

ABSTRACT

An Investigation Into the Factors That Affect Academic Performances of Pupils Who Come From Single-Parent Homes, at a Selected School in the St. Patrick Education District

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This study sought to identify the home factors that contribute to the low academic achievement of students from single-parent homes at a primary school in Trinidad and Tobago. The participants in the study were six purposively selected Standard 5 students, four single mothers, a stepmother, and a maternal grandmother. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The data revealed that the barriers to the students' academic achievement were: 1) economic factors, 2) poor home/school relationship, 3) excessive household chores, 4) family structure, 5) frequent changes of residence or school, 6) poor social climate in the home, 7) abuse of alcohol by parents and pupils, 8) high rate of absenteeism, 9) poor at-home support for learning, 10) low self-esteem among pupils, and 11) the low educational background of parents and siblings. It was also found that many single parents engage in denial and defence, since they are incapable of providing academic support to their children at home. Further, almost all the parents were resigned to their domestic situation; they themselves had low levels of educational attainment and, consequently, low expectations for their children.

Keywords: Primary school children; Performance factors; Case studies; Academic achievement; Single mothers; Impact assessment; Home environment; Trinidad and Tobago.