechanisms and family or community support normally led to resilience.

#### **4.8.3 Effects of Single Parent Occupation on Parenting**

This research found out that the work of single parents often deprived them of time with their children. As the literature on work-family conflict shows, low wages or irregular jobs might complicate parenting. The respondents of this study were employed in the informal industries with minimal job stability, benefits, and work-life balance, which increased their problems as single parents. In the study conducted by Kitheka (2016), single parents employed in precarious and low-paying jobs do not have time and energy to take care of their children. Respondents make it clear that lack of time means they cannot attend school events or even go to see their children, and this may strain them emotionally or neglect them. The results also indicated that in such cases parents are usually at a disadvantage, and they are likely to experience the time bind where they have to decide between work and family. Based on the survey, emotional strain and physical strain and time constraints are among the barriers related to job. Liang et al. (2019) discovered that emotional work in low-wage jobs could interfere with family life, and the respondents reported that job stress can make them too exhausted to spend time with their children. In this research, it was established

that job stress may lead to health problems among single parents and lower their parenting capacity. The study showed that some respondents thought that their gender influenced the impact of their work on their parenting. Pruett et al. (2017) discovered that work-family conflict was gendered, and the female single parents were more prone to having difficulties with work-caregiving balance. Nevertheless, single fathers had higher chances of grappling with physical care giving tasks such as preparing meals and doing domestic chores that are in line with the gender roles of care giving.

#### 4.8.4 Role of Single Parent's Age in Shaping Parenting Practices

Age also influenced single parents' parenting techniques in this study. The literature supports the conclusion that younger single parents, particularly those in their twenties, lack the experience, financial stability, and emotional maturity to parent (Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis, 2016). On the other hand, older single parents may struggle with waning energy or cultural expectations about their abilities to support their children. The study discovered that age influences parental skills like discipline, direction, and meeting children's emotional and physical needs. The respondents noted that younger single parents often struggle to provide consistent discipline or emotional support, which is consistent with McLoyd and Steinberg (1998), who suggested that younger parents may lack the life experience or financial resources needed for effective parenting. Liang *et al.* (2019) discovered that older parents had physical restrictions that hindered their caregiving.

Younger single parents generally struggle financially due to lower incomes or less job experience, according to respondents. According to Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis (2015), younger single parents are more likely to work in low-paying occupations, worsening their financial situation. While older parents may be financially solid, they may struggle with the physical demands of parenting, especially if they have small children. Younger single parents are often judged or stigmatized, according to the study. This supports Muthuri *et al.* (2017) who found that younger parents are perceived as less responsible and competent of single parenthood. However, older single parents may be more empathetic, but they still must juggle work and family.

#### **4.8.4 Age of Single Parent and Its Impact on Parenting.**

Single parenting styles were also determined by age in this research. The literature confirms the finding that younger single parents, especially those in their twenties, are inexperienced, are financially and emotionally not stable to parents (Maldonado and Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Conversely, older single parents might not have sufficient energy or cultural demands concerning

their capabilities to take care of their children. The researcher found out that parental skills such as discipline, direction, and addressing the emotional and physical needs of children depend on age. The respondents observed that the young single parents usually find it difficult to offer discipline or emotional support, and this is no exception to McLoyd and Steinberg (1998) who proposed that the young parents might not have the experience in life or the finances to exercise effective parenting. Liang et al. (2019) found that elderly parents suffered physical limitations which prevented them from caring. In the respondents, younger single parents are financially challenged by low income or job experience. As Maldonado and Nieuwenhuis (2015) also state, younger single parents tend to be employed in low-paying jobs, which further deteriorates their financial conditions. Although the older parents might be financially good, they might not be able to cope with the physical aspects of parenting, particularly when they have young children. According to the study, younger single parents are usually judged or stigmatized. This affirms Muthuri et al. (2017) who determined that the younger parents are viewed as less responsible and competent to be involved in single parenting. Nevertheless, single parents who are older can be more understanding, but they have to balance between work and family.

#### **4.9 Summary**

Overall, the results brought out that the nurturing style of a single parent and his/her gender play an important role in parenting style. The two variables are closely connected to the income and job requirements of single parents. The community believes that education plays a great role in influencing the perspective of sexuality and that it has contributed towards the acceptance and popularity of single parenthood. Even poverty is considered as a driving force, as it forces people to live in a single-parent family, where they must struggle to support their children, and their health is affected by this. Single parenthood has significant impact on behaviour, development, schooling and wellbeing of children since there is scarcity of resources and time, which often diminishes parental involvement and support. The poor single parents are less able to attend to the basic needs, and developmental needs of their children. Moreover, the occupation of a parent like irregular working hours or even physically demanding jobs makes the parent unable to balance work and family life. Age is also a factor since young single parents might not be experienced or have the resources to cope with their duties effectively and elderly parents might encounter special issues because of their energy levels or social requirements.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to examine the socioeconomic issues that determine parenting within single-parent families at the Kaptembwa Ward in the Nakuru County. A party of 121 single parents was also used in the study to offer an insight into the role of income, occupation, and gender in the roles of the parents. This chapter is a comprehensive discussion of the research results in Chapter 4. It also outlines the main themes, which were found by the data, creating the connection between the results and the available literature on single parenthood and socioeconomic factors. The chapter also gives very useful recommendations regarding the findings of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of Key Findings**

It was observed that the sample of single parents in the study was diverse in terms of age, gender, education level and household size. They were both represented by the younger and older age groups, though most of the participants fell in the age bracket of 27-33. The genders represented in the group were also varied, with a great percentage describing themselves as transgender. Educational backgrounds were diverse with some going as far back as high school education and some with advanced education. Several factors that brought about single parenthood are the choice of preference, divorce, and death of a spouse. So often these single parents had large families, often consisting of eleven or more children. Most of them were engaged in assorted unskilled and unpaid work. The study also had mixed community perceptions about single parenting. Key informants stressed the importance of education in reducing the number of single parents and avoiding unintended pregnancies. Among the major issues were the need to balance work and childcare, financial problems, and social support. The organisation argues that the behaviour and academic performance of children might be affected because single parents cannot always keep order at home and be financially sound.

In addition, the research emphasized that the strength of single parents is vital in improving the obstacles. Most of them have innovative ways of coping with a variety of responsibilities such as finding supportive social networks and the community. This is manifested in their persistence which is shown by the fact that they were very determined to make their children experience a nurturing environment regardless of financial, social and emotional problems. The current struggle

highlights the necessity of policies and programs that more effectively assist single-parent families in the community so that they can gain access not only to secure employment, but also to affordable childcare services and social services that may help to reduce some of the strains observed in this research.

### **5.3 Implications of Findings**

This research throws some insight into socioeconomic dynamics that affected single parenting in the Kaptembwa Ward of Nakuru County. This has implications for community interventions, family welfare and policy.

#### **5.3.1 Income as a Determinant of Parenting Quality**

The results of the study indicate that income has significant impact on the quality of life and parenting capability of single parents. Majority of respondents said that they earned very low salaries that were barely sufficient to sustain their family needs, which portrays the poverty that low-income single parents must endure. Low income lowers access to health services, education and good housing and this negatively affects development of children. This indicates that specific government assistance like cash payment or income support is required. Local agencies might also collaborate with nonprofits to offer financial literacy services to empower single parents to spend their money wiser. Studies indicate that child development is achieved by having a positive family environment that is backed by economic resources and good parenting. In the study, the single parents often struggle to cope with the high cost of living, low wages, and unstable jobs, which increases the level of stress and limits their ability to offer good care to their children. To manage these stressors, most of them take the help of their friends and family. To assist single parents to overcome these challenges and improve the conditions of their families, it is not only important to raise income but support them by offering childcare, flex working schedules, and mental health services.

#### **5.3.2 Occupation and Employment Policies**

The single parents in the study engaged in informal sectors that had erratic payments which increased their predicaments. Their parenting ability is bound by stress at work and time. One, the policies should be put in place that encourage stability in employment and legalize the informal sector jobs to provide single parents with stable pay, medical coverage, and working hours. Second, childcare services that single parents can afford to work without risking the welfare of

their children should be increased. Single working parents should have subsidized daycare by governments and even privately owned companies.

### **5.3.3 Social Support and Community Networks**

The research notes the significance of social support to the single parents, particularly women. Local community and extended family networks are often used by many single parents who need their support in childcare and emotional support. Not everyone is, however, availed of these supports and therefore, community intervention like parent support groups can be expanded to offer a greater safety net. Community parenting centers should be funded by the local governments and nonprofit organizations. These facilities might provide peer support, parenting education, and emergency childcare to assist single parents in coping with their duties and minimizing the stress.

### **5.3.4 Impact of Gender on Parenting**

It was discovered that single mothers experience more financial and social disadvantages than single fathers, especially regarding balancing between caregiving and employment. This underscores the necessity of some gender-sensitive activities that support women who are single mothers including economic empowerment. Single mothers should be provided with grants or low-interest loans to start small businesses, which will allow them to become more self-sufficient and care-flexible. The stigma of single motherhood could also be fought by means of public campaigns and inclusivity and equality of the community.

### **5.3.5 Age as a Factor in Parenting**

Younger single parents in the study struggled with finances, emotional maturity, and social stigma. This suggests age-specific support programs. Younger parents can learn financial and caring skills from parenting education programs. Healthcare and counselling can help older single parents manage parental obligations despite physical vitality and health issues.

Table 5.1 summarizes the recommendations for practice, based on the insights and implications of the study. Moreover, warmth, nurturance, supportiveness, effective discipline, limit-setting, developmentally appropriate expectations, problem-solving skills, positive communication, and low conflict and negativity protect and strengthen children after parental separation or divorce (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). Strong parent-child relationships require frequent, effective, and open communication and love. Most children do not talk about divorce with their parents, making it hard to know what they are thinking and feeling (Clark, 2013).

Parents must listen without judgment, reflect understanding, allow silence, respond with empathy, build family rituals, share activities, and spend more time with each child (Anderson, 2014).

**Table 5.1:** Recommendations for Practice

| <b>Recommendation</b>           |            | <b>Action</b>  |
|---------------------------------|------------|--|
| Financial Programs              | Support    | Implement targeted financial interventions such as conditional cash transfers or subsidized loans for low-income single-parent households.                 |
| Employment and Income Stability |            | Promote formalization of informal jobs and provide flexible work arrangements, including paid leave and flexible hours for single parents.                 |
| Affordable Services             | Childcare  | Increase access to subsidized or free childcare services, particularly for low-income single parents, to ease financial and caregiving burdens.            |
| Community Support               | Parenting  | Establish local centers offering workshops, peer support, and emergency childcare to strengthen community networks and alleviate parental isolation.       |
| Gender-Sensitive Interventions  |            | Develop policies supporting single mothers through grants, training, and financial aid, and launch campaigns to reduce stigma and promote gender equality. |
| Youth Programs                  | Parenting  | Create programs for young single parents focusing on parenting skills, financial literacy, and mental health support for emotional challenges.             |
| Healthcare Older Parents        | Access for | Provide older single parents with access to healthcare services, such as physical wellness and parental counselling programs.                              |

The parents should solve their issues, build polite, professional relationships, and define well-defined boundaries and standards of collaboration to make their children prosperous (Amato,

2001). The parents must be involved in school discussions, visitations, and after school programs (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994).

Group therapy and support groups can help youngsters feel less isolated, clarify their misconceptions, learn problem-solving skills, and interact better with parents (Haimi & Lerner, 2016). Parents should prioritize their health, seek mental health care for emotional issues, compartmentalize their time, and take time for themselves (Hetherington & Elmor, 2003).

Single parents must learn how to have healthy talks with their children and friends, including politeness, respect, honesty, space, anger management, and dispute resolution. They should allow their kids to discuss societal issues without judgment and solve them themselves. Bullying and harassment must be discussed in person and online (Anderson, 2014). Single parents must be approachable. The single parent must learn their child's interests and hobbies and help them establish friends by getting them involved in activities they enjoy and having more meaningful conversations (Haimi & Lerner, 2016). They must inform children of which risks will allow them to test their skills, and which may be damaging, even if others encourage them (Amato, 2010).

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

This study examined the socioeconomic characteristics of income, occupation, gender, and age that are associated with single parenting in Kaptembwa Ward, Nakuru County. The findings demonstrated that single parents, especially low-income ones, struggle to sustain their families. Due to their inability to afford housing, healthcare, and education, their children's growth and well-being suffer. Single mothers endure more social shame and financial difficulty than single fathers, according to the study. Social assistance was helpful, but not enough to solve these issues. The results showed how vital a stable employment, supportive neighborhood, and daycare are for single parents. These findings indicate that single parents and their children need financial aid, flexible work schedules, and affordable daycare to improve their quality of life. Older and younger single parents need age-specific programs to improve their parenting and well-being.

#### **5.5 Recommendations for Practice**

Table 5.2 below summarizes the recommendations for practice, based on the insights and implications of the study. Moreover, warmth, nurturance, supportiveness, effective discipline, limit-setting, developmentally appropriate expectations, problem-solving skills, positive

communication, and low conflict and negativity protect and strengthen children after parental separation or divorce (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999).

Strong parent-child relationships require frequent, effective, and open communication and love. Most children do not talk about divorce with their parents, making it hard to know what they are thinking and feeling (Clark, 2013). Parents must listen without judgment, reflect understanding, allow silence, respond with empathy, build family rituals, share activities, and spend more time with each child (Anderson, 2014).

**Table 5.2: Recommendations for Practice**

| <b>Recommendation</b>           | <b>Action</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Financial Programs              | Support Implement targeted financial interventions such as conditional cash transfers or subsidized loans for low-income single-parent households.             |
| Employment and Income Stability | Promote formalization of informal jobs and provide flexible work arrangements, including paid leave and flexible hours for single parents.                     |
| Affordable Services             | Childcare Increase access to subsidized or free childcare services, particularly for low-income single parents, to ease financial and caregiving burdens.      |
| Community Support               | Parenting Establish local centers offering workshops, peer support, and emergency childcare to strengthen community networks and alleviate parental isolation. |
| Gender-Sensitive Interventions  | Develop policies supporting single mothers through grants, training, and financial aid, and launch campaigns to reduce stigma and promote gender equality.     |
| Youth Programs                  | Parenting Create programs for young single parents focusing on parenting skills, financial literacy, and mental health support for emotional challenges.       |
| Healthcare Older Parents        | Access for Ensure older single parents have access to healthcare services, including physical wellness and parental counselling programs.                      |

Parents must resolve problems, establish courteous, business-like relationships, and set clear limits and norms for working together to benefit their children (Amato, 2001). Parental

involvement in school meetings, visits, and after-school activities is essential (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Group therapy and support groups can help youngsters feel less isolated, clarify their misconceptions, learn problem-solving skills, and interact better with parents (Haimi & Lerner, 2016). Parents should prioritize their health, seek mental health care for emotional issues, compartmentalize their time, and take time for themselves (Hetherington & Elmor, 2003).

Single parents must learn how to have healthy talks with their children and friends, including politeness, respect, honesty, space, anger management, and dispute resolution. They should allow their kids to discuss societal issues without judgment and solve them themselves. Bullying and harassment must be discussed in person and online (Anderson, 2014). Single parents must be approachable. The single parent must learn their child's interests and hobbies and help them establish friends by getting them involved in activities they enjoy and having more meaningful conversations (Haimi & Lerner, 2016). They must inform children of which risks will allow them to test their skills, and which may be damaging, even if others encourage them (Amato, 2010).

#### **5.6 Recommendations for Further Studies**

- i. There is a need for future studies to examine the long-term socioeconomic impacts on single-parent households, especially regarding children's development.
- ii. Comparative studies to explore how single-parenting challenges vary between rural and urban areas.
- iii. Further studies ought to assess the effectiveness of financial and childcare support programs for single-parent households.
- iv. Future research should focus on the mental health issues faced by single parents and their impact on parenting practices.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Questionnaire for Single Parents

#### PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End time:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

**Researcher's Information:** The research is being conducted by **Euphemia Awuor Odera** in partial fulfilment of master's degree at Egerton University.

**Purpose of this study:** The study aims to investigate socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents in Kaptembwa Ward, Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. Thus, I would like to ask you about how socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents. The interview should last no more than 45 minutes.

**Potential harm, risks or discomforts to participants:** I do not anticipate any risks for you in participating in this study. Participation in any research study will, however, take some of your time, in this case, estimated at 45 minutes. If you feel distressed during the interview, the research activity will end, and you will be connected to a community leader for support.

**Benefits of participating in the study:** There is no direct and immediate benefit for participating as a respondent. However, some of the expected outputs will include recommendations that will help in good parenting and correct anomalies in parenting among single parents.

**Confidentiality:** Directly identifying information (e.g. names, addresses) will not be to other parties outside this research study. Any personal information that could identify you will be

removed or changed before files are shared with other researchers or results are made public. You will not be identified in any outcomes (e.g. publications, products or services) of this study.

## **RESPONDENT SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed for academic purpose only.

- I have read/been explained and understood the information sheet and this consent form.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation. I understand that I am not obligated to sign up to participate in the study.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- I understand that all the information I provide will be treated with strict confidence unless it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others.
- I understand how to raise concerns or make complaints.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I understand that this study has been approved by Cooperative University and the researcher has a study permit from National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Study Participant***

**Instructions**

**Mark inside the box with a tick (√).**

**Background information**

1. What is your age?

18-20 yrs

21- 26 yrs

27- 32 yrs

33yrs and above

2. What is your sex?

Male

Female

Transgender

3. What is your highest level of education?

Primary

Secondary

College

University

Illiterate

Never completed primary education

4. What is the cause of single parenthood?

Death of partner ( ) separation ( ) others specify

5. What is the size of your household?

1-5 children ( ) 6-10 children ( ) 11 children and above ( )

6. What is your occupation?

Business ( ) casual labour ( ) employed ( ) hawker ( ) cleaning services ( ) Bodaboda ( ) Construction ( ) Juakali ( ) others specify

7. What is the estimated daily income?

Ksh 1-100 ( ) ksh 101-200 ( ) Ksh 201 -300 Ksh 301 and above ( )

**Section B How Gender of the Single Parent Affects Parenting**

8. Does your gender affect parenting?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes in which ways?

.....

9. In your opinion do you agree with the following statements?

| Statement  | 1=Strongly disagree | 2=disagree | 3=neutral | 4=agrees | 5=strongly agree |
|--|---------------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|
| Whether a male or female single parenting is challenging   |                     |            |           |          |                  |
| Single men struggle more to raise children than single women   |                     |            |           |          |                  |
| Single women face more challenges in disciplining and providing for their children than single males |                     |            |           |          |                  |
| single women are more insecure than single men   |                     |            |           |          |                  |
| Single women are more resilient than single males  |                     |            |           |          |                  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**Section C: How Level of Income of the Single Parent Affects Parenting**

10. Does level of income affect parenting?

Yes ( ) No ( )

11. How often do you receive your income?

Daily ( ) weekly ( ) monthly ( )

12. Does the income adequately meet the household needs?

Yes ( ) No ( )

13. How do you use the income?

Buying food ( ) paying school fees ( ) paying rent ( ) buying clothes ( ) paying hospital bills ( )  
meeting basic needs ( ) meeting wants ( ) paying house rent ( )

14. What challenges do you face in generating income?

Lack of job opportunities ( ) Failure to have relevant skills ( ) lack of entrepreneurship skills ( )  
lack of capital ( ) high cost of living ( )

**Section D: How Occupation of the Single Parent Affects Parenting**

15. What is your occupation?

House help ( ) Self-employment ( ) employed ( ) casual labourer ( ) business person ( ) others specify

16. Does occupation affect parenting?

Yes ( ) No ( )

17. If yes in which ways?

Lack of time ( ) gender load ( ) shift of working e.g night shift ( ) tiredness ( ) distance from work  
place ( ) separation with the family as a result of work ( ) others specify ....

17 How does occupation affect parenting?

Separation with the children ( ) long working hours ( ) not having quality time with the children ( ) busy schedule affecting the time relating with children ( ) others specify ..

18. In your opinion, how does occupation affect the daily gender calendar?

| <b>Activity</b>   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Waking up   |            |           |
| Attending Domestic chores<br>e.g taking care of children<br>and house chores.                               |            |           |
| Attending Productive work<br>e.g Income Generating<br>Activities.   |            |           |
| Attending to communal roles<br>such as school meetings,<br>wedding's, public gatherings<br>and celebrations |            |           |
| Sleeping  |            |           |
| Leisure time (selfcare and<br>hobbies)  |            |           |
| Reproductive roles  |            |           |

**Section E: How Age of the Single Parent Affects Parenting**

| <b>Activity</b>                               | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Affects provision of basic<br>needs           |            |           |
| Affects attending to<br>emotions of the child |            |           |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Affects guidance and counselling of the child    |  |  |
| Affects having constant income and employability |  |  |
| Affects directing the child's behavior           |  |  |
| Affects disciplining the child                   |  |  |

## Appendix B: Key Informant Interview (KII)

### PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End time:** \_\_\_\_\_

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

**Researcher's Information:** The research is being conducted by **Euphemia Awuor Odero** in partial fulfilment of master's degree at Egerton University.

**Purpose of this study:** The study aims to investigate socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents in Kaptembwa Ward, Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. Thus, I would like to ask you about how socio-economic factors affecting parenting among single parents. The interview should last no more than 45 minutes.

**Potential harms, risks or discomforts to participants:** I do not anticipate any risks for you in participating in this study. Participation in any research study will, however, take some of your time, in this case, estimated at 45 minutes. If you feel distressed during the interview, the research activity will end, and you will be connected to a community leader for support.

**Benefits of participating in the study:** There is no direct and immediate benefit for participating as a respondent. However, some of the expected outputs will include recommendations that will help in good parenting and correct anomalies in parenting among single parents.

**Confidentiality:** Directly identifying information (e.g. names, addresses) will not be to other parties outside this research study. Any personal information that could identify you will be

removed or changed before files are shared with other researchers or results are made public. You will not be identified in any outcomes (e.g. publications, products or services) of this study.

## **RESPONDENT SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed for academic purpose only.

- I have read/been explained and understood the information sheet and this consent form.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation. I understand that I am not obligated to sign up to participate in the study.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence unless it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others.
- I understand how to raise concerns or make complaints.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I understand that this study has been approved by Cooperative University and the researcher has a study permit from National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Study Participant***

## **Instructions**

**Kindly volunteer freely**

### **1. HOW DOES THIS COMMUNITY VIEW SINGLE PARENTHOOD?**

Probe for.

- What are the stigmas and stereotypes faced by single parents?
- What are your views about parenting, for example single parenthood?
- Why do you prefer being single parents?
- What are the coping mechanisms for single parents and their children?

### **2. WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SINGLE PARENTHOOD?**

Probe for:

- Average age of single parents.
- Do you think education and sexuality determine whether a person will be a single parent.
- In this area is the marital status of an individual has any influence in behavior change
- remarked difference in parenting among the married and the single parents.
- In your own judgment, poverty can facilitate single parenthood.

### **3. IN YOUR VIEWS, WHAT ARE EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTING IN CHILDREN**

- Schooling and behavior of the children
- Health of the children
- Household income and expenditure
- Unemployment and business opportunities.

## Appendix C: Ethical Clearance and Approval

**EGERTON**  
TEL: (051) 2217808  
FAX: 051-2217942



**UNIVERSITY**  
P. O. BOX 536  
EGERTON

**EGERTON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**EU/RE/DIR/009**  
**Approval No. EUISERC/APP/341/2024**

**12<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Euphemia Awuor Odero  
P.O.Box 2758-20100  
Telephone: 0727316951  
E-mail: euphysamwet@gmail.com

Dear Euphemia,

**RE: ETHICAL APPROVAL: SOCIO- ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING PARENTING AMONG SINGLE PARENTS HOUSEHOLDS IN KAPTEMBWA NAKURUWEST SUB-COUNTY NAKURU COUNTY KENYA.**

This is to inform you that the *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *EUISERC/APP/341/2024*. The approval period is *12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025*

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee*.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for Material Transfer of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.

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*"Transforming Lives through Quality Education"*

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- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee*.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://oris.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Raphael M. Ngure  
**CHAIRMAN, EGERTON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW CTTEE**  
RMN/BK/

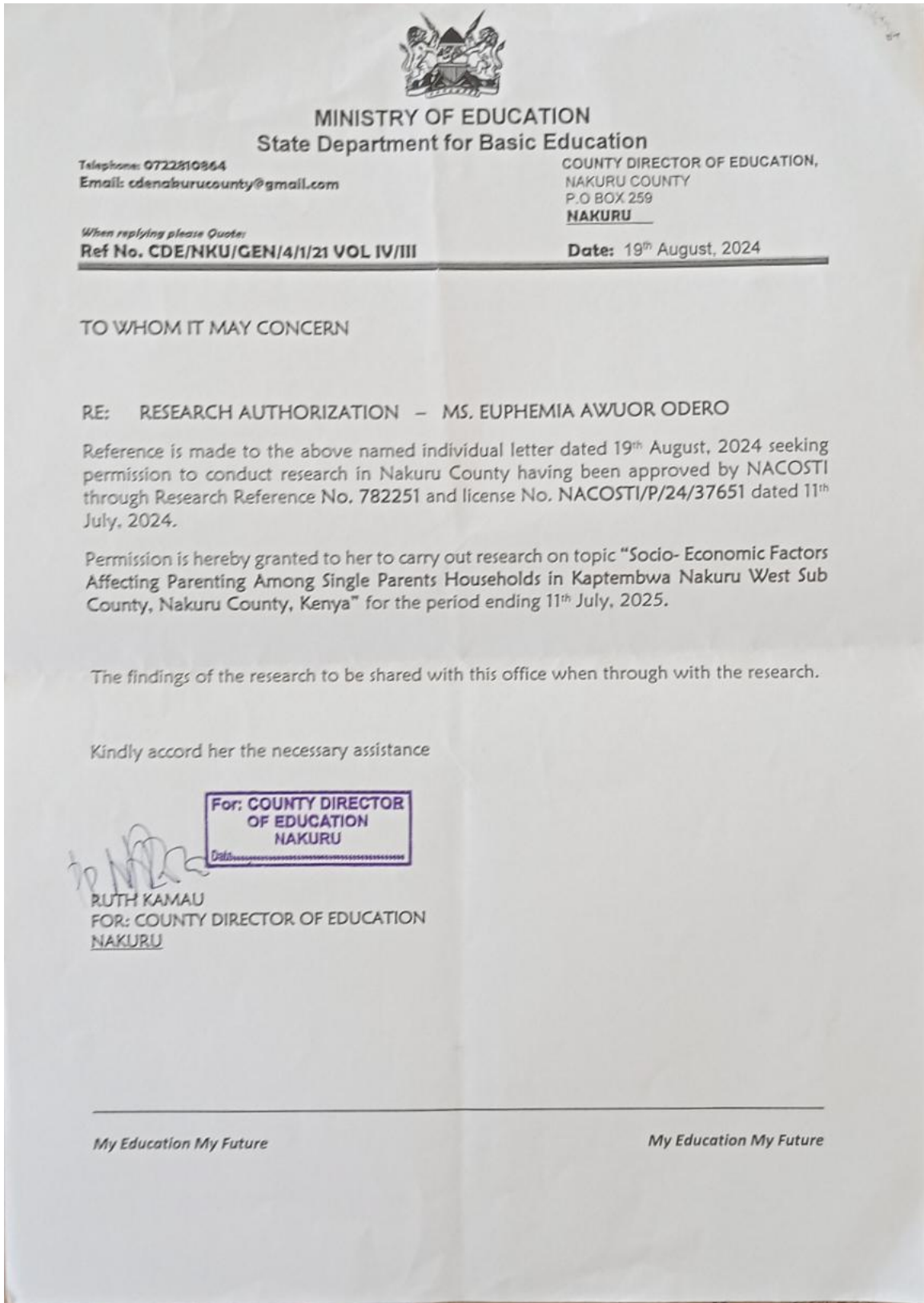


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*"Transforming Lives through Quality Education"*

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**Appendix D: Research Authorization**



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Email: [nakuruwestedu@gmail.com](mailto:nakuruwestedu@gmail.com)

When replying please quote



**SUB COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE**  
**NAKURU WEST SUB COUNTY**  
P.O. BOX 1028 – 20100,  
**NAKURU**

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2024

SCDE/NKUWEST/G/II/2/62

Ms. Euphemia Awuor Odera  
NACOSTI/P/24/37651  
Egerton University

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your request to conduct research on “Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Parenting among Single Parents Households in Kaptembwa Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru, Kenya”, through County Director of Education letter vide dated Ref No. CDE/NKU/GEN/4/1/21 VOL IV/III, Authority is hereby granted to visit households as from 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 for period ending 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2025

You will however be required to give a copy of findings of research to this office on completion of your programme both in hard and soft copy.

Ensure that it is conducted professionally.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance

For: SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR  
OF EDUCATION  
NAKURU WEST SUB-COUNTY

  
JANET AKINYI OCHIENG  
SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
NAKURU WEST

# Appendix E: Research Permit



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: **782251**



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Date of Issue: **11/July/2024**

**RESEARCH LICENSE**



**This is to Certify that Ms. Euphemia Awuor Odera of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru on the topic: SOCIO - ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING PARENTING AMONG SINGLE PARENTS HOUSEHOLDS IN KAPTEMBWA NAKURU WEST, SIBUR COUNTY KENYA for the period ending: 11/July/2025.**

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/37651**

Applicant Identification Number: **782251**

Director General: *Walter Odera*

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**



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**See overleaf for conditions**

**THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013 (Rev. 2014)**  
 Legal Notice No. 108: The Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government in matters related thereto.

**CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE**

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of International treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way:
  - i. Endanger national security
  - ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
  - iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN).
  - iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
  - v. Adversely affect the environment
  - vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
  - vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
  - viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. The license any rights thereunder are non-transferable
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.
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National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI),  
 Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,  
 P. O. Box 30623 - 00100 Nairobi, KENYA  
 Telephone: 020 4007000, 0713788787, 0735404245  
 E-mail: [dgg@nacosti.go.ke](mailto:dgg@nacosti.go.ke)  
 Website: [www.nacosti.go.ke](http://www.nacosti.go.ke)

## **Appendix F: Publication (Accepted for Publication)**

### **Socio-Economic Determinants of Parenting Practices among Single-Parent Households in Urban Kenya: Evidence from Kaptembwa Ward, Nakuru County**

#### **Abstract**

Single-parent households are on the rise globally and in Kenya, with significant implications for child development, household well-being, and parenting practices. In low-income urban settlements, these challenges are intensified by unstable employment, stigma, and limited support structures. This study examined the socioeconomic determinants affecting parenting among single-parent households in Kaptembwa Ward, Nakuru County, Kenya. A mixed-methods design was adopted, combining survey data from 121 single parents with qualitative insights from local administrators, healthcare workers, and community leaders. Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Results showed that 66.1% of respondents reported that their low income compromised their parenting capacity, with 77% earning less than KES 300 per day. Most parents were engaged in informal, low-wage occupations, and 74% indicated that work demands hindered childcare. Gender differences were apparent; single mothers experienced heightened economic and emotional burdens, while single fathers struggled with caregiving responsibilities. Age also shaped parenting, as younger parents faced heightened challenges due to financial instability and limited experience. The findings reveal that single parenting in marginalized urban areas is shaped by intersecting factors of economic vulnerability, gender roles, and inadequate institutional support. It recommends interventions such as subsidized childcare, income-generating programs, and psychosocial support to enhance parental capacity and child welfare in single-headed households. The study enriches literature on urban poverty and family dynamics by providing empirical evidence from Kenya, highlighting how structural inequalities and gendered experiences affect parenting. It also advances debates on social-policy by linking socio-economic conditions to parental functioning and child welfare outcomes.

**Keywords:** Single parenthood, socioeconomic factors, gender roles, parenting practices, low-income households, Kenya