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Academic Engagement, learning Interests, and Psychological well-being of Undergraduates from Single-Parenting Backgrounds

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Abstract: Students' home background and parental status could influence their academic outcomes. In recent times, cases of divorce and early death of either spouse have left many students, especially in higher institutions of learning, in the hands and care of a single parent. In the context of this study, it is perceived that underperforming students are those from a single-parentage, an assumption that needs further inquiry. Therefore, this study examined the levels of undergraduates' learning interest, academic engagement, and psychological well-being and how they relate to their single parentage. Underpinned by the Self-determination Theory (ST), this study adopts the cross-sectional quantitative research type of the non-experimental design. Undergraduates enrolled in degree programmes at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti in Nigeria comprised the study's population, which was selected using purposive and simple random techniques. An instrument tagged "Students' Academic Engagement, Learning Interest, Psychological Well-being and Single-parenting Questionnaire (SAELIPWSQ)" with Cronbach alpha of 0.92, 0.85, and 0.70, respectively, was hosted on Google Forms and used for data collection. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, and median) and correlational analysis were used to examine the study's data at a 5% significance level using SPSS V6 software. Findings indicate the sampled undergraduates' high learning interests, academic engagement,

and psychological well-being. Moreover, a positive and significant relationship exists among undergraduates' learning interests, academic engagement, psychological well-being, and single parentage. It is recommended that "the government and non-governmental organisations provide special support" for single parents and students from such backgrounds to boost these single parents' involvement in the educational and academic life of these students. Contextually, all forms of disregard and contempt against single parents and students from single-parenting backgrounds should be alleviated or eradicated by legislation and other enforcement agencies.

Keywords: Academic engagement; Learning interest; Psychological well-being; Single parenting; Undergraduates; Nigeria.

Introduction

Parents give their children the first chance to connect, communicate, and form relationships. They also act as a positive role model for them, modelling healthy relationships and fostering positive interactions with others (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The state of being a parent and nurturing, guarding, and directing a child through development is known as parenting (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). Parenting has traditionally featured gender-neutral responsibilities, where the father's responsibility was to protect and discipline the kid, while the mother's role was to nurture and provide emotional support (Gežová, 2015; Omokhabi & Lawal, 2023). A single parent can be either a mother or a father, also known as a solo parent; they can also be divorced, widowed, or separated from their partner due to an unplanned pregnancy, or they can be a man or woman who chooses to become a single parent by donor insemination or adoption and lives with one or more dependent children without the assistance and presence of an adult partner who shares parenting responsibilities (Stack & Meredith, 2018; Van Gasse & Mortelmans, 2020). There has been a change in the family paradigm and the emergence of gender-neutral parenting roles because of more education, dual-earning parents, higher incomes, and gender equality (Fagan et al., 2014; Osiesi & Blignaut, 2024). Single-parent households have increased due to industrialisation, and globalisation (Omokhabi, 2020; Omokhabi & Lawal, 2023).

Most single parents worldwide are single mothers, making up 84.3% of all households, while lone-father households make up 15.7%. This suggests that women are primarily responsible for raising children and ensuring their families' financial stability (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). Due to men's propensity to remarry and leave their children in the care of their mothers or other female relatives, the number of single fathers is relatively low (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). There are a variety of reasons why single mothers choose to start their households, including male migration, divorce, widowhood, separation from their spouse, intimate partner abuse, abandonment, and social norms or legal restrictions that make it difficult for women to remarry or enter new relationships (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023).

There are multiple steps involved in parent-child separation or divorce, and the youngster eventually adjusts to the new normal. The mental health problems of children of single parents start long before the actual separation because of the arguments between their parents. They initially experience a variety of negative emotions, including confusion, hopelessness, anger, guilt, grief, and difficulties with loyalty (Osiesi et al., 2023b). They worry about their future and also hold misunderstandings. When a parent leaves the home, most kids feel saddened, but in families where there is abuse or domestic violence, some kids think relieved (D'Onofrio, 2011). Studies have indicated that there is a persistent disparity in several domains between children raised by divorced parents and those raised by married parents (Clark et al., 2013). Countries in Africa, including Nigeria, in recent times, have had a surge in cases of divorce and single parenting.

Active parental involvement can increase students' learning interests by offering homework assistance and supporting academic endeavours (Amante et al., 2022; Ernawati, 2023). This is especially crucial for single parents, who might have to take on a more significant role in their kids' education to make up for the loss of a second parent. Purwantoro (2023) asserts that although single parents are frequently absent from their children's lives, they are still able to provide them with the motivation and support they require. Parenting styles, especially single parenting, greatly impact students' academic motivation and achievement (Febriani et al., 2023; Hayek et al., 2022; Mihret et al., 2019; Osiesi et al., 2023b). This suggests that single parents can create a more conducive learning environment for their children by using supportive and engaging parenting methods.

Students from single-parent households usually do worse academically than their peers from two-parent families, mainly due to emotional and financial pressure, according to Amato et al. (2015). Due to these challenges, single parents may need help to provide their kids with the educational resources and tutoring they require to pique their passion for learning (Lestari, 2023). Furthermore, studies show that kids with parental, emotional, and motivational support have better academic engagement and learning excitement (Imami et al., 2021; Nofrizal et al., 2020). This emphasises how crucial the emotional support that single parents offer is. However, single parents' time restraints and obligations may prevent them from participating altogether, which may lower student motivation (Zahara & Azwarni, 2022).

Research has also indicated that students' interactions with their school environment and level of academic engagement are impacted by single parenting (Osiesi et al., 2023a; Rubamande & Mukadi, 2022; Sanni et al., 2023). Cheung and Pomerantz (2015) show that, in various cultural situations, parental involvement predicts children's academic functioning, including engagement and grades. Children's enthusiasm and involvement in school activities can significantly increase when single parents offer intellectual and emotional support (Gilbert et al., 2017). Parents who actively participate in their children's learning processes foster a sense of belonging and enthusiasm in academic endeavours, essential for students' overall engagement. According to Kim and Kim's (2021) and Zhao's (2023) research, students with positive parenting practices have greater self-esteem and academic engagement. This implies that some of the negative consequences of their family structure on academic engagement may be lessened by single parents who use encouraging and constructive parenting techniques (Osiesi & Blignaut, 2024). Children of single parents can grow intrinsically motivated and engage more in school if raised in a loving and supportive atmosphere (Omokhabi, 2020; 2023). On the other hand, unfavourable parenting practices might lower kids' motivation and involvement, reducing their academic performance (Zhao, 2023).

Stress levels among students whose parents are unmarried may be elevated, potentially hurting their mental health. According to Aunola et al. (2013), parents' everyday distress might result in a greater degree of psychological control over their relationships with their kids, which can then encourage the expression of negative emotions in these kids (Omokhabi, 2020; 2023). The emotional states of single parents can significantly impact children's ability to regulate their feelings and general psychological well-being (Spinelli et al., 2020). In a study on single parenting, Golombok et al. (2016) discovered that a healthy mother-child relationship was linked to children's improved psychological adjustment. Children who have poor parent-child connections may develop long-term psychological problems because they feel more anxious and insecure (Lacey et al., 2014; Mabbe et al., 2018; Rasskazova, 2019; Yan, 2023). Children of single parents who practice supporting and caring behaviours can develop emotional stability and resilience, which improves the psychological well-being of the children (Chen & Zhou, 2021; Luo, 2023).

Compared to young adults (in this case, students) whose parents were still living together, young adults with divorced parents report higher levels of total chronic stress (social isolation, persistent

worrying, and work discontent), loneliness, attachment anxiety, avoidance, and personality disorders (Schaana et al., 2019). Children of single parents have lower psychological well-being scores on exams and higher rates of depression, substance abuse, and suicide than children from dual-parent households, according to research done in African countries. More significantly, academics have warned that poor psychological well-being among university students, or those in higher education, has become a severe problem that requires more research (Katajavuori et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, this current research examines the relationship among students' academic engagement, learning interests, psychological well-being and single-parentage at a public university in Nigeria.

Research Problem

There seems to be no study in the extant literature and within the context of this current study that has examined the academic engagement, learning interest as well as psychological well-being of university students from single-parenting backgrounds, especially in Sun-Sahara Africa, which is the key research gap this study intends to fill. Although there is scanty evidence about the psychological well-being of students from single-parenting backgrounds (Katajavuori et al., 2023; Rasskazova, 2019; Schaana et al., 2019; Yan, 2023), this researcher argues that it may be the function of the study's context and the sample thereof. More studies on the relationship between academic engagement, learning interest, and the psychological well-being of these students from single-parenting backgrounds are necessary; hence, this study.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of psychological well-being of students from single-parenting backgrounds?
2. What is the level of learning interest of students from single-parenting backgrounds?
3. What is the level of academic engagement of students from single-parenting backgrounds?
4. To what extent does a single-parenting background influence students' psychological well-being, learning interests, and academic engagement?

Literature Review

This literature review aimed to assess the research evidence about the relationship among academic engagement, learning interests, and psychological well-being of university students from single-parent homes. When someone is psychologically well, they can enjoy and be content with their life, believe that their life has meaning and purpose, build healthy connections with others, feel in control of their lives, and manage stress and challenges (Frost et al., 2022). Psychological well-being can significantly impact university students' learning (Pan et al., 2023). According to Kubzansky et al. (2023), psychological well-being corresponds to positive emotions and feelings while being resilient against negative emotions and regularly seeking enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction in daily life. According to Diener and Ryan (2009), students' psychological well-being reflects their level of contentment, which is controlled by their perceptions and attitudes about their wellness and the satisfaction and pleasure they derive from their everyday lives. By highlighting the good parts of people's lives, psychological well-being, a subset of positive psychology, has become one of the most important fields that motivates and inspires people to take action to improve performance and accomplish goals (Lomas et al., 2021).

According to studies, children of single parents perform poorly academically and have emotional and behavioural issues, as well as fewer social connections (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). Beneficial parent-child interactions help teenagers feel loved and cared for, which enhances their psychological health and benefits their interests and commitment to learning (Shire et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2021). Shao and Kang

(2019) investigated the association between learning engagement and parent-child relationships. The results show that motivation, learning engagement, and the relationship between parents and children are positively correlated. Martinez-Yarza et al. (2024) examined how family involvement affected students' school engagement and social-emotional growth. Research indicates that families that actively participate in their children's education at home benefit students' school involvement, which fosters the development of students' social-emotional skills.

According to Klapp et al. (2024), there was a negative correlation between psychological well-being and academic achievement, meaning that learners under stress at school did better than those under less stress. Nonetheless, research by Bückner et al. (2018) shows that students' academic achievement and psychological health are positively correlated. Previous research has demonstrated a beneficial relationship between students' academic achievement and psychological well-being (Kiuru et al., 2020; Li & Lajoie, 2022; Morales-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Rehman et al., 2023; Yang, 2021). More precisely, psychological health has been found to link positively with essential outcomes in higher education, such as motivation, positive behaviours, personal growth, and improved grades (Capone et al., 2020). In higher education, university students' well-being significantly raises learners' aspirations, educational participation, academic accomplishment, and academic production, as Jing et al. (2021) pointed out.

Theoretical Framework

The Self-determination Theory supports this study. The theory's main tenets are the connections between drive, attitude, and optimal functioning (Hiko et al., 2023). Its premise assumes that motivation, engagement, or interest are potent tools for influencing people's conduct and are either internal (intrinsic) or extrinsic (driven by outside events) (Ryan & Deci, 2019). It occurs when a person finds something exciting and supports it because it aligns with their identity and sense of worth (Ryan & Deci, 2019). The urge to live up to expectations or the fear of punishment are the sources of extrinsic motivation derived from external rules or regulations. Extrinsic incentives can take the shape of praise, awards, rankings, accolades, and other people's respect and acceptance (including parental approval). Forcing someone to follow the rules of others out of fear, accepting them despite their disagreements, demonstrating empathy for them, and incorporating them into their values can control conduct (Ten Cate et al., 2011).

Applying this approach to our research, we suggest that learner background variables, such as parentage, should be the priority when promoting conduct that supports students' higher learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being. The emergence of single-mother and single-fathered homes is the new normal. Contrary to earlier times when the phenomenon was unusual and thought to be a sign of the breakdown and failure of the family unit, single-parent households are increasingly becoming accepted in developing nations (Hiko et al., 2023). The drop in academic performance among learners can be ascribed to this, which has resulted in the stigmatisation of single parents. According to Ojo (2019), children raised by single parents perform worse academically, are less likely to receive an education, and are more likely to commit crimes. It was discovered by Anyakoha (2016) and Nwachukwu (2011) that well-read single parents assisted their kids with schoolwork, positively impacting such students' learning outcomes.

Methodology

Research Design

The cross-sectional quantitative research type of the non-experimental design was chosen for this study. Using samples selected from a population that were relevant to this research focus, cross-sectional studies examine data from a population at one moment in time (Maier et al., 2023; Wang & Cheng, 2020).

Population, Sampling Techniques, and Sample

Undergraduate students enrolled in degree programmes at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti in Nigeria comprised the study's population. This public institution in Ekiti State was chosen using the purposive sampling technique because it was believed that some of its students came from single-parent households. Using a Google Form, 65 undergraduates from the various Departments and faculties were chosen using a simple random sampling process. The study's objectives were explained to the sampled students, who then willingly participated. They completed the online survey during the first semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. Of the responses, 38.5% (25) were male and 61.5% (40) were female.

Instruments

An instrument tagged "Students' Academic Engagement, Learning Interest, Psychological Well-being and Single-Parenting Questionnaire (SAELIPWSQ)" was used for data collection. It comprised four sections: A, B, C, and D. These included the respondents' gender, academic level, faculty and parenting background, academic engagement, learning interest, and psychological well-being. The Academic Engagement Questionnaire (AEQ) (section B), created by Osiesi et al. (2024), was adopted and utilised. The questionnaire measured students' involvement in academic and social activities. This scale's internal consistency has been confirmed by Olatunbosun and Pillay (2024). The scale was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 meant "very often," 4 meant "frequently," 3 meant "occasionally," 2 meant "rarely," and 1 meant "never." In the study's context, the scale's piloted Cronbach alpha was 0.81; nevertheless, the pilot test for the current study showed a Cronbach alpha of 0.92. The Learning Interest Scale (section C) was adapted from Wu's (2022) Validated Scale. This case has 14 items measuring students' learning interests and was placed on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. This scale has Cronbach alpha = 0.85.

The Ryff et al. (2007) Scale created the condensed 18-item Psychological Well-Being Scale (the pilot result from this current study yielded a Cronbach alpha = 0.70). The 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale, which assesses six facets of happiness and well-being, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal development, positive interpersonal relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance, was the original model for the scale (Ryff, 1989; Ryff et al., 2007). Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Slightly Agree (Slightly Agree), Neutral (N), Slightly Disagree (Slightly Disagree), and Disagree (D) were the categories on the 6-Likert scale, which made up the section D.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, and median) and correlational analysis were used to examine the study's data using SPSS V6 software at a 5% significance level.

Results

Table 1

Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	40	61.5
Female	25	38.5
Total	65	100
Level		
100	9	13.8
200	19	29.2
300	13	20.0
400	19	29.2
500	5	7.7
Total	65	100
Faculty		
Arts	4	6.2
Engineering	20	30.8
Management Science	3	4.6
Medical Sciences	1	1.5
Sciences	1	1.5
Social Sciences	36	55.4
Total	65	100
Parents living with		
Grandmother	3	4.6
Only Father	13	20.0
Only Mother	49	75.4
Total	65	100

Source: The author (2024).

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the study's respondents. The Table reveals that 61.5% of the respondents are male while 38.5% are female. This implies that most respondents who took part in the study were male. In terms of academic level, it was found that 29.2% of the respondents were in the 200 (second year) and 400 (fourth year) level. Based on respondents across the faculties, the Table reveals that Engineering (30.8%) and Social Sciences (55.4%) were the majority. The survey of respondents from single parents found that most respondents (75.4%) live with their mothers, while 20.0% live with their fathers.

RQ 1. What is the level of learning interest of students from single-parenting backgrounds?

Table 2

Level of Learning Interest of Single-Parenting Undergraduates

S/N	Items <i>Learning Interest</i>	Very Untrue	Untrue	True	Very True	Med
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1	Coming to school every day is fun	27 (41.5%)	22 (33.8%)	16 (24.6%)	3	
2	Studying my books interests me a lot	9 (13.8%)	33 (50.8%)	23 (35.4%)	3	
3	I want to be well educated	1 (1.5%)	11 (16.9%)	53 (81.5%)	4	
4	The subjects I learn in school are interesting	5 (7.7%)	27 (41.5%)	33 (50.8%)	4	
5	I enjoy doing academic tasks	9 (13.8%)	26 (40.0%)	30 (46.2%)	3	
6	Having good scores makes me happy		9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	4	
7	Learning in school would make me have a good future	2 (3.1%)	3 (4.6%)	24 (36.9%)	36 (55.4%)	4
8	I love asking questions in class	9 (13.8%)	26 (40.0%)	16 (24.6%)	14 (21.5%)	2
9	I teach my fellow students things they do not understand	4 (6.2%)	14 (21.5%)	37 (56.9%)	10 (15.4%)	3
10	I wish to read more books before graduating from this school		6 (9.2%)	29 (44.6%)	30 (46.2%)	3
11	I wish lesson time was longer than what it is now	13 (20.0%)	24 (36.9%)	15 (23.1%)	13 (20.0%)	2
12	I expect my teachers to give me more take-home assignments	10 (15.4%)	26 (40.0%)	18 (27.7%)	11 (16.9%)	2
13	I usually ask that my parents buy me more textbooks	12 (18.5%)	15 (23.1%)	21 (32.3%)	17 (26.2%)	3
14	I wake to read my books mostly in the night	8 (12.3%)	10 (15.4%)	22 (33.8%)	25 (38.5%)	3

Note. *Midpoint = 2.5, Med = Median values.

Source: The author (2024).

Table 2 presents undergraduates' level of learning interest from single parents in the sampled university. From the Table, most respondents responded positively to the items on their learning interest (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13 and 14). However, most of the respondents reported that it is untrue that they love asking questions in class (Item 8) or that lesson time is longer (Item 11), nor expect their teachers to give them more take-home assignments (Item 12). Overall, the median values of most items are above the midpoint of 2.5. This implies that undergraduates from single-parenting backgrounds at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti have high learning interests.

RQ 2. What is the level of academic engagement of students from single-parenting backgrounds?

Table 3

Level of Academic Engagement of Single-Parenting Undergraduates

S/N	Items <i>Academic Engagement</i>	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often	Med
1	Talked about career plans with your academic adviser	32 (49.2%)	17 (26.2%)	7 (10.8%)	9 (13.8%)	2
2	Come to class to complete assignments	8 (12.3%)	24 (36.9%)	12 (18.5%)	21 (32.3%)	3

3	Worked with classmates to prepare assignments	2 (3.1%)	21 (32.3%)	22 (33.8%)	20 (30.8%)	3
4	Tutored other classmates voluntarily	20 (30.8%)	20 (30.8%)	14 (21.5%)	11 (16.9%)	2
5	Make presentations on projects in class	17 (26.2%)	18 (27.7%)	18 (27.7%)	12 (18.5%)	2
6	Contributed to class discussions	5 (7.7%)	20 (30.8%)	20 (30.8%)	20 (30.8%)	3
7	Ask questions during classes	16 (24.6%)	27 (41.5%)	10 (15.4%)	12 (18.5%)	2
8	Worked on projects that required the integration of ideas from various sources	7 (10.8%)	18 (27.7%)	27 (41.5%)	13 (20.0%)	3
9	Used ideas from different courses to complete assignments	2 (3.1%)	9 (13.8%)	33 (50.8%)	21 (32.3%)	3
10	Used e-learning facilities to communicate with lecturers	12 (18.5%)	20 (30.8%)	19 (29.2%)	14 (21.5%)	3
11	Participate in service learning on community projects within the school	19 (29.2%)	23 (35.4%)	12 (18.5%)	11 (16.9%)	2
12	Concerned about the grading system of the school	5 (7.7%)	11 (16.9%)	26 (40.0%)	23 (35.4%)	3
13	Engaged classmates in topical discussions	9 (13.8%)	19 (29.2%)	19 (29.2%)	18 (27.7%)	3
14	Discussed your performance with academic advisers after the semester	38 (58.5%)	12 (18.5%)	4 (6.2%)	11 (16.9%)	1
15	Applied concepts to practical situations	4 (6.2%)	26 (40.0%)	21 (32.3%)	14 (21.5%)	3
16	Worked in the laboratory	31 (47.7%)	11 (16.9%)	11 (16.9%)	12 (18.5%)	2
17	Attend seminars/workshops	8 (12.3%)	15 (23.1%)	19 (29.2%)	23 (35.4%)	3

Note. *Midpoint = 2.5, Med = Median values.

Source: The author (2024).

Table 3 presents the level of academic engagement of undergraduates from single-parent backgrounds at the university. From the Table, most respondents responded positively to the items on their academic engagements (Items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15 and 17). However, most of the respondents reported that they will never talk about their career plans with their academic advisers (Item 1), discuss their performance after the semester (Item 14), or work in the laboratory (Item 16). Overall, the median values of most items are above the midpoint of 2.5. This implies that undergraduates from single-parenting backgrounds at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti have high academic engagements.

RQ 3. What is the level of psychological well-being of students from single-parenting backgrounds?

Table 4

Level of Psychological Well-Being of Single-Parenting Undergraduates

S/N	Items <i>Psychological Well-being</i>	Never	Very Untrue	Untrue	Slightly True	Very True	Med
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1	I like most parts of my personality	7 (10.8%)	1 (1.5%)		17 (26.2%)	40 (61.5%)	4
2	I am pleased with how things have turned out so far in life	12 (18.5%)	3 (4.6%)	17 (26.2%)	16 (24.6%)	17 (26.2%)	3
3	I have a strong sense of purpose in my life.	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)		10 (15.4%)	53 (81.5%)	4
4	I am growing as a person.	1 (1.5%)			12 (18.5%)	52 (80.0%)	4
5	I have meaningful relationships with others.	7 (10.8%)	1 (1.5%)	5 (7.7%)	14 (21.5)	38 (58.5%)	4
6	I am in control of my life.	8 (12.3%)		5 (7.7%)	17 (26.2%)	35 (53.8%)	4
7	I often feel optimistic about the future.	6 (9.2%)	1 (1.5%)		7 (10.8%)	51 (78.5%)	4
8	I am capable of achieving my goals.	2 (3.1%)			12 (18.5%)	51 (78.5%)	4
9	I am satisfied with my personal growth.	6 (9.2%)	3 (4.6%)	6 (9.2%)	23 (35.4%)	27 (41.5%)	3
10	I am committed to a larger course.	7 (10.8%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (3.1%)	16 (24.6%)	39 (60.0%)	4
11	I am not among those who wander through life	1 (1.5%)		1 (1.5%)	11 (16.9%)	52 (80.0%)	4
12	I am satisfied with my relationships.	6 (9.2%)		1 (1.5%)	14 (21.5%)	44 (67.7%)	4
13	I can manage stress effectively.	5 (7.7%)	1 (1.5%)	6 (9.2%)	17 (26.2%)	36 (55.4%)	4
14	The demands of everyday life often get me down	2 (3.1%)	2 (3.1%)	11 (16.9%)	12 (18.5%)	38 (58.5%)	4
15	I feel disappointed in many ways about my achievements in life	6 (9.2%)	2 (3.1%)	18 (27.7%)	17 (26.2%)	22 (33.8%)	3
16	Maintaining close relationships has been difficult for me	9 (13.8%)	1 (1.5%)	20 (30.8%)	9 (13.8%)	26 (40.0%)	3
17	I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life	4 (6.2%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	14 (21.5%)	45 (69.2%)	4
18	I am influenced by people with strong opinions	10 (15.4%)		18 (27.7%)	9 (13.8%)	28 (43.1%)	3

Note. *Midpoint = 2.5, Med = Median values.

Source: The author (2024).

Table 4 presents the level of psychological well-being of undergraduates from single parents in the university. From the Table above, 55.4% of the sampled respondents had good psychological well-being (Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 17). Moreover, the median values of all the items on psychological well-being are above the midpoint of 2.5. This implies that undergraduates from single-parenting backgrounds in the sampled university also have very high psychological well-being.

RQ.4: What is the relationship between learning interest, academic engagement and psychological well-being of single parenting students in FUOYE?

Table 5

Relationship among Learning Interests, Academic Engagement, and Psychological Well-being of Single Parenting Undergraduates

Variables	Learning Interest	Academic Engagement	Psychological Wellbeing
Learning Interest	1	0.651**	0.402**
Academic Engagement		1	0.467**
Psychological Wellbeing			1

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels; N=65.

Source: The author (2024).

Table 5 shows the direction of the relationship among learning interest, academic engagement and psychological well-being of single-parenting undergraduates in the university. It can be observed that no pair of the variables has a value as high as 0.9. Hence, there is no redundancy or multicollinearity among the variables. The inter-correlation matrix in Table 5 reveals a positive and significant relationship between learning interest and academic engagement ($r=0.65$). Also, a positive and significant relationship exists between learning interest and psychological well-being ($r=0.40$). Further, the result shows a positive and significant relationship between academic engagement and psychological well-being ($r=0.47$). This implies a positive relationship among learning interest, educational engagement, and psychological well-being of single-parenting undergraduates at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Discussion

This study has assessed the relationship between academic engagement, learning interest, and the psychological well-being of students from single-parenting backgrounds. The results show that single-parented undergraduates at the sampled university have high levels of psychological well-being, academic engagement, and learning interests. Interestingly, education has excellent cultural and sociological inclinations, given Nigerian society's cultural beliefs, particularly in Western Nigeria, where this study is conducted. Our findings may have resulted in high levels of academic engagement, learning interest and psychological well-being. Education is highly valued in Nigerian society as a means of achieving success (Gbeleyi et al., 2022). Communities and parents frequently support students' academic success, creating an atmosphere where these students are inspired to do well and attain higher. This contradicts the findings of Amato et al. (2015), who revealed that students from single-parent households usually do worse academically than their peers from two-parent families.

Because students believe that education would enhance their socioeconomic situation, this cultural background encourages academic involvement and benefits their psychological well-being (Gbeleyi et al., 2022). Technology integration into the educational process has been the main focus of recent educational changes in Nigeria. For example, programs like e-learning and establishing several university computer laboratories have considerably raised students' interest in information and communication technology (ICT)-related courses (Omokhabi, 2023). Students' high computer curiosity and confidence levels were associated with better learning outcomes and increased academic engagement (Adebowale et al., 2010; Ojokheta et al., 2016; 2018). These, amongst other factors, also promoted these students' psychological well-being. These findings support those of Herpratiwi and

Tohir (2022) and Kihwele and Mkomwa (2023), who showed an appreciable level of these variables in their sample.

The finding also reveals a significant positive relationship between learning interest, academic engagement, psychological well-being, and single parenting. Single parents (aware of their societal status) invest so much time and resources in ensuring their kids outperform them and their peers in all ramifications. They are highly involved in their kid's educational and academic activities, as they would not want society to view them as failures or products of failed homes. Students learning satisfaction stems from their learning interests and academic engagement, favourably influencing their psychological well-being, irrespective of their parental status. Given the high levels of learning interest, educational engagement, and psychological well-being of students sampled in this study, other learning outcomes not considered in this current study are likely to be high about their parental involvement. Since these students are already adults, their educational decisions (amongst other choices) depend on their parents. This study's findings agree with the findings of Amante et al. (2022), Ernawati (2023), Febriani et al. (2023), Hayek et al. (2022), Imami et al. (2021), Mihret et al. (2019), Nofrizal et al. (2020), and Zahara and Azwarni (2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has examined the levels of undergraduates' learning interest, academic engagement, and psychological well-being and how these relate to their single parentage. Findings indicate the sampled undergraduates' high learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being. Moreover, a positive and significant relationship exists between undergraduates' learning interests, academic engagement, psychological well-being, and single parentage. According to this study's findings, it is recommended that "special support" be made available for single parents and students from such backgrounds by the government and non-governmental organisations to boost these single parents' involvement in the educational and academic life of these students. Contextually, all forms of disregard and contempt against single parents and students from single-parenting backgrounds be ameliorated or eradicated by legislation and other enforcement agencies. Governments should give students and their single parents social rehabilitation to foster their social and economic well-being. Single parents should not be treated as trash (or second-class citizens) by society but instead be given opportunities to thrive economically and socially.

Limitation of the Study

Because of its quantitative nature, this study may not have accurately captured the subjective and contextual experiences of the undergraduates in the sample because it does not represent a representative sample. The study's conclusions and generalisability may have been impacted by self-reporting bias and the deliberate selection of only one public university from Nigeria's numerous universities.

Suggestions for Further Research

While reviewing scientific publications, we may identify unresolved aspects of the problem that extend beyond the scope of our research. Researchers could consider conducting similar studies at the early childhood and primary education levels. Conducting a similar study through mixed research could benefit the research community. A systematic literature review regarding the variables in this study and within the context of Africa would be commendable. Conducting a similar study with a more extensive scope and sample could give a more generalizable result. There is a need for further studies to look into the 'mindfulness' state of students from single-parent homes and how this relates to their psychological wellness and academic outcomes. Academic outcome measures of students (outside this current study)

from single-parent homes can be further examined in conjunction with other students' psychological traits.

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Conflict of Interest Declaration

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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