

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
7/25/08	_____	_____
Oct 17 2005 05 01 08	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

MSU is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\circ\datedue.pm3-p.1

**SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY ADOLESCENTS
AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

By

David Ziegler Messner

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration

Major Professor: Dr. Philip Cusick

1996

ABSTRACT

SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY ADOLESCENTS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by

David Ziegler Messner

The researcher's purpose in the study was to describe student perceptions of life in a single-parent family and how they relate to academic achievement and school attendance. Was life in a single-parent family related to academic performance? Adolescents living in single-parent family homes (119) and adolescents living in dual-parent family homes (119) from two middle-class suburban school districts were surveyed. Class and race factors were held constant and an almost exclusively Caucasian students were surveyed. A survey instrument was developed while interviewing 18 single-parent family students, 18 dual-parent family students, and 10 single parents. Single and dual-parent students' academic performances were compared using t-tests. No significant differences in attendance rates and GPA between single and dual-parent family students were found.

Combined comparisons were made between the single-parent and dual-parent students. Attendance and responses to questions in one of five different areas were compared: relationship between parents, student relationship with each parent, family configuration, student-perceived role in the home, and student-perceived family economic status. The greatest difference was in the students' perceived relationship between their parents. A higher percentage of dual-parent than single-parent students had high GPAs and/or good attendance and viewed their parents as having a supportive relationship.

Teachers and other school personnel view single-parent students as dependent and vulnerable children. These "infantilized" adolescents suffer distress in the home and still attend school. And so, single-parent students work more like adults than children.

In this study the level of cooperation among potential single-parent student interviewees was varied. Surveyed students had reconciled their family situations to the point that they were willing to communicate their feelings. Readers must remember that single-parent student information is based on those willing to share. This limitation pervades research in this area.

You are only down when you refuse to get up.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my doctoral committee: Chairman Dr. Philip Cusick, Dr. Samuel Moore, and Dr. Louis Romano.

I would also like to thank a host of people and two school districts for their cooperation and support in my pursuit of a doctoral degree. Special thanks to those that helped me along the way: Cheri Bates, Jennifer Buchannan, Mary Coburn, Jeff Dagg, Ellen Doss, Dr. Terry Davidson, Mike Dodge, Patricia Elliott, Mike Fisher, Dr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Sharon Flynn, Dr. John Hansen, Paul Jolly, Patrick Kreger, Laurence LeBlanc, Adam Messner, Chye Messner, Felicity Messner, Robyn Messner, Barbara Neff, Dr. Lewis Peters, Alvin Ritt, Dr. David Rodwell, Joseph Romeo, Dianne Stephenson, Dr. Ross Stephenson, Dr. Gil Stiefel, Aaron Ward, Richard Weaver, Dr. Suzanne Wilson, and Judy Woolston

In memory of Ron VanErmen and Harold Ziegler Messner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER I.....	1
Background.....	11
Exploratory Questions.....	15
Hypotheses.....	17
Sample and Methodology.....	18
Research Significance.....	23
Conclusion.....	24
CHAPTER II.....	25
Literature Review.....	25
Evidence of the Phenomenon.....	26
Loss.....	28
Parent-Parent Relationship.....	31
Parent-Child Relationship.....	33
Family Configuration.....	36
Child's Family Role.....	39
Family Finances.....	43
Problems in School.....	46
Mixed Findings.....	48
School and Parent Response to the Issue.....	50
Conclusion.....	53
CHAPTER III.....	56
Purpose and Introduction.....	56
Hypotheses.....	58
Study Design.....	60
Sample.....	61
Variables.....	66
Data Collection.....	68
Data Analysis.....	77
Summary.....	79
CHAPTER IV.....	80
Introduction of Data Analysis.....	80
Hypothesized Findings.....	80

First Hypothesis.....	81
Second Hypothesis.....	88
Five Family Related Variables.....	91
Third Hypothesis.....	94
Fourth Hypothesis.....	100
Fifth Hypothesis.....	108
Sixth Hypothesis.....	110
Seventh Hypothesis.....	112
Eighth Hypothesis.....	112
Conclusion.....	120
CHAPTER V.....	128
Purpose.....	128
First Hypothesis.....	129
Second Hypothesis.....	130
Third Hypothesis.....	131
Fourth Hypothesis.....	133
Fifth Hypothesis.....	136
Sixth Hypothesis.....	137
Seventh Hypothesis.....	138
Eighth Hypothesis.....	142
Unexpected Findings.....	143
Infantilization.....	144
Areas of Future Research.....	146
Final Conclusions.....	147

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 - United States Families with Either One or Two Parents.....	3
Table 1.2 - U.S. Single Parent Living Arrangements.....	4
Table 1.3 - United States Single-parent Families.....	6
Table 1.4 - Grade Point Average Comparisons	22
Table 2.1 - Reasons for the Creation of Single-parent Families	27
Table 3.1 - Student Living Arrangement.....	71
Table 3.2 - Students Surveyed in May.....	74
Table 3.3 - 1989 Student Responses to Parents' Mutual Support.....	78
Table 4.1 - Full-day Attendance Rate Comparison.....	82
Table 4.2 - Partial-day Attendance Rate Comparison.....	84
Table 4.3 - Grade Point Average Comparison.....	86
Table 4.4 - Interquartile Comparison.....	89
Table 4.5 - Mean GPA and Days Absent.....	90
Table 4.6 - Attendance and Perceptions of Parent's Interrelationship.....	95
Table 4.7 - Combined Comparisons Parent's Interrelationship and GPA.....	97
Table 4.8 - Student's Perception of Time Spent with Mother.....	101
Table 4.9 - Student/Mother Relationship and GPA.....	102
Table 4.10 - Maternal School Support and GPA.....	102

Table 4.11 - Student/Father Relationship and GPA.....	103
Table 4.12 - Paternal School Support and GPA.....	103
Table 4.13 - Student/Mother Relationship and Attendance.....	104
Table 4.14 - Maternal School Support and Attendance.....	104
Table 4.15 - Student/Father Relationship and Attendance.....	105
Table 4.16 - Paternal School Support and Attendance.....	105
Table 4.17 - Time Spent with Father in the Last Three Years.....	106
Table 4.19 - Full-day Attendance Rate Comparison.....	114
Table 4.20 - Partial-day Attendance Rate Comparison.....	116
Table 4.21 - 1989 - 1994 Grade Point Average Comparison.....	118
Table 4.22 - Largest Response Differentials.....	125
Table 4.23 - Full-day Attendance/GPA Comparison.....	126

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 - Children Living with One Parent 1990.....	5
Figure 1.2 - Children Living with One Parent 1980.....	5
Figure 1.3 - Children Living with One Parent 1970.....	6
Figure 1.4 - U.S. Single-parent Family %.....	7
Figure 4.1 - Full Day Absence Comparison	83
Figure 4.2 - Partial-day Absence Comparison.....	85
Figure 4.3 - Grade Point Average Comparison.....	87
Figure 4.4 - Time Spent with Mother and Academic Performance.....	99
Figure 4.5 - Family Size and Academic Performance.....	109
Figure 4.6 - Student Responsibility for Chores and Academic Performance...	111
Figure 4.7 - 1989 and 1994 Full Day Attendance Comparison.....	115
Figure 4.8 - 1989 and 1994 Partial Day Attendance Rate Comparison.....	117
Figure 4.9 - 1989 and 1994 Grade Point Average Comparison.....	119

Chapter I

Purpose and Introduction

The researcher's purpose in the study was to describe students' perceptions of life in a single-parent family and to describe how these perceptions relate to the students' academic achievement and school attendance. Is life in a single-parent family related to the academic performance (grade point average) and rate of attendance of the students involved? Is successful academic achievement and good attendance an overriding value held by single-parent families? The conditions examined included the student's perception of the relationship between his/her biological parents; the relationship s/he had with each biological parent; the configuration of the family; the student's perception of his/her role within the family; and the student's perception of the family's economic condition. Among school educators, it is commonly assumed that single-parent families and the conditions that create single-parent families are responsible for (student) academic and behavioral problems in school. This study examines this belief. Middle class students from two suburban high school districts were the researcher's subjects.

A single-parent family is defined as consisting of a child or children living with only one biological parent. By definition, no other adults are living in the single-parent family. The parent present in the home is the person responsible for caring, feeding, supervising, and supporting the child or children in the

family. In contrast, a student living with both biological parents, in theory, has both parents sharing these responsibilities.

Single-parent family formation is caused by events such as death, divorce, and desertion. In the past, the usual cause of family disruption was the death of a parent; today the reasons are more likely to be divorce, separation, or birth outside of marriage (Zill & Rogers, 1988, p. 37). According to Current Populations Reports (U.S. Census Report, 1991), the growth in out-of-wedlock births, coupled with a climbing divorce rate, has led to the rising proportion of children living with one parent.

The configuration of American families is indeed changing. According to a 1991 U.S. Census Bureau survey of 57,400 households, the number of single-parent families, most headed by women, has nearly tripled since 1970. The census report stated, "The tremendous increase in the number of single parents has been one of the most profound changes in family composition to have occurred during the past quarter century" (Bianchi & McAurther, 1991, p. 10). The percentage of children living with both parents is declining. The percentage of children living with both parents went from 87.1% in 1970 to 78.5% in 1980 to 71.9% in 1990 (see Table 1.1). The impact of the changing student population on our educational system needs to be more widely understood. Previously held assumptions, beliefs, and conclusions held about single-parent family students may not now hold.

While the increase in the number of children living in single-parent homes has recently started to decrease, no indicators predict a rate of decline. Current estimates are that a third of today's children will experience their parents' divorce and almost a half of today's children will spend some time in a single-parent family (Zill & Rogers, 1988).

Continued research on single-parent family children is needed. Nollar and Callan (1991, p. 106) stated, "Despite the increase[d] divorce [rate], we know relatively little about how the breakup affects adolescents." According to Ahrons and Rodgers (1987, p. 209), "The current social context surrounding divorce is sufficiently changed to warrant questioning the application of earlier research findings to families in the latter part of the 20th Century." The researcher's purpose was to provide current and additional information for educators.

Table 1.1

United States Families with Either One or Two Parents

	1970	1980	1990
Two Parent Family	87%	79%	72%
One Parent family	13%	21%	28%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, December, 1990, Current population reports. Populations Characteristics, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements"

Table 1.2

U.S. Single Parent Living Arrangements

(Numbers in the thousands)	1990		1980		1970	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Mothers						
Living with mother	8,398	86.1	6,230	90.0	3,415	89.7
Divorced	3,194	32.8	2,721	39.3	1,109	29.1
Separated	1,557	16.0	1,483	21.4	962	25.3
Never married	2,775	28.5	1,063	15.4	248	6.5
Widowed	593	6.1	703	10.2	682	17.9
Spouse absent	1,836	18.8	1,743	25.2	1,377	36.2
Fathers						
Living with father	1,351	13.9	690	10.0	393	10.3
Divorced	700	7.2	340	4.9	(NA)	(NA)
Never married	345	3.5	63	.9	22	.6
Widowed	89	.9	107	1.5	124	3.3
Spouse absent	217	2.2	181	2.6	247	6.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, December, 1990, Current population reports. Populations Characteristics, Series p.-20, no. 447, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements."

Figure 1.1

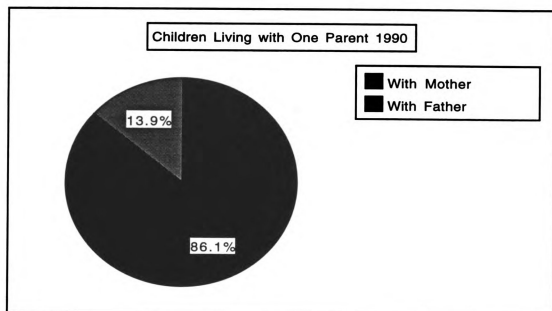


Figure 1.2

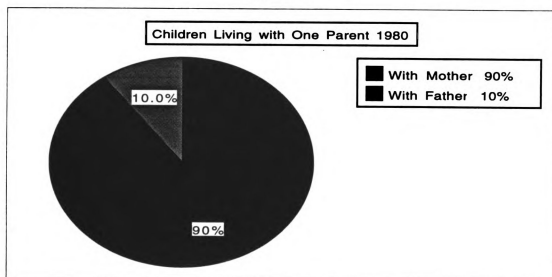


Figure 1.3

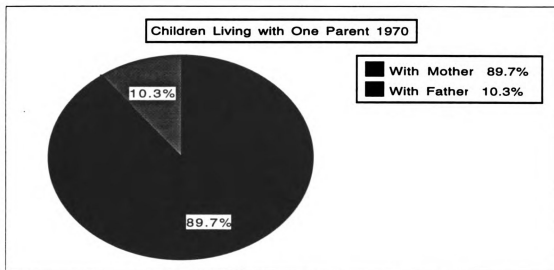


Table 1.3

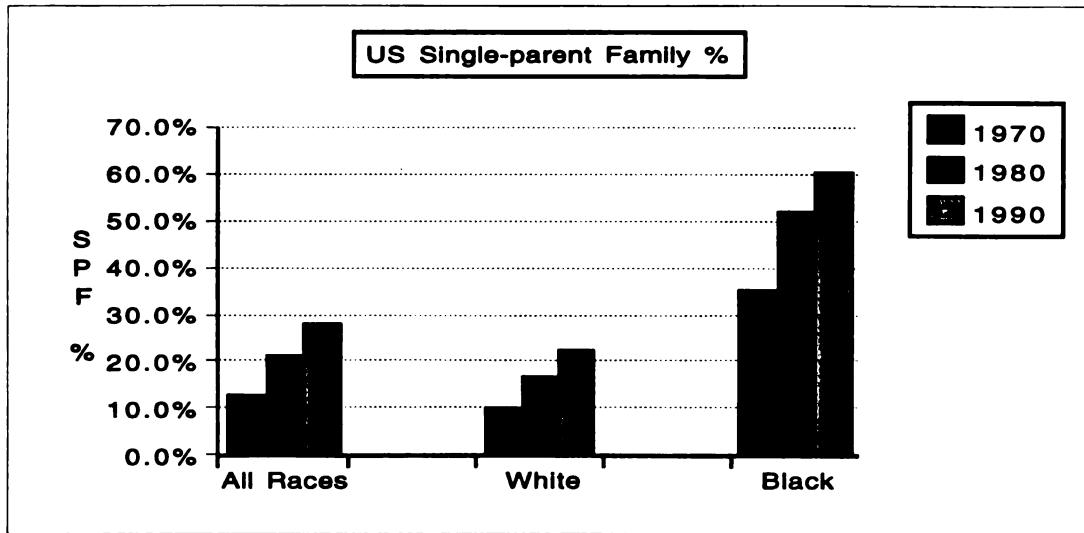
United States Single-parent Families

Percentage of Single-parent families (by race)

Family by race	Years	1970	1980	1990
		%	%	%
All Races		12.8	21.5	28.1
White		10.1	17.1	22.6
Black		35.6	51.9	60.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, December, 1990. Current population reports, Populations Characteristics, Series p.-20, no. 447, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements."

Figure 1.4



The statistics in Table 1.2 and Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 cannot be completely understood unless they are disaggregated by race (provided in Table 1.3 and Figure 1.3). In 1991, the percentage of black single-parent family groupings was almost three times that of white single-parent family groupings. The statistics in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 are skewed by inner-city minority populations. Families from white, middle-class communities are less likely to suffer the stresses of racism, violence, immigration, and cultural variation factors that could obscure a focus on single parenting (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989, p.xiv-xv). The suburban single-parent families will likely have fewer negative stresses impacting their lives, thus making it easier to examine the effects of living in a single-parent family on academic performance.

It is also true that minorities constitute a disproportionate share of the poor, and that economic well-being impacts the family. In 1990, over 50% of the single-parent African-American families were living in poverty vs. slightly over 30% of the single-parent white families (Farrell, 1992, p. 91). Suburban families

are not, in general, ravaged by hunger. The single-parent family statistics need to be disaggregated to be better understood (Zimmerman, 1995).

A commonly accepted belief among educators is that students from single-parent families, ipso facto, do worse in school. According to Schaffer (1990, p. 192), "One study described how teachers, social workers, and others made less favorable judgments about children when told they came from single-parent families than when told they were from intact two-parent families." This self-fulfilling prophecy works to the single-parent family students' detriment.

Among teacher-held beliefs is that single-parent family children have less academic success in school than do dual-parent family children. "Schools also assume single parents lack resources to assist children" (Wanat, 1993). They earn lower grades and are absent more often. Single-parent family children have low self-esteem and single parents have less control of their children. Many teachers contend that the non-resident parent has little or no influence on the development of his/her children. More personal conflict with family members is witnessed by the students in single-parent families. Greater financial pressure is put upon single-parent family students and they are more likely to be needy. The Los Angeles County Board of Education instituted seminars to assist teachers in dealing with students from "reconstituted homes" including academic and behavior problems (Leerhsen, 1985).

Many single parents believe that teachers have a bias toward their children and them. In a single-parent survey, Clay (1980, p. 41) reported that single parents had heard almost half of school personnel mention "broken home" or other stereotyped language when speaking of a single-parent family. The parents thought the teachers would expect the children to have problems. According to Klein (1973, p. 6), terms like broken home, fractured family, or

diminished family help perpetuate the belief that a single-parent home cannot be whole and the students are the victims. Indeed, Drake (1981, p. 156) reported that single parents were acting on their concerns about school personnel attitudes toward single-parent families (and their children) when she wrote, "Single parents will say little to their schools for fear of negative stereotyping."

The media also help perpetuate the negative view of single-parent family students held by many in our society. In a May 21, 1990, Chicago Tribune article about students and public education, the author repeatedly used the term "broken homes" to connote disadvantaged students (Thomas, 1990).

Bernard (1982, p. 67) reported that negative beliefs perpetuate the idea that single-parent family homes are "broken homes" which cannot be whole or complete. Caple (1988, p. 96) concluded, "In general, society has not held its single-parent families in high esteem." Divorce has an inherent power to make people unhappy. Historically, single mothers have been viewed as either promiscuous women, fallen women, gently weeping widows, or poor divorcees whose husbands callously left them (Klein, 1973, p. 6). These images may be changing, but the change is slow. Few positive connotations are associated with the one-parent family.

The negative portrayal of single-parent families reflects beliefs held by our society. However, Percival (1993) refers to the negative beliefs about the single-parent family as the "myth about the 'dysfunctional' single-parent family." Jenkins (1975, p. 24) stated, "(The) one parent family has not proven to be psychologically dysfunctional - its main problems are socioeconomic." Levitan and Belous (1981, p. 68) stated, "Some analysts assert that the generally held view about the burden carried by children of divorced parents reflects more

traditional morals and mores than empirical evidence."

The academic achievement of single-parent family students is similar to dual-parent family students. Cashion (1982, p. 3) reported, "Research evidence indicates that the majority of single-mother families are as successful as two-parent families when compared on measure of emotional adjustment and scholastic achievement."

The number of children affected by the creation of single-parent families and the number of children living in single-parent families has grown. This growth increases the importance of single parenting. The morals and mores of our society and some of the research encourages the belief that existence in a single-parent family is associated with school failure.

The information obtained from this study will provide a clearer comparison of the reality of living in a single-parent family. The beliefs held by many school personnel that students of single-parent families are suffering from low self-esteem and personal conflict that affect their rate of attendance and academic performance were tested. A current inspection of single-parent family students' academic performance was completed. Their academic performance was compared with students living with both biological parents. The comparison provided information from which more informed decisions affecting larger student bodies can be made.

The researcher's purpose and the common beliefs surrounding the issue have been described. In the next section, the background variables are identified and existing research examined. The single-parent family formation's impact on young people is considered. The relationship between parents and its effect on adolescents and the adolescent's relationship with each parent are explored. The family configuration and its relationship to student academic

performance and attendance will be reviewed as will the impact of the student's perceived family role and the family financial status.

Background

The researcher's purpose in the study was to describe student perceptions of life in a single-parent family and to describe how they relate to student academic achievement and school attendance. Single parent is a blanket term. Numerous variations and twists on family life are associated with children living with one parent. The background section will enumerate major elements associated with single parenting.

The first element to be examined is the loss suffered by the child when a single-parent family is created. According to Coddington (1972, p. 205), parental separation is potentially the most stressful life event a child can undergo. The level of stress for the adolescent of a single-parent family will be higher than that of a child living with two parents. The stress may come from moving, family problems, and parental conflict (Kalter, 1990). Children experience the grieving process with differing degrees of intensity and for varying lengths of time. All of the grieving process stages do not appear the same in each child.

The next element, the relationship between parents, is a major contributing factor in a student's school achievement. Marital discord rather than family framework is a more important factor concerning the children's perception of the effects of practical problems, consequences for social life, intimate relationships, health, and safety (Goetting, 1981). In-the-home strife and conflict prior to a separation of parents is contrasted to a non-contested

creation of a single-parent family. A good portion of the "broken home" impact may relate to how the child viewed family life and parental relationships prior to the disintegration. Kalter (1990, p. 369) stated, "Divorcing parents are frequently angry at each other." Grade school students had lower self-concept scores where there was parental conflict, regardless of the family structure (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987, p. 78). Hess and Camara (1979) indicated parental conflict is a better predictor of children's maladjustment than is the marital status of the parents. According to these authors, to think a child can continue to function academically (with the same degree of concentration, attention span, interest level, and desire to learn) at a time of family crisis is unrealistic.

Another major element effecting adolescents, which may effect school performance, is their perceived relationship with each parent. According to Nollar & Callan (1991, p. 44) adolescents have about the same number of communication problems with mothers and fathers. One complaint mentioned by both the resident and non-resident parent is the reduction of contact and time spent with their children. In fact, a number of fathers, as non-custodial parents, reported a negative change in their relationship with their children due to a reduction in contact (Kitson, 1992, pp. 189-190). The importance of the child's post-separation contact is critical, even with the non-custodial parent. However, many parents following separation become unavailable to their children producing a "moratorium" on parenting (Kitson, 1992, p. 186). The reactions of children to this parental distress can range from acts of violence to quiet depression.

The family configuration, another element, can relate to the adolescent's academic performance (GPA and rate of attendance in school). The family configuration means the number of children in the family, the birthing order, and

the gender of the remaining family members. The changed elements of the family structure after the split may affect the student. The number of children a family has may affect school performance. The adolescent's birthing order may also be a factor. Being the first versus a later born child may make a difference. The gender of the parent and child (children) in a single-parent family can affect the behavior of the student(s). In divorce situations, maternal child custody is often assumed.

As a child gets older, the restructuring of family roles occurs. A family break-up may cause a change in family roles, level of authority, and responsibility. The change in family roles is an element to consider. The remaining parent may or may not consolidate all of the authority. The sharing of power can occur. The adolescent ownership level in decisions made in the home may increase. The student's role in the decision making process and level of responsibilities may affect his/her actions in school. The student may embrace, revolt, or absent him/herself from the learning loop.

In a study by Kaslow and Schwartz (1987, p. 190), many student respondents said they had assumed more household responsibilities earlier in their lives because their parents had divorced. Due to financial stresses and the residential parent's limited availability, older children may be given child-care and household responsibilities that exceed their developmental level. Textor (1989) reported that though such responsibilities may foster a sense of maturity, they may also interfere with the successful negotiation of age-appropriate developmental tasks.

According to Ahrons and Rodgers (1987), executing an organization's (e.g., a family) plan requires structure, and those within the organization help shape it. All families have rules related to the social and general behavior of

the children. The rules are not always clear, nor are families always aware of who is primarily responsible for a particular standard. Many children assume a greater family role, well beyond their years, as they undertake to psychologically advise and physically nurture a troubled parent. If an appropriate level of authority is placed in the hands of the adolescent, the experience can be rewarding; when it is inappropriate, the results can be damaging to the youth.

If an adolescent exhibits manipulative behavior, this behavior can reflect the child's sense of powerlessness and feelings of having been moved around without consideration of his/her feelings (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980, p. 169). In the school setting, these feelings are often reversed. The child may victimize others and/or himself/herself. The student may "bully" and/or attempt to control others in school.

The young adult's perception of change in his/her single-parent family financial resources can be an element effecting school performance. According to Farrell (1992, p. 91), single-parent family children living in poverty often do not receive a good education and adequate health care. In divorced families, the newly created family most often experiences a loss of income. Warren and Konanc (1989, p. 306) indicated that, as a rule, most single-parent families are economically distressed. With a reduction of finances, the children may feel a sense of deprivation. Further, the remaining parent may experience increased pressure to generate income to support the family. If a parent works for more income, the result may be that the adolescent sees less of that parent (Peterson, 1989, p. 88). This sort of change will affect the self-esteem of the children.

Children respond in a variety of ways to economic pressure. Many respond by seeking a part-time job. The time and effort invested in a part-time

job puts pressure on the student to devote less time to his/her studies. The student may become more organized and remain focused on school activities, or may become less focused on the school work and activities.

In summary, there are a number of elements to consider when trying to understand the impact of single parenting on student performance in school. The issue is indeed complex. The following exploratory questions identify areas of this complex concept, single parenting, that demand further understanding.

Exploratory Questions

The researcher's purpose in the study was to describe student perceptions of life in a single-parent family and to describe how these perceptions relate to the student academic achievement and school attendance. In this study the researcher sought to determine if life in a single-parent family is related to the academic performance (grade point average) and rate of attendance of the students effected.

1. Is there a difference between adolescent single-parent families and adolescents from dual-parent families regarding school performance (school attendance and/or grade point average)?
2. Is there a difference between adolescents from single-parent families and dual-parent families regarding their perception of the relationship between their biological parents and academic performance?

3. Is there a difference between adolescents from single-parent families and dual-parent families regarding the perceived relationship with each biological parent and school performance?

4. Is there a difference between adolescents from single-parent families and adolescents from dual-parent families regarding family configuration (number of children in the family, birth position and gender of the adolescent(s)/parent living in the home) and school performance?

5. Is there a difference between adolescents from single-parent families and dual-parent families regarding the adolescent's perceived role in the family and school performance?

6. Is there a difference between adolescents from single-parent families and dual-parent families regarding the economic condition of the family and school performance?

7. Is there a difference in academic performance between the single-parent and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1989 from those surveyed in 1994?

This study's specific hypotheses are:

Hypotheses

1. A single-parent family students' academic performance (school attendance or grade point average) is likely to be significantly different from that of students living with both parents.

2. When combined, single-parent family students' academic performance, school attendance, and GPA will differ significantly from that of students living with both parents.

3. When comparing the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students having similar perceptions of the biological parents relationship, the single-parent family students' academic performance will be significantly lower.

4. Single-parent family students with similarly perceived student/parent relationships to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly different academic performance.

5. Single-parent family students with similar family configurations to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly different academic performance.

6. Single-parent family students that perceive their role in their family similarly to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly lower academic performance.

7. Single-parent family students that perceive their household economic experience similarly to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly lower academic performance.

8. The academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1989 will not differ significantly from the single-parent family students and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1994.

The methodology used to seek answers to these questions is described next.

Sample and Methodology

The researcher first interviewed 10 single-parent family students, 5 single parents, and 3 former single parents. Along with the background information collected, these interviews were designed to establish the specific areas to be examined in the study. Single-parent family student and dual-parent family student interviews were completed to help create a survey instrument.

The second step was to identify the family configurations of students attending two suburban high schools grades nine through twelve. This was done by having the students complete an information sheet. One of the schools had an enrollment of about 600 students and the other's is over 2200 students. Both of these suburban Ann Arbor schools had similar student populations. Most students were Caucasian and living in middle-class families. During the 1988-89 school year, fewer than 5% of both student bodies were receiving government free or reduced lunch subsidies (Plymouth-Salem 5% and Dexter

3%). How, when, and why the students became members of single-parent families was discovered.

The 1600 students completing the information sheet, which determined with whom each student was living, represented 57% of the combined Dexter and Plymouth-Salem student bodies. In Dexter, 77% of the student body responded, while in Plymouth 52% of the students responded. Several elements are responsible for different student response rates. The researcher works in a supervisory capacity at Dexter High School and has direct access to students. In Plymouth-Salem, the researcher was viewed as an "outsider." The researcher's familiarity, credibility, and level of access was less. The number of research projects done in the Plymouth-Canton School District is high and teachers are protective of their instruction time. In some instances, when teachers were to give the students the forms to complete, they were never distributed. Plymouth-Salem High School is on a campus setting shared with Plymouth-Canton High School. When the information sheets were administered, many Salem students were attending classes at Canton High School (a ten minute walk from Salem), thus resulting in the lower response rate.

The third step was to select the appropriate students to survey. The participants came from a pool (1600 students) of Dexter and Plymouth-Salem High School students either living with one of their biological parents and no other adults, or living with both biological parents. All of the identified single-parent family students were asked to be surveyed. A group of 250 dual-parent family students were randomly selected to be surveyed.

The fourth step was to survey the randomly selected students from the two high schools grades nine through twelve. Responding were 119 students

from single-parent families and 119 students from dual-parent families. The students' grade point averages and attendance records were obtained from school records.

The fifth step was to analyze the data. Compared were the student responses to the survey questions focusing on five family-related areas. The five areas are the relationship between parents, relationship the student has with each parent, birthing order, student responsibility within the family, and family economics. Data comparisons and statistical significance were completed by Dr. David Rodwell, Executive Director, Research and Data Processing, Plymouth-Canton Community Schools. Chi-square, Cramer's V, Kendall's tau B and C, Somer's D (asymmetric and symmetric), and other tests were considered in determining the significance of compared data. Further, the survey responses of the single-parent and dual-parent family students that had similar rates of attendance in school were compared. The same was done by comparing those students with similar grade point averages.

The sixth step was to administer the questionnaire to a similar population five years later. Because the 1989 sample was small, the second gathering of data was warranted. The students that completed the surveys in 1989 are no longer in school. In the spring of 1994, single-parent and dual-parent students presently attending Dexter High School were given the same survey that was given in 1989.

The Dexter Community Schools now request students to list their present living arrangement on their emergency form (compliance is voluntary). Further, each parent must list a work and home phone number. Therefore, the students were not asked to complete the same information sheet that was administered in 1989.

All of the Dexter High School single-parent family students were asked to complete the survey that was administered in 1989. All of the single-parent family students attending Dexter High School were asked to participate in the study. Collected data were given to Dr. David Rodwell. He processed the scan sheets and analyzed the data. As of the spring of 1994, the percentage of Dexter High School students living with one parent had increased by four percent (1989 -13% vs. 1994 - 17%). The percentage of students receiving government free or reduced hot lunches decreased (1989 - 3% vs. 1994 - 1%). The same random selection process used in 1989 was used in 1994 to select the dual-parent family students to be surveyed.

The seventh step was to tabulate and compare the 1994 single-parent family student and dual-parent family student survey results. The rate of attendance and grade point averages of those surveyed were compared. Indeed, all of the comparisons done in 1989 were repeated with the 1994 survey data.

The eighth step was to compare the 1994 survey results with the 1989 survey results. The data collected from the two time periods were compared. Differences between single-parent children and dual-parent children were identified using t-tests and chi-square assessments. For example, grade point averages were compared (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4

Grade Point Average Comparisons

	Above a 2.5 GPA	Below a 2.5 GPA
1989 Single-parent family student	45.3%	54.7%
1994 Single-parent family student	53.7%	46.3%
1989 Dual-parent family student	58.0%	42.0%
1994 Dual-parent family student	61.2%	38.8%

Further, the school attendance of both groups was compared two ways: whole day attendance and partial day attendance (missing one or more classes but not the entire school day).

Comparisons were made between the single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' grade point average, whole day attendance, partial day attendance, and specific perceptions held by these students relating to their families. The family areas examined were the relationship between parents, student relationship with each parent, family configuration, responsibility level in the home, and family economic status.

Research Significance

Adequate and current research on student perception of the family influences on the adolescent's rate of attendance and academic performance is needed. As societal changes are experienced, schools must anticipate having more pupils from single-parent families. Consideration for the individual needs of these children, and their families as well, must be given priority as continued focus is placed upon educational reform in the United States (Hutchinson & Spangler-Hirsch, 1989, P. 18).

The composition of our schools and society continue to change. The pressures adolescents face vary. Not enough research has been done on student perceptions of family influences related to attending school and academic performance (GPA). Not enough is known about student perspectives of the impact of the family composition to draw significant conclusions. This study describes the perceptions of a group of adolescent students living in single-parent families and compares them with a group of students living with both biological parents. The students' answers to survey questions have been compared and the significant results reported.

Educators and parents from suburban school districts will benefit most from the study's findings because of the student population's suburban setting. The results may help dispel the belief that students coming from "broken homes" have greater difficulty with their academics and do not attend school as often as students living with both of their biological parents. Comparing grades and attendance records in the large student sample will paint an informational portrait. Educators and parents will be provided a current bibliography on the topic of single-parent families and information to add to their present

knowledge. Family structure elements have been identified. Their impact on student achievement and rate of attendance will be examined. Educators can use this information to support student academic growth.

Conclusion

Seven exploratory questions and eight hypotheses were developed to better understand if existence in or the creation of a single-parent family correlates with student's academic achievement and school attendance. Based on the reviews and interviews of current literature and interviews with single parents and their children, a comprehensive survey was constructed to provide data necessary to determine if any correlation exists. Two suburban school districts within communities with similar socio-economic and race distribution were selected to conduct the study.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The researcher's purpose in the study was to describe student's perceptions of life in a single-parent family and how these perceptions relate to academic achievement and school attendance. It was determined, whether life in a single-parent family is related to the academic performance (grade point average) and rate of attendance of the student involved?

The logic of the literature chapter is as follows. There is a lot of single parenting as evidenced by national statistics. It seems to be assumed by many educators that single parenting is the cause of many school problems. But the evidence shows that the relationship between school problems and divorce or single parenting is indirect. That is, divorce causes problems of loss, distance between parents, distance from parent(s), altered family structure, shifted responsibility, declined family finances, changed living location, etc. Those elements then result in less time, attention, and care for learning. These distractions lead to academic disruption and it follows that learning problems will show up in school or as school problems. These learning problems manifest themselves as poor grades, poor attendance, poor social behavior, and dropping out of school. However, in some studies, the findings relating living in a single-parent family to student academic performance are mixed or inconclusive (Nollar & Callan, 1991). Among educators, the subtle distinctions are ignored and they tend to view single parenting as a problem per se, and directly responsible for school problems. The intent of this study is to go into the particulars of the logic and see if and how school problems relate to divorce or

single parenting. The magnitude of the single-parent phenomenon is described first.

Evidence of the Phenomenon

Our entire society has been touched by the creation of single-parent families (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990, p. xxi). A rise in the number of single-parent family children began to occur between 1960 and 1970; the number of single-parent children increased twelve times as rapidly as the number of dual-parent family students. According to Current Populations Reports (1990, p. 10), the percentage of all children living in a single-parent family has gone from 9% in 1960 to 12.9% in 1970 and 28.1% in 1990 (U.S. Census Report, 1991).

Blended families with two parents are not included in the single-parent family figure. In 1960, 4.4% of the entire United States population lived in single-parent families; this number has increased to 8.3% in 1990 (Wallace, 1991).

Although the divorce rate has remained high for a full generation, just recently there is a greater willingness to acknowledge the serious impact the creation of single-parent families has had (Farrell, 1992). According to Zill and Rogers (1978, p. 31), "Over the past 25 to 30 years, divorce has become common." Today one out of two marriages ends in divorce. In the 1950's, 80% of children grew up in families with both biological parents. By 1980, only 50% of the children could make that claim (Whitehead, 1993, pp. 47-50). Today fewer than ten percent of the American families fit the 1950's stereotype of the husband working and the wife taking care of the household with young children (Steinberg, 1988, p. 6).

Almost half of America's families have experienced separation (Ahrons &

Rodgers, 1987, p. 75). Whitehead (1993, p. 47) stated, "If this current trend continues fewer than half of all children born today will live continuously with their own mother and father throughout childhood."

For a growing number of single-parent families, the second parent was never present (see Table 2.1). According to Society Magazine (1992), "Out of wedlock births have rocketed." The percentages of different means by which single-parent families are formed in 1980 and 1990 are listed below:

Table 2.1

Reasons for the Creation of Single-parent Families

Parent Status	% of White Single-parent Family		% of Black Single-parent Family	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
Widowed	13	8	9	5
Divorced	52	49	25	20
Separated	28	24	37	23
Never Married	7	19	28	52
(Farrell, 1992, p.91)				

Zill and Rodgers (1978, p. 31) noted, "More unmarried women are bearing and rearing children." In 1990, the percentage of single-parent families created by parents that were never married had almost tripled among whites and nearly doubled among blacks.

Around 50% of all white single-parent families and a fifth of all black single-parent families are created by divorce. One unwed mother stated, "I had a baby because I wanted to have the experience before I was too old. My biological clock was ticking, but I was not ready for the married gig" (Chavez, 1988). Nearly 50% of the single-parent homes are headed by working mothers.

Teens in these families are more on their own than ever. According to Farrell (1992, p. 91), "Women's earning as a percent of men's wages for full-time work reached an all-time high of 71% in 1990, up from 60% a decade earlier. So from an economic perspective, women have less of an incentive to get or to stay married." Consequently, one of the reasons for female economic dependence has been reduced.

The pervasiveness of single parenting in our society has been described. Several phenomena attend or are likely to attend the creation of single-parent families. In the next several sections these will be addressed, particularly those that are likely to affect the children.

Loss

The first phenomenon to be addressed is loss. When a single-parent family is created, the children have the potential to suffer many losses, including the physical presence of a parent, a significant relationship with one or both parents, the existing family configuration, a certain role and set of responsibilities in the home, and financial support.

The loss of dual-parent family status occurs in several ways: separation, divorce, or death. In a study using an achievement test for comparison, children who had lost a parent through death scored, on average, higher than those who had suffered a loss through divorce, separation, or desertion. The children whose parent dies suffers the loss only once; the deceased parent never reenters the family dynamics. When parents separate, creating a single-parent family, the missing parent lives on and may repeatedly enter and exit the single-parent student's life. The missing parent's level of presence or absence

continues to be a factor in the child's development (Goetting, 1981, p. 355).

Suffering a loss through the death of or separation (divorce, separation, or desertion) from a parent is a significant event for a child. Grieving over a loss is a natural process by which one resolves the loss of an attachment to a person, idea, or a process. The child in a single-parent family loses a parent and a living environment. The stages a person experiences in resolving interpersonal separation when caused by death can also be applied to the loss experienced in physical separation and divorce (Devaul & Zisook, 1976, p. 268).

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p. 86) stated that the divorce of parents caused adolescents to feel a profound sense of loss. Inglis (1982, p. 98) stated, "The departure of one or other of the parents from the marital home is like having the spiritual rug pulled out from underneath him (the child)." Aaron, a student interviewed during this research project, stated, "Every kid associated with a divorce must go through the grieving process before life returns to normal."

Lindeman (1944, p. 143), who did research on grief and mourning, found five grief reaction stages:

1. Somatic distress
2. Preoccupation with the image of the departed person
3. Guilt
4. Hostile reaction
5. Loss of patterns of conduct

The grief syndrome may appear after the loss has occurred, or be delayed, exaggerated, or apparently absent.

An initial disruptive reaction accompanies any change that occurs. A

review of the literature revealed a wide range of descriptors of the feelings children experience with the loss of a parent. These include: emotional and physical shock, denial, depression, sadness, tearfulness, fear, anger, guilt, shame, insecurity, confusion, frustration, rejection, and disappointment. These initial reactions may be prolonged. Other change reactions that may also last beyond the first two months are the feelings of loneliness and restlessness (Budik, 1987, pp. 36-37).

Adolescent trauma caused by parental divorce actually interferes with growth (Inglis, 1982). According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p. 267), two-thirds of the youngsters showed notable change after the divorce had occurred. Academic performance of children from divorced families is poorer than for children from single-parent families that were created for other reasons (Ferri, 1976; Santrock, 1972; Zill, 1978).

Inglis (1982, p. 98) stated, "Adolescents take refuge in defiant postures and act out these feelings to disguise the shock and distress caused by the change." Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p. 223) and Whitehead (1993, p. 66), reported that some children react by being sexually promiscuous, resulting in an increased likelihood of teen-age pregnancy.

The point of disruption seems to be a critical concern; however, for many adolescents the denial of the loss causes further reactions at a later time. These adolescents try to avoid the intense distress connected with the grief experience and try to avoid emotional expressions which are painful. The single-parent family student's stress potential is great (Spanier, 1984, pp. 15-16).

The number of single-parent families has grown dramatically over the past forty years. In the past ten years, the percentage of single-parent families

created by death and divorce has declined and the percentage of parents that never take a spouse has increased. The creation of a single-parent family, in most instances, means the physical loss of a parent and the loss of a living environment. The single-parent family students' response to loss is a source of stress and grief. Young people experience the grieving process at varying rates. The greatest likelihood of academic problems and poor attendance will occur around the time the single-parent family is created (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). For most single-parent family students the initial reaction is disruptive and painful.

The impact of the loss of a parent has been described. Next, an investigation into how the various family structure elements impact adolescents is necessary, beginning with the parent-parent relationship, a source of stress and pain for young people.

Parent-Parent Relationship

Many investigators believe that the most important mediating variable associated with divorce and child adjustment is inter-parental conflict (Block, Block, & Gjerde, 1986; Cleminshaw, Guidubaldi, McLaughlin, & Perry, 1983; Emery, 1988; Hutchinson & Spangler-Hirsch, 1989; and Luepnitz, 1982).

Parental conflict creates family dissonance. Though families may have power struggles in all periods of their evolution, the interdependency of parents and their parental rights make decision-making, power, and authority issues much more complex during child rearing than any other time (Rutter, 1971, pp. 233-234). The quality and contact level between parents, custodial and non-custodial, will affect the adolescent.

Students often witness their parents fighting and can be the victims of parental conflict while the parents are still living together (Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987, pp. 159-160). A group of sixth graders listed witnessing their parents fighting as one of their most stressful experiences (Budik, 1987, pp. 36-37). According to Furstenburg and Condran (1988, p. 127), studies suggest that high-conflict but intact marriages produce the same negative effects on children as does the break-up of a family. Parents staying together "for the sake of the children" is now less often deemed necessary or appropriate. Kaslow (1987, p. 5) found that when a dreaded family split-up finally occurred, many families experienced a sense of relief with a chance to rebuild lives more peacefully.

A post-separation mother-father relationship that is relatively conflict free is beneficial because the children are not forced into choosing which parent is good and which is not. However, civilized cooperation is exactly what conflicted parents cannot do (Pollitt, 1992, p. 92). Research has found that a predictor of child adjustment to divorce is the degree to which parents establish a cooperative relationship following divorce (Furstenburg & Cherlin, 1991, p. 71). Findings revealed that five years after a divorce, the most poorly adjusted children are those whose parents have continuing conflicts (Teyber, 1987, p. 28).

In summary, we know students experience the grieving process with the loss of a parent. When a student is separated from a parent through death, the loss occurs only once. When a parent is separated by divorce, each time the missing parent reenters and then leaves the student's "primary group," the student experiences the grieving process. This process can interfere with adolescent intellectual, behavioral, and social growth.

A healthy relationship between parents is important for the children's

growth and development. Conflicted but intact families cause as many problems as do families that are disrupted. Parents that have parted need to continue to have a positive relationship for the benefit of their children. Each parent also needs to have a positive relationship with children.

Parent-Child Relationship

Keeping in contact and having a relationship with both parents is important for proper adolescent adjustment. Dworkin (1987), Inglis (1987), Lamb (1982), and Teyber (1985), support this position. Isaacs, Montavlo, and David (1986, p. 181) found the parental separation process often resulted in at least a temporary decline in adequate parenting and increase in erratic discipline. Troubled mothers and fathers find it easier to rationalize leaving their adolescents alone to fend for themselves. According to Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989, p. 7) troubled parents often put children on hold, attending to adult problems first. Divorce is associated with a diminished capacity to parent in almost all dimensions: discipline, play time, physical care, and emotional support. At this time parents can confuse their own needs with those of their children. Kaslow (1987, p. 159) reported that negative effects of divorce on children tend to be found in families that "contained" a distant, uninvolved, non-supportive parent or have a non-custodial father and/or a chronically embittered, angry, vengeful custodial mother.

Francke (1985, p. 85) stated, "The developmental tasks of the adolescent are both exaggerated and blurred by divorce,...the emergence of the second Oedipal phase can make young teenagers perceive the departure of a parent as disinterest..." According to one adolescent, "My parents let me do anything I

want as long as I don't get in trouble" (Gelman, 1990, p. 10). Sometimes a child can feel lost. Another stated,

After the divorce, it was awful. I mean, nothing was the same. Mom had to get a job and we moved to a cheaper place. I miss my old room. Mom doesn't have time so I make my own breakfast and lunches now. I've gotten used to an empty house now. My boyfriend comes over and we do a little grass. I tell him about my day. (Akers-Hanson, 1987, p. 34)

Another youngster said,

I'd been used to going to my father for help with my homework and I missed him terribly. For months afterward I'd say, 'Okay, I don't understand this problem', I'll go ask and then there would be the realization. My marks went way down at school. It was the continuing realization that got to me.

Another adolescent stated, "I could stay out as late as I wanted. Homework was never even asked about. My study skills definitely went downhill after the divorce because of the freedom" (Manning, 1991).

If the custodial parent has greatly reduced the level of contact with the child, the child will be affected. If a child has a close relationship with the parent leaving the family unit, the impact is great.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found that a large number of children who had continued contact with both of their parents also expressed satisfaction with their life. Perceived easy access to both parents is important. For a successful school effort, positive self-esteem is beneficial. Wessel (1978, p. 559) stated, "Children that were not visited by their fathers usually grieved and a significant number of them became depressed. They were troubled with low self-esteem and a gnawing feeling of having been rejected."

At the time of separation the children need both parents to convince them they are still loved and are not responsible for the separation. For the typical adolescent, the disengagement from parents is a gradual and natural

process which takes place over several years. The process occurs regardless of the parental structure. Young people need to develop their own life. Leaving the nurturing environment of a home should occur. Losing a parent through death or separation adds considerable stress to the process. High school graduation is a symbolic separation. In general, the maturing and disengagement is welcomed, encouraged, and supported by parents and teachers. During the process, the gradually maturing adolescent gains and regresses in the move toward adulthood.

An important purpose of the family is to serve as a safe, temporary "haven." Even while seeking emotional autonomy, the youth needs to be able to replenish his/her self-esteem and bolster his/her courage to venture toward more independent actions. Family-structure change disrupts a teenager's developmental process. The family in turmoil and/or change is removed as a safe place for the child's refueling. The time available for the child to move toward independence is shortened. Many are able to make the transition and their developmental process is merely hastened. Others seek to return to behaviors in their life that were performed during a safe time of development. These adolescents attempt to return to a time when their family was whole and in relative harmony.

The continuation of child-parent relationships are important. Adolescents naturally move toward greater independence from each parent. Having to speed-up the maturation process impacts adolescent growth. The family configuration will be examined next.

Family Configuration

The single-parent family configuration constitutes the number of children in the family, the birth order, and the gender of the children and single parent.

Family size makes a difference. According to Polit-O'Hara and Berman (1984),

When the performance of hundreds of thousands of children is averaged, almost invariably those from smaller families do better than ones from larger families on intelligence tests. The research evidence on this point is consistent, and persists for children regardless of sex, racial/ethnic group, economic circumstances, age, or national origin. Family size differences in ability also persist regardless of the type of test used.

Generally, intelligence and achievement are closely, but not perfectly, linked. Smart children tend to get better grades, get more years of schooling, and get better jobs than kids who are less able.

Children from smaller families achieve more than those from larger families (Table 5). The reasons are

1. The prenatal environment changes in successive births
2. Parents with high IQs have fewer children than those with low IQ's
3. In larger families there are fewer resources to buy children materials conducive to their intellectual growth
4. Parents with few children have more time to devote each child

thereby, fostering intellectual advances (Polit-O'Hara and Berman, 1984, pp. 44-46) Middle and upper class families have fewer children and these people invest more time in their children. Single parents with three or more children are likely to experience more difficulties than single parents with only one or two children (Polit-O'Hara & Berman, 1984, p. 197). Most commonly, single-parent families have one child (Blake, 1979, p. 245).

Statistically, a child's birth order can make a difference in the child's

school performance. Belmont and Marolla (1973) noted that the birth order of children in a family also has an important effect on adolescent achievement. First born children tend to do better. Further, the youngest child's intellectual development, when comparing large samples of children in families, is less.

The gender of the parent and child (children) in a single-parent family may be a contributing factor in the student's behavior. A child growing up with a mother alone will face issues different from those of the child who grows up with a father alone, or the child who grows up with two parents because personality is influenced by the family (Luepnitz, 1982, p. 5). In divorce situations, maternal child custody is often assumed. Ironically, women are more stigmatized than men in one-parent families (Cashmore, 1985, p. 266). And yet, according to Mesce (1990, p. 11), "In a society that believes women should be the ones raising children, it (living in a maternal single-parent family) has the potential for hindering the self-esteem of the children." In one study, female adolescents were perceived as having been most adversely affected by the mother's death and this caused their school grades to "suffer" (Beddell, 1972, p. 252).

Balancing work and child rearing responsibilities is a major problem for custodial single parents (Mesce, 1990, p. 11). In most instances, mothers tend to have less time for their children due to the increased pressure to earn money to sustain the recreated family. In one study, 50 percent of the mothers felt they were spending less time with their children after a divorce, and 87 percent of the fathers felt they were spending more time with their children (Luepnitz, 1982, p. 272). The increased time spent by fathers is relative. The amount of time spent with children before separation was small, so an increase in the time spent would still be less than the mothers typically spend even after separation.

The overall impact of the altered state is varied. Several studies have

shown that girls rather than boys are more inclined to accept the single-parent arrangement. In one study, boys tended to fare less well than girls from living in single-parent families (Bernard, 1989, p. 245). Also, boys are more vulnerable to the effects of parental discord and separation (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976, p. 417). Another research study showed that children in mother-headed households were slower learners (Lamb, 1982, p. 272).

The disciplining of children, especially with a new family structure, is a common concern. Three-fourths of the mothers and all the single-parent family fathers thought two parents were better than one when it came to disciplining children. Some single-parent women expressed concern about a lack of stamina. Overall the fathers did not see discipline as "overwhelming," but they preferred two parents sharing the load (Parsons & Bales, 1955, p. 78). As sole disciplinarians, mothers tend to become more strict, causing strain. Fathers are generally more lenient to compensate for emotional loss. Mothers tend to have greater difficulty disciplining sons and fathers have greater problems disciplining daughters (Lamb, 1982, p. 10).

In summary, the number of single-parent families and single-parent family children is growing. The loss of a parent is a source of grief and stress for the parent and child. The family configuration can impact the child's growth and development. Middle and upper class families tend to have fewer children, and devote more time, energy, and money to their children's development. Children from smaller families, on an average, do better on intelligence tests and are higher achievers. What is not known is whether children with the same birthing order and number of children in the family have similar school performance.

Once a single-parent family is created, depending on the gender of the household head and/or siblings, their interaction will create different problems.

That is to say, single-parent mothers tend to have more difficulty controlling and raising teenage sons and single parent fathers have greater difficulty disciplining teenage daughters. Girls were more accepting of and comfortable with living in a single-parent family than were boys. With the creation of a single-parent family, the roles of all family members is redefined and the redefinition can effect the way a child performs in school.

Child's Family Role

The creation and maintenance of a single-parent family often brings a redefinition of relationships and a reorganization of the member's lives while they are trying to execute the functions and obligations of the original family (Ahrons & Rogers, 1987 p. 75). With the additional pressure for greater authority from the maturing adolescent, the family structure is likely to continue to change. This restructuring of the division of labor is often tentative, with trial-and-error evolution (Ahrons & Rogers, 1987, p. 67). The single-parent family may overtly and/or covertly address the division of labor, maintenance of order, power, authority, and decision making structure. During the period of family disorganization, a given family member may take on or reject additional family roles such as: one child may take on much more responsibility; another child may withdraw from the family; and the third may do less than s/he had been doing.

Many families are changing the methods and means of disciplining children. According to Richard R. Peterson (1989, p. 3), "Disciplinary practices have changed and child rearing philosophies have changed." Apparently this happens because families are communicating and sharing authority more

(Anderson, Hetherington, & Clingempeel, 1986).

The non-custodial parent may attempt to undermine the authority in the single-parent family and disturb any equilibrium that is present (Ahrons & Rogers, 1987, p. 38). Adolescents may be upset with their parent's decision to separate and alter the rules and the way the game is played. Isaacs, Montalvo, and Abelson (1987, p. 39) stated, "Often angry at their parents for breaking up the marriage and exposed to their frequent two-way battles and demanding criticisms of each other, they revise their perceptions of the parents, stripping them of automatic authority. The adolescent can prey on, divide, manipulate, and outflank the executive system."

Compared to children living with both parents, the single-parent family student is affected differently by family structure. According to Hetherington (1981, p. 317), in a summary of fifteen years of research,

Both sons and daughters in divorced non-remarried families were allowed more responsibility, independence, and decision making power than were children in non-divorced families. They successfully interrupted their divorced mothers, and their mothers yielded to their demands more often than in the other family types.

As children get older, individual family roles and responsibilities are redefined. Conflict in the family can also bring about a change in roles. The disruption of the family and the creation of a single-parent family will likely bring about a redefinition of roles. What is not known is whether single-parent and dual-parent students with similar perceptions of their family roles have similar school performances.

In some cases this greater power and independence result in an egalitarian, mutually supportive relationship. In other cases, where the emotional demands or responsibilities required by the mother are

inappropriate, are beyond the capabilities of the child, or interfere with normal activities of the child, such as in peer relationship or school activities, resentment, rebellion, or psychological disturbance may follow (Heatherington, 1981, p. 317).

Single-parent family children view their family role differently after the separation. Youth that experience the separation of their parents have lost childhood forever and will not again perceive family authority the same (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989, p. 14). With marital change comes a restructuring of the family (Ahrons & Rogers, 1987). Typically, due to financial concerns and restricted parental involvement, the adolescent takes on greater authority and/or autonomy in the home. The results of a study of single-parent families created by the death of a parent suggests that the more family members are able to share information and decision making, the greater the chance an effective adjustment after parental death will occur (Cohen, Dizenhus, & Winget, 1977, p. 223).

Johnston and Campbell (1988, p. 104) stated,

When families are breaking up, in an attempt to ward off loss, parents often turn to their children to take on the responsibilities of replacing the departed spouse. The parents become emotionally dependent and lean on their children to soften the loss, using the children as companions or confidants.

It is common for the protecting child(ren) to insist on peer status and refuse to accept the authority of the adult. If this process escalates, the protector usurps parental power. Further escalation can lead to a runaway reversal of the family hierarchy (Isaacs et al., 1986, p. 174).

In the Wallerstein and Kelly study (1980, p. 92), one third of the adolescents took on this role. However, another third of those studied distanced themselves from the family.

In a newly created family unit, along with authority restructuring, comes the redistribution of family responsibilities. The result may be an imbalanced or balanced level of responsibility for the adolescent in the family. When younger children live in the home, the adolescent(s) is(are) usually required to take on more of the child care responsibilities. The adolescent's response to the demand will affect attitude. The student may see the added responsibilities as punishment for his/her parent's separation. The students may then take the family problems with them to school where academic achievement and/or the rate of attendance may decline.

With family disruption comes a greater likelihood of moving. Few adolescents desire to leave their peer-support system which they have helped create. Moving into a new environment is stressful. Leaving the living space to which one has grown accustomed is difficult. The stress this generates is potentially great. These children tend to be less healthy and attend school less often (Institute for the Development of Educational Activities, 1980, p. 192).

If a child has to change schools due to a move, the new teachers see one set of behaviors. The child's new teachers do not have much previous reference to know if the child has changed or whether this is how s/he normally acts. The staff references may come from parental descriptions, intuition, and past academic records, but school personnel do not always ask the right questions, and parents do not always volunteer answers when a loss of a spouse occurs (Diamond, 1985, p. 6).

With the creation of a single-parent family, the family structure changes and the family roles are redefined. Parents often need their children to provide them stability. The children provide the stability in exchange for greater family authority. Further, with the family change comes a greater likelihood that the

family will move. The children usually have little control of this. Financial pressure often causes the change.

Family Finances

With the creation of most single-parent families, financial difficulties pose a barrier for the establishment of a healthy and happy lifestyle (Lombana, 1983, p. 98). Family finances may also have an effect on the student in a single-parent family. According to Bianchi and McAurther (1991, p. 5), "Children who remain with their mothers after families break up tend to fall head-long into poverty." In the United States, 55% of the single parent families live below the poverty level (Gelman, 1990, p. 12). In general, the single-parent family generates less income than dual-parent families. Often both parents' income is reduced after one parent leaves home.

Single-parent family finances are a major concern. Females head about 86% of all single-parent families. The financial strain on a female-headed, single-parent family is usually greater than the strain on a patriarchal family. The wage earning capacity of a female is considerably less than her male counterpart. In one study, the female-headed, single-parent families created by divorce had only 53% of the couple's previous joint income (Glick, 1979, p. 215).

According to Peterson (1989, p. 88), divorced women are expected to fare worse economically than men because their children represent additional expense and their child care responsibilities restrict working hours. However, single-parent fathers are also affected by the change. According to Mesce (1990, p. 1), "Some (single-parent) fathers (after the creation of the single-

parent family)... had to quit their jobs and some were fired, but for most the problem was a frustrating halt of their rise up the career ladder." For single parents of either sex, the acceptance of family obligations reduces their flexibility in business. For example, business travel on short notice is restricted which can hinder chances for promotion. Sometimes the single parent has to make a choice between pursuing his/her career path or putting his/her career on hold. The children often suffer when the parent chooses business gain over being with the children.

On a stress-rating survey, single-parent mothers listed economic pressure as their greatest source of stress while their male counterparts listed economics as their third greatest source of stress (Bowen & Finegan, 1969, p. 397). According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p. 151), eighteen months after the divorce, three-fifths of the women and two-fifths of the men experienced a substantial decline in their standard of living. In fact, a third of the females had a daily struggle for financial survival. With a reduction in finances, the children were more likely to feel a sense of deprivation. Further, the children were less likely to see the parent because of the increased pressure to generate money to support the family. A change of this sort affects the children's self-esteem; they are forced to accept the reality of the family's financial condition.

Family economic pressures often result in adolescents taking part-time jobs (Swift, 1991, p. 16). Teenagers of divorce are savvy about money because with strained circumstances they are forced to take money management seriously. Parent separation does require a change in lifestyle. The majority of adolescents from single-parent families have part-time jobs. In general, teenagers living with one parent are more likely to seek and hold a job than classmates living with two parents, regardless of race, family income,

educational attainment of the family head and family size (Bowen & Finegan, 1969, p. 398). The downward mobility is frustrating (Francke, 1985, pp. 163-164).

Children who hold part-time jobs tend to be more independent. Unfortunately, these students often sacrifice their studies for monotonous, dead-end jobs, in effect trading the long-term economic benefits of education for a smaller, short-term payoff (Miller, 1990, p. 30). Further, teens who work more than 15 to 20 hours per week tend to spend less time with their parents than their nonworking classmates. They spend more time daydreaming in class, have more behavior problems, and are more likely to drink and smoke cigarettes and marijuana (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 205).

The creation of single-parent families causes problems for children and their families. The loss of a parent from the home causes trauma to the family system and to the members within the system. During and following a separation, the relationship between parents can become strained. Parents that can work together are more likely to have children that are well adjusted. The size of the family and the gender of the parent and children remaining in the home will have an impact on the adjustment and growth of the child(ren). When a single-parent family is created, the family roles are redefined. In general, children are forced to grow-up ahead of schedule. Like the diver that ascends from the deep too quickly and gets "the bends," there are negative side effects to the forced acceptance and development of family roles. For most families, the transition from dual-parent status to single-parent status results in economic decline; a single-parent family generates less income than does a dual-parent family. As a result, there is greater pressure for single-parent family students to take part-time jobs. The work takes away time, energy, and focus

from academics.

Problems caused by the creation of and living in a single-parent family on the adolescent have been described, an examination of domestic problems manifested in the school setting is warranted.

Problems in School

The creation of single-parent families is problematic for children. Due to the problems previously listed, single-parent children take less time to learn, pay less attention to school, and care less about their academics. The results of many studies which say single-parent family children have difficulty with social behaviors, learning, and staying in school are presented next.

The receptivity to learning as well as ability to do abstract reasoning problems for many students may be compromised by the creation of the single-parent family. Female adolescents in single-parent families were more adversely affected by the mother's death than male adolescents, causing their grades to "suffer" (Bedell, 1972, p. 256). Single-parent students' overall attitude toward school declined after the creation of the new family unit (Drake, 1981, p. 165). Research suggests that students whose parents have divorced are less likely to get the kind and amount of education they would received had their parents stayed together (Cooney, 1988; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1986; Wallerstein & Huntington, 1983).

Compared to dual-parent family students, single-parent family students had substantially more disturbances in behavior and affect (Bower, 1991; Hodges, 1986; Jacobson, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c; Kalter, 1977, 1990; Wallerstein, 1991). In one study, students from divorced families were absent

more often than dual-parent family children and were more likely to be hostile and withdrawn (Dworkin, 1987, p. 31). According to Whitehead (1993, p. 47) single-parent family students are more likely than dual-parent family students to drop out of school, get pregnant, abuse drugs, and get in trouble with the law. Having fewer adults and less interaction with adults in a single-parent family setting decreases the overall levels of adolescent academic achievement (Shinn, 1978, p. 295).

Dworkin (1987), McLanahan (1985), and McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) support the belief that living in a single-parent family is likely to have a negative effect on single-parent children. In one study, the researcher found that older students had trouble concentrating in school after the creation of a single-parent home (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990, p. xi). In another, the students willingness to experiment in learning was lowered and their interest to learn reduced. These students, living with one parent, were more likely to be late to school and create more behavioral problems (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980, p. 205). Benedek (1979, p. 156) concluded, "There is a correlation between divorce and the onset of cognitive and behavioral problems."

In general, researchers found single-parent family students', as opposed to dual-parent family students', academic and school performance to be to be more problematic. According to Kalter (1990, p. 329), adolescents greatly need school and their peer groups, and often with a divorce the student must move changing school and peer groups. This results in other losses. Single-parent family students' receptivity to learning is diminished. Single-parent family students do not control the creation of a single-parent family but must suffer the consequences. In contrast, the self-defeating behaviors related to school are controlled by the single-parent family students. Single-parent family students

have a choice as to whether they will drop out of school, be late to class, earn poor grades, and be withdrawn and hostile toward school. However there are other school related findings that present a mixed or contradictory picture of the single-parent family student in school.

Mixed Findings

Clinical studies of children and theories of child development have suggested that the disruption of a marriage should have severe negative consequences on the children's well-being. However, empirical research using large, national representative samples of children has failed to document persistent and pervasive differences (Furstenburg & Condran, 1988, p. 127). Nollar and Callan (1991, p. 112) reported, "When researchers have used non-clinic samples, they have not found differences in the adjustment of adolescents from intact and separated families. In another study, the absence of a father in the home had no impact on student S.A.T. scores (Black, 1981). According to Kitson (1992, p. 343), divorced parents reported little distress or change in their children's behavior that was attributed to their divorce. The single-parent family student changes observed were comparable to dual-parent family student behavior; these findings contradict other research (Hetherington, 1989; Krantz, 1988).

The negative effects demonstrated by children experiencing divorce may be caused by other factors. New financial burdens and the passage through puberty can cause problems (Miller, 1992). Too much is attributed to the break up and new living arrangement. Problems that existed prior to the divorce are often attributed to the divorce. Cherlin (1991, p. 252) concluded that the effect

of divorce on children can be predicted by conditions that existed well before the separation occurs.

Students may view school as an escape from the craziness of an altered home life. One student stated, "My grades suffered (when her parents divorced) somewhat but not drastically. I always kept a B-plus average. I like going to school because it was somewhere away from home" (Manning, 1991, p. 15).

If parents divorce when the child is a teen, what impact does the divorce have on the child? The results of research on this question are mixed (Kaslow & Schwartz, 1985, pp. 177-178). A National Association of School Psychologists' study found academic test scores were the same for children regardless of whether their families were divorced or intact (Dworkin, 1987, p. 31). Other research results on the impact that the creation of single-parent family, and the maintenance of that family, have on the academic performance and rate of attendance of adolescents have been inconclusive or contradictory. Some studies have found no statistically significant difference in school grades, attitudes toward school, and participation in school activities (Burchinal, 1964, p. 49). Research on the consequences of marital disruption for children has produced ambiguous results, partly because it is difficult to separate the effects of family instability from conditions surrounding marital dissolution, particularly parental conflict preceding separation and economic deprivation following divorce.

Several studies suggest conflicted but intact marriages produce the same negative effects on children as families where the parents have separated (Cherlin, 1991, p. 1386; Furstenburg & Condran, 1988, p. 127; & Essen, 1979, p. 189). Miller (1992, p. 130) found, "Children living in low-conflict divorced families compared favorably with children from high-conflict intact

families." Bower (1991, p. 357) indicated that children are hurt by family conflict regardless of whether the parents are living together or not. With increased conflict came an increase in behavior problems and a dip in achievement scores.

No research findings indicate that living in a single-parent family is more beneficial to children than living with both parents. At best, the research shows no significant difference between children living with one or two parents and their school performance. One study found the disruption and living in a single-parent family did not negatively effect the children's well-being. In other studies, when the single-parent children and dual-parent children test scores, grades, attitude toward school, and participation in school were compared no significant difference was found. Nollar and Callan concluded (1991, p. 121), "There is sufficient evidence to suggest that most children and adolescents adjust well to divorce of their parents."

Conflicted intact families are hard to compare to single-parent families because it is difficult to separate the family instability and financial limitations that effect the creation of and living in the new family unit. However, in the next section the schools' and some leading educators' perceptions of and responses to single parenting will be presented.

School and Parent Response to the Issue

In suburban America, divorce carries a stigma and the schools are a reflection of their communities (Goode, 1956; Kitson, 1992; Nollar & Callan, 1991). Further, single parent's relationship with his/her child's school appears to be a problem. Single parents experience conflict with schools during and

after the separation process. Parents have had to rationalize not telling school personnel about an impending divorce because they believe the teachers become prejudicial toward them - fears that are often justified. The belief held by many educators is that female single parents have little control over their children; the children are victims of their circumstance and the parents are in a continual state of conflict. Some educators assume that all parent post-divorce relationships are combative when it comes to the children (Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987, p. 159).

The school needs to be nurturing to all students, providing routine, safety, and an equal educational opportunity. However, according to Drake (1981, p. 150), some teachers have negative attitudes toward single-parent family students. In many instances school teachers, administrators, and staff stereotype single-parent family students as victims of "broken" homes, an attitude which assumes that single-parent families are abnormal and dysfunctional (Rich, 1988). Richards (1991, p. 19) stated, "A teaching nun told a widow (that was successfully raising seven children despite the death of her husband) that it wasn't normal for her children to be so happy." Parents point to a series of daily reminders: school textbooks portray the never-divorced family almost exclusively; school forms are designed for one home with two natural parents; not for two homes with natural or step-parents; and presents made in school for Mother's Day and Father's Day are limited to one present per parent per holiday. Report cards and notices are typically sent to only one home (Ricci, 1980, p. 510).

The author of the newsletter Better Teaching urged, "Principals and teachers need to work together to build a recognition of the growing number of single-parent family children attending school into all school activities." Further,

educators need to be extremely sensitive about the use of the terms "broken family," "fractured family," and "diminished family." These terms are producing a stereotyped attitude toward single-parent family students (Davis, 1990, p. 3). Many schools cling to the fading image of the dual-parent family. They simply ignore the special needs of the single-parent student, as if to pretend that this trend, like others, will pass (Francke, 1983, p. 235).

The notion that living in a single-parent family is negative for the student has been reinforced by some educational leaders. In 1990, in a drafted article titled, The Changing Profile of Education in Michigan (1991), Mr. Donald Bemis, then Michigan's state superintendent for public instruction, equated single working mothers with impoverished drug users. He stated, "Another serious challenge facing our educational system is the changing nature of our families....Twenty-three percent of all children live in single-parent families...Public education must counteract the barriers to productive lives that these children face." During a speech presented to the Washtenaw Council of Reading and the Washtenaw County Consortium for Professional Development, Mr. William Hallorin (1990) a noted national speaker for Reading Inc., stated, "Children coming from broken homes is one of the leading problems in America today." In a Josten's Renaissance promotional video, Mr. Larry Bittle (1989), Assistant Principal of Conway High School, made repeated allusions to children from broken homes as being a problem. Bittle indicated that journalists were furthering the belief by co-mingling teen pregnancy, kids from broken homes, teen suicide, and drugs in school. Jim Tuman (1992), nationally known adolescent consultant, agrees with the general media assessments.

Many researchers and the general public believe that living in a single-parent family will have a negative effect on single-parent family children. The

belief is that single parents lose control of their children and the children are sad and withdrawn. These beliefs are reinforced by our educational leaders including general perceptions about attendance and academic achievement. Despite these perceptions the research findings were mixed and or inconclusive when the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students were compared. Next, the conclusion of what is known, what is not known, and what is yet to be found out is stated.

Conclusion

Single parenting has grown. The number of children living in single-parent families has greatly increased over the last thirty years. The leading reason for the creation of a single-parent family has shifted from the death of a spouse to divorce and separation. The creation of a single-parent family is a source of stress and grief and can be disruptive to the child's educational experience.

Many believe that children living in a single-parent family will do poorer in school than children living with both parents. Conflict between parents is a source of stress for students regardless of the number of parents with whom they live. In families where the parents remain amiable and cooperative, children are more likely to prosper. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar perceptions of the parent's interrelationship have similar school performances? It appears that the student's perception of the parent-parent relationship influence school performance.

Continued parent-child contact is important. Parents have a greater impact on student development than do peers. What is not known is whether single-parent family students and dual-parent family students who view their relationships with each parent similarly have similar school performance.

Other family related phenomenon (family configuration, family role, and family finances) can impact student development. The number of children, the order of birth, and the gender of the parent and student can impact student development. However, upper and middle class families tend to have fewer children than do poor families. The academic performance of children from small families may be related to other factors. What is not known is whether single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar family configurations will have similar school performances. Do single-parent and dual-parent family students with the similar number of siblings in the family have similar school performance? Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar family birthing orders have similar school performance?

Single-parent family students tend to have greater family responsibility, independence, and family decision making power. In some instances, parents and children even reverse roles. Many children of single-parent families are given greater family roles out of necessity. Single-parent families are forced into certain shared power arrangements. Students of single-parent families face the harsh realities of adulthood sooner than do dual-parent family students. For example, the rent must be paid or there is no place to live.

The creation of a single-parent family reduces family finances and decreases family buying power. Single-parent family students are more likely

than dual-parent family students to hold part-time jobs. Single-parent family students tend to work longer hours than do children of dual-parent families. If single-parent family students and dual-parent family students have part time jobs, will their grades and attendance be significantly different? Will single-parent family students and dual-parent family students working similar part time job hours have similar school performance?

In chapter three, the methodology used to compare single-parent family children's' and dual-parent family children's' level of academic achievement and school attendance is presented. Their parent-parent relationships, parent-child relationships, family configuration, family roles, and family finances perceptions are compared and contrasted. To be determined is whether single parenting influence the grades and attendance of single-parent students.

Chapter III

Purpose and Introduction

The researcher's purpose in the study was to describe students' perceptions of life in a single-parent family and to describe how these perceptions relate to the students' academic achievement and school attendance. To be determined, is life in a single-parent family related to the academic performance (grade point average) and rate of attendance of the students involved? Is successful academic achievement an overriding value held by single-parent families? The conditions to be examined include the student's perception of the relationship between his/her biological parents, the relationship s/he has with each biological parent, the configuration of the family, the student's perception of his/her role within the family, and the student's perception of the family's economic condition. Among educators, it is commonly assumed that single-parent families and the conditions that create single-parent families are responsible for student academic and behavioral problems in school. The researcher tested this belief. Middle class students from two suburban high schools districts were the subjects.

The research project had the approval of the Dexter Community Schools' Board of Education, the Plymouth-Canton administration, the parents of the students participating in the study, and the students surveyed. The Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects reviewed and approved this research. The researcher shared the nature and purpose of

the study with each of the groups.

Given the second chapter's literature review, a series of questions need answering about single-parent family students. These questions are listed below:

1. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students have similar academic performances?
2. Do single-parent family students with good grade point averages attend school on a regular basis?
3. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students perceive their parents to be mutually supportive?
4. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar perceptions of their parents' level of mutual support have similar academic performance?
5. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students perceive their parents to have a supportive relationship with one another?
6. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar perceptions of their relationship with their parents have similar academic performance?

7. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students have similar family configurations?

8. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar family configurations have similar academic performance?

9. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students have similar roles in their families?

10. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar family roles have similar academic performance?

11. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students have similar family economic conditions?

12. Do single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar family economic conditions have similar academic performance?

Hypotheses

1. A single-parent family students' academic performance (school attendance or grade point average) is likely to be significantly different from that of students living with both parents.

2. When combined, single-parent family students' academic performance, school attendance and GPA, will differ significantly from that of students living with both parents.

3. When comparing the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students having similar perceptions of the biological parents relationship, the single-parent family students' academic performance will be significantly lower.

4. Single-parent family students with similarly perceived student/parent relationships to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly different academic performance.

5. Single-parent family students with similar family configurations to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly different academic performance.

6. Single-parent family students that perceive their role in their family similarly to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly lower academic performance.

7. Single-parent family students that perceive their household economic experience similarly to that of dual-parent family students will have significantly lower academic performance.

8. The academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1989 will not differ significantly from the single-parent family students and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1994.

Study Design

A study was designed to explore these hypotheses. As with most educational research, this study sought to describe or discover the cause of certain events using the causal-comparative research method. This method bridges the gap between an experimental study and a descriptive study.

This study looks at events that have already occurred. Students do live in single-parent families and these students were surveyed. Their attendance rates and grade point averages will be examined. The students will report information about their perceptions of their family configuration, their parents' relationship, their relationship with each parent, their role in their family, and their family economic condition.

This type of study is called post facto research: (1) the method bridges the gap between descriptive and experimental studies; (2) it can be used in a descriptive study; and (3) it can help search for potential causes. The causal-comparative study can be descriptive as well as determine central tendencies and variability. This study's control group is students living with both parents. Since dual-parent family students are a closely comparable control group, this causal comparison can express something close to the precision of a well-designed experiment (Borg & Gall, 1974, p. 298). Further comparisons were made between the two groups and conclusions drawn.

The causal-comparative research method starts with the observed effects

of certain behavior. There are differences that educators may have observed and so assume to be generalized. A researcher attempts to determine the causes of the behavior. However, the researcher can not go beyond discovery.

The causal-comparative research method has limitations. According to Borg and Gall (1974, p. 298), "One cannot infer causes from a causal-comparative study; all that can possibly be concluded is that relationships between variables exist." Difficult to determine is whether a variable found to be related to the behavior being studied has been a contributing cause or has been a result of the behavior pattern. Failure to recognize a correlation may not mean causation (Glass & Stanley, 1970, p. 122). For example, does living in a single-parent family cause poor grades? All that can be concluded is that there may be a relationship between the living in a single-parent family and poor grades.

At times, no correlation rather than a high correlation has a greater impact on a hypothesis. A zero correlation between two variables may mean there exists no influence of one upon the other (Glass & Stanley, 1970).

Comparing the collected data from 1989 and 1994, added to the study. The 1989 findings are compared to see if the trends found in 1989 continued five years later.

Sample

Single-parent family students from high schools with similar populations were selected for the study, and dual-parent students from the same high schools were selected for comparison purposes. Students attending two suburban high schools, Dexter High School and Plymouth-Salem High School,

were asked to participate in the study. These schools are located on the west side of the greater Detroit metropolitan area. More specifically they are just outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Dexter Community Schools is north and west of Ann Arbor, while the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools is north and east of Ann Arbor. Both school districts are in growing communities. The communities' locations (near Detroit, Detroit Metropolitan Airport, Ann Arbor, and major interstate highways), availability of land, and the school districts' positive reputations have contributed to the increased demand for housing within these districts.

Dexter Community Schools is a 40 square mile district including one village, and portions of several townships. A person living in the Dexter Schools would have one of six mailing addresses: Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Hamburg, Pinckney, or Whitmore Lake. The hub of the district is the village of Dexter. The school district's residents number over 15,000, with just over 2100 of those residents being K-12 students.

Professionals working in the greater Detroit metropolitan area make-up a majority of Dexter's population. Dexter has mostly "middle" to "upper middle" class residents. Five institutions of higher learning (The University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, Cleary College, and Concordia College) are located in the immediate area. Many Dexter homeowners work at these institutions. Many residents are tied to the transportation industry, i.e., auto companies, auto company suppliers, and commercial aviation. Greater Dexter is the home of several graphic arts firms.

The Dexter school district is one of the last areas in Washtenaw county to be completely developed. The land around greater Dexter is being transformed from farmland to suburban housing. Prior to the mid 1980's, growth had not

been encouraged within the community. A former village council president stated, "We like Dexter the way it is. We don't want it to grow and change." Five to seven years ago the demand for housing and industrial sites within the county made it desirable and profitable to develop greater Dexter. Land adjacent to the village was annexed and an industrial park started to accommodate light industry. The housing in greater Dexter is almost exclusively single unit dwellings. In the past four years, the community gained its first condominium complex and major apartment complex. There are no trailer parks within the school district.

School activities are major community events. More community members attend graduation annually than any other single civic ceremony. The homecoming football game is also a major community event. Annually, the high school band marches down Main Street during the Homecoming parade, the Memorial Day parade, and the "Dexter Daze" parade.

The student population of Dexter Community Schools has remained fairly constant over the past twenty years. As of 1989, Dexter's only high school had just under 600 students, grades 9 through 12. The student population is evenly distributed among the four grades. In the last two years, the population has begun to rise due to new subdivision developments. The student population is now well over 700 students.

Dexter was formerly an "out-of-formula" school district. That meant property taxes raised by residents and businesses within the Dexter school district exceeded the minimal standards set by the state of Michigan for funding. Therefore, the state did not share tax revenues from other sources with the Dexter School district. Dexter was viewed as a "rich" district. More money had been spent per pupil than the State's minimum standard. The Plymouth-Canton

Community School District was also an "out-of-formula" school district. With the new state tax laws, the state's funding of education has become more equitable.

The Plymouth-Canton school district has a much larger population spread over a similar area. Plymouth-Canton Community Schools consists of over 40 square miles and just under 90,000 residents (just under 15,000 K-12 students). A student going to the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools would reside in either Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Salem Township, Canton Township, Superior Township, or Westland. The village of Plymouth is the center of the district. More than half of the population lives in Canton Township. The Plymouth Community Schools changed its name to the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools in order to recognize the significant population present in Canton Township. Further, this township is beginning to establish its own "downtown" focus.

Professionals working in the greater Detroit metropolitan area make-up most of Plymouth-Canton's population. The school district has mostly "middle" to "upper-middle" class residents. Since 1990, the minority population within the Plymouth-Canton Schools has begun to rise. Seven institutions of higher learning are in close proximity to the Plymouth-Canton schools: the five institutions previously mentioned, Madonna College, and Schoolcraft Community College. Many Plymouth-Canton residents work at these institutions. A number of the residents are also associated with the transportation industry. A major Ford production plant is located within the school district.

The Plymouth-Canton school district is primarily in Wayne County (northwest) with a small section reaching into Washtenaw county (northeast). Plymouth is a fully developed community. Canton Township and Plymouth

Township are still developing. Light industry is located within the communities of Plymouth and Canton. There are apartment and condominium complexes within the district and some public housing units.

The Plymouth-Canton Community Schools has two high schools: Plymouth-Salem High School and Plymouth-Canton High School. Each has more than 2200 students, grades 9 through 12. Both schools were built on the same site. Students from the school district are placed in a lottery to determine which high school will be their "home" school. Students attend classes in both buildings. Having two schools together affords the Plymouth-Canton schools the opportunity to offer a wide range of classes. The two schools combine their music programs to form one marching band.

The researcher chose Dexter High School and Plymouth-Salem High School for two reasons. First, both schools were accessible to the researcher. Being an administrator at Dexter, the researcher was able to gain access to the students and was familiar with them. At Plymouth-Salem, the researcher was welcomed by a fellow administrator and a district interested in learning more about the topic of single-parent family students. Second, Dexter and Plymouth-Salem possess similar student populations. The student bodies of both schools are mostly middle class. Less than 5% of the districts' student population qualified for federal free and/or reduced lunches. The student populations are overwhelmingly white: Dexter High School - 97% and Plymouth-Salem High School - 94%.

Variables

According to Glass and Stanley (1970, p. 121), "The relationships that exist among variables in education.... are almost always too complex to be explained in terms of a single cause. Achievement in school is the result of numerous influences, in addition to being a complex concept itself which cannot be described adequately by any single measurement."

This study covers student outcomes and perceptions of family life. Full-day attendance, partial day attendance, and GPA are the dependent variables that are categorized as elements of academic achievement. A full-day attendance is defined as a student being physically present in all six classes in a given school day. A partial-day attendance is defined as being in attendance for at least one of the six classes but not all six. A student's grade point average is a number that represents a student's academic effort. Points are assigned for each grade earned and the number of points earned is then averaged with the number of classes taken. A student can earn the following points for the following grades :

A = 4

B = 3

C = 2

D = 1

E = 0

Therefore, the larger the grade point average a student has, the higher the average grade the student earned. The grade point average range is 4.0 to 0.0.

The independent variables are the number of parents living in the home, student's perceptions of the parents' inter-parent relationship, student-parent relationship, family configuration, the adolescent's perceived family role, and

the student's perception of the family's economic condition. The number of parents in the home is defined as the number of biological parents of a student residing together. Excluded are step-parents and adopted parents, and/or foster parents. The perception of an inter-parent relationship is defined as the student's opinion of the level of demonstrated mutual support between his/her biological parents. Further, it is the level of demonstrated conflict between the same parents. Family configuration is defined as the number of offspring produced by a set of parents and the birthing order of children in that biological family. Further, it is defined as the gender and age of the children in the family and the gender of the single parent. Family role is defined as the student's perception of his/her family responsibilities and authority within the family. The responsibilities relate to the number of assigned tasks and the amount of time expended completing the tasks. Authority would relate to the student's perceived leadership role within the family and the student's level of influence effecting family decisions. The student's perception of family economic condition relates to the family's relative standard of living and buying power. Further, it is the student's perceived need to have a part-time job.

The dependent variables, full-day attendance, partial-day attendance, and grade point average information, were recorded and stored by the two school districts. The daily attendance of each student is recorded by the classroom teacher and communicated to the administrative offices that kept record of student hourly attendance. The student attendance for the first semester of the 1989-90 school year was examined. For the second sample, the first semester of the 1993-94 school year was examined.

Student grades are calculated by the individual teachers. The grades are then sent to the administrative offices that combine the student's grades.

The student's grade point average is calculated by a computer program considering the number of courses taken and the grades earned. The students' grade point averages for the first semester of the 1989-90 school year were examined.

The independent variables were measured through self-reporting. The students completed a survey that asked questions about parent inter-relationships, student-parent relationships, family configuration, student family role, and family economic conditions. Students were asked to state their judgments about events happening within their families. They had to match their responses with the multiple answers given. Other questions required the student to provide information that was not opinionated.

Data Collection

The data collection was completed in a four-phase process culminating in the administration of a lengthy survey to single-parent family and dual-parent family students. Two phases were interviews and two were surveys (one five questions and the other more than 70 questions).

The first phase was to interview single-parent family students, single parents, and former single parents. The second phase was interviewing single-parent family students and dual-parent family students. The third phase involved surveying the Dexter and Plymouth-Salem student bodies. In the final phase, single-parent family students and dual-parent family students were surveyed.

The first phase began with interviews done during the spring and summer of 1988. All of the interviews were conducted with students and

parents from Dexter. In the process of developing a survey instrument to learn about single-parent families and single-parent family students' perceptions, the researcher interviewed three single-parent family students, three single parents, and two former single parents. The researcher knew the individuals had been, or were, a part of a single-parent family. One parent learned of the research project and asked to be interviewed.

The single-parent family students, single parents, and former single parents identified major concerns. The interviews helped the researcher develop and refine the questions. The interviewees provided the researcher feedback on their understanding of the questions. Further, they established that the questions asked were areas of concern. The researcher asked questions about the reaction to the loss of a parental family figure, parent-parent relationships, parent-child relationships, family configuration, family roles, family finances, and the schools' and communities' response to the family configurations. The researcher's intent of the interviews was to validate literature review. The major areas of concern raised in the literature were the same areas of concern raised by the interviewees. The children and parents were given an opportunity to express themselves on any other topic they thought was germane to the subject.

At the conclusion of most interviews, the interviewees expressed a sense of relief. Most were glad to have had the opportunity to share their feelings. Some said it was the first time they were able to express those feelings. Some felt they had been carrying their feelings as a burden.

The second phase of the study was interviewing students from single-parent families and dual-parent families from Dexter and Plymouth-Salem High Schools. A variety of students with various GPAs and attendance rates were

interviewed. Their student discipline records were also considered. Students familiar to the administration in both schools that fit the criteria were asked to participate. Five single-parent family students and five dual-parent family students from Dexter and Plymouth-Salem were interviewed at each school during the fall of 1988 and the winter of 1989. As a result of these interviews, the wording of each question was completed. These students were asked to answer survey questions and put into their own words the meaning of specific questions.

The researcher then interviewed ten students of single-parent families and ten students of dual-parent families using the survey instrument as a guide. The researcher was concerned about the clarity of the questions. Would they be understood? Were the questions reaching the intended point? Thus, the survey was formed through the interviews and the students' feedback.

The third step was to survey the Dexter and Plymouth-Salem student bodies to determine each student's present living arrangement. About 57% of the combined Dexter and Plymouth-Salem student bodies, or 2793 students, responded to the five question survey. Their names were placed in the appropriate living arrangement category. In Dexter, 454 students out of a possible 593 (77%) students responded, while 1146 out of 2200 (52%) students responded at Plymouth-Salem. The total and percentage of groupings are listed below.

Table 3.1
Student Living Arrangement

	Dexter		Plymouth		Totals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dual-parent family	329	72.5	808	70.5	1137	71.1
Single-parent family-mom	50	11.0	162	14.2	212	13.3
Single-parent family-dad	16	3.5	18	1.6	34	2.1
Mom & step-dad	39	8.6	107	9.3	146	9.1
Dad & step-mom	11	2.4	29	2.5	40	2.5
Foster parent or other	9	2.0	22	1.9	31	1.9
Total students	454	100	1146	100	1600	100

Compared to national figures, Dexter and Plymouth-Canton had a lower percentage of single-parent families. The national percentage of children living in single-parent families is 28.1% (22.6% white), while the percentage of Dexter/Plymouth students living in single-parent families was 15.4%.

The final phase was to have a lengthy survey completed by selected single-parent family and dual-parent family students. The lists of single-parent family students from Dexter and Plymouth-Canton created in the second phase of the data collection process were merged. The same was done with the lists of Dexter and Plymouth-Canton students living in dual-parent families. The purpose of merging the lists was to randomly select students to complete the

survey about their family and school.

The study's selected students were from a large pool of students (1600) from Dexter and Plymouth-Salem that had completed the initial survey form indicating they lived with either one or both of their biological parents. The selected single-parent family students and dual-parent family students and their parents were asked to sign a consent form or to orally give their consent to participate in the study. This was done via letter, telephone, or in-person.

All of the students living in single-parent families (246) identified in the second phase were asked to participate in the survey. This was due to the small number of identified single-parent family students. (Ultimately about half of the identified single-parent family students completed the lengthy survey.)

Many more dual-parent family students had been initially identified. The researcher wanted the same number of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students completing the survey. Therefore, the number of dual-parent family students surveyed was limited to the number of single-parent family students surveyed.

Over eleven-hundred (1137) students indicated that they lived with both biological parents. Due to the large numbers, not all of these students were asked to participate. In the spring of 1989, a random sample of dual-parent family students was selected to participate in the survey. A randomized selection of these students was done to determine which would be asked to complete the longer survey. The students were alphabetized by last name and assigned a number (for example: 1. Aaron, 2. Adams, 3. Baker... 1137. Zute). The numbers were placed in a random order by a computer software program. The students were then listed in the order of their assigned number. For example:

1. Aaron
2. Adams
3. Baker
1137. Zute
- etc...

The first 246 dual-parent family students listed were asked to complete the longer survey. Of the students selected, 48 were from Dexter and 198 were from Plymouth-Salem.

In April of 1989, at Dexter High School, the researcher met separately with two large groups of students selected to be surveyed, one group living in single-parent families and the other group living in dual-parent families. Students living with step-parents were not included in the study. The students received consent forms that explained the research project's nature and purpose as well as the selection procedures. The researcher reviewed the purpose of the intended survey. The students could ask questions and did. The two most frequently asked questions were, "Why was I given a pass to report to the cafeteria?" and "Why was I selected to complete a survey?" After these repeated inquiries were answered several times with the same response, the inquiries shifted to the nature of the survey. The students were given survey consent forms to complete, which required the student's signature and a parent's signature.

After two weeks the researcher individually contacted the students who had not returned forms. If the student indicated that he/she did not want to participate, the student was thanked for giving it consideration and the inquiry was concluded. If the student responded that he/she had lost the form, a new form was issued. If the student said the form was in a locker or at home, the

researcher issued another form and encouraged the student to bring it back signed.

The designated Plymouth-Salem High School students and their parents received (by mail) a consent form, an explanation of the research project, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. They were asked to sign and return the consent form. As of June 1st, 1989, only eighty (80) students had returned signed consent forms (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Students Surveyed in May

	Single-parent students	Dual-parent students
Dexter	28	19
Plymouth-Salem	19	14

In Dexter, the students were given passes from class to complete the survey in either the school cafeteria or in a conference room. Plymouth-Salem students were asked to complete the surveys in the school cafeteria also after being given passes from class. In both schools, the researcher monitored the students during the completion of the surveys. Further, he gave each group general instructions and answered questions before and during the sessions. The students were given one of two surveys - one for students of single-parent families or one for students of dual-parent families (see appendix). Further,

each student was given a scan sheet to record his/her responses.

Many students gave excuses for not completing the permission slips or did not respond to the passes. Some said they left the permission slip at home or in their locker. When given the opportunity to retrieve the slip, some said the form was not signed. When given the opportunity to get approval over the phone, some agreed to be interviewed. Others did not want to bother their parents at work. Others admitted they did not want to share things about their family. They said the subject was too painful to share. One student said, "It is too soon after my dad's death to talk. It really burns me." Another student said, "I hated it when my parents divorced. Thinking about those bad times again will make me cry." Two brothers were asked to complete the survey. One did. He said, "My brother will not do it. He acts more like a baby now than before our mother left. Heck, he's a ninth grader; you'd think he'd grow up."

By the end of the spring, only one in six (80 out of 492) students asked had agreed to be surveyed and had completed the surveys (see Table 3.2). As a result, the remainder of the dual-parent family students were put in random order. The researcher went down the list asking dual-parent family students to participate until 119 students agreed to complete the survey. (More Dexter High School students responded than at Plymouth-Salem High School. The student response rate may have been higher at Dexter High school because the researcher is a Dexter High School administrator with direct student access. In Plymouth-Salem, the researcher was viewed as an outsider.)

Discussing one's family life (the perceived relationship between parents, the relationship with each parent, the family configuration, the family roles, and the family finances) is threatening. A lot of students were not willing to share

this information with a stranger. One parent called the researcher concerned that the school had given someone she did not know her daughter's name and address. When this conversation shifted to interviewing her daughter, she responded, "That area's (her family) out of bounds."

Although the Dexter High School students were familiar with the researcher, revealing perceptions about family history was still considered risky. The threatening nature of this inquiry prompted many to pass on the opportunity to share their perceptions.

In May of 1994, all of the single-parent family students at Dexter High School were asked to complete the same survey used in 1989. Eighty single-parent students, or two-thirds of these students, agreed to participate. Using the same method of selection, 80 dual-parent family students were surveyed. A research assistant, a recent college graduate and former Dexter High School student, helped the author survey the students. Students completed the forms, as in 1989, in the cafeteria of the school or in a small conference room. In 1994, the data collectors were more direct in asking students to help complete the forms. In 1994, a higher percentage of single-parent family students completed the forms. The reasons attributed for the greater success are three fold. First, the research assistant was able to devote more time to collecting the surveys. Second, the assistant was closer in age to the high school students than was the researcher. Third, the researcher has gained a reputation for his knowledge of single-parent family students.

The dual-parent family students were willing to participate, but showed little emotion or signs of stress while completing the survey, as evidenced by the casual attitude they presented. Some of the single-parent family students expressed their gratitude for being able to complete the survey. Fewer students

went through the same steps of avoiding having to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

The difference between single-parent family students and dual-parent family students were compared using t-tests, chi-square tests and MANOVA. These tests were used, in part, because the sample sizes are relatively small, the tests provide reliability, and have a robust nature. The sample groups being compared are independent. The comparisons were made for independent variables - grade point average and student attendance. Attendance rates are compared two ways: whole-day attendance and partial-day attendance (missing one or more classes but not the entire day).

T-tests were used to compare single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' full day attendance, partial attendance, and grade point average. Further, t-tests were used to compare the two groups' perceived level of support between parents, perceived level of support with parents, family configuration, perceived family role, and perceived family economic condition.

When comparing the single-parent family and dual-parent family responses to the question, four tallied numbers resulted. For example, when comparing the single-parent and dual-parent family students' responses to a question about the perceived level of support each parent provides the other, the student had an option to select one of four answers. Two of the answers indicated support and two indicated no support. To determine if a significant difference exists, a predictable number of responses for each category is calculated and that number is compared with the actual results. For example:

Table 3.3

1989 Student Responses to Parents' Mutual Support**SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY STUDENT Responses**

	Positive Response	Negative Response
Predicted	76	43
Actual	56	63
Difference	-20	+20

DUAL-PARENT FAMILY STUDENT Responses

Predicted	76	43	
Actual	96	63	
Difference	+20	-20	Net difference 40

The net difference between the expected and actual single-parent family students' perceptions and the dual-parent family students' perceptions is 40. More single-parent family students viewed their parents' relationship as non-supportive than expected, and fewer dual-parent family students viewed their parents' relationship as non-supportive. The differences between the expected and actual responses are significant in all categories. Therefore, a significant difference exists between the perceived level of support between the parents of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students. The single-parent family students' are less supportive of each other

Comparisons were made between the single-parent and dual-parent students, their whole-day attendance, partial-day attendance, GPA, and question items in one of five different areas. The areas include relationship between parents, student relationship with each parent, family configuration, student-perceived role in the home, and student-perceived family economic status.

Summary

This preliminary study was conducted at two high schools in the greater Ann Arbor area using an opinion survey with two forms, one for students of single-parent families and another for students of two parent families. Most of the survey questions were the same. A sample of 119 adolescents from both single-parent and dual-parent families completed the survey in 1989, and 80 adolescents from each group completed the surveys in 1994. This chapter also includes an explanation of the sampling and data collection procedures, a description of the sample groups, rationale for the use of the questions, the hypotheses, and the analytic procedure used in testing these hypotheses.

CHAPTER IV

Introduction of the Data Analysis

The researcher's purpose in the study was to explain the student's perceptions of life in a single-parent family and how these perceptions relate to the student's rate of attendance and grade point average. Questions asked include: Is the existence of and life in a single-parent family related to the academic performance (grade point average and/or rate of attendance of the students involved)? What other factors are related to the student's GPA and/or rate of attendance in school?

The conditions examined were: the student's perception of the relationship between his/her biological parents, the relationship the student has with each biological parent, the configuration of the family, the student's perception of his/her family role, and the student's perception of the family's economic condition. In summary, is the generally negative stereotype of the single-parent family student merited?

Hypothesized Findings

The study's eight hypotheses reflect the major elements and suggestions that came out of the literature. They fall into three groupings. The first two hypotheses compare single-parent family student's and dual-parent family student's grades and rates of attendance (partial and full-day attendance). The next five hypotheses compare single-parent family student and dual-parent

family student family related factors with their academic performance. The final hypothesis examines the student responses collected at different points in time.

First Hypothesis

A single-parent family student's academic performance is likely to be significantly different from that of students living with both parents.

The students' academic performance was defined as full-day attendance, partial-day attendance, and grade point average. Single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' number of full-day absences, partial-day absences, and semester grade point averages were compared. (With the advent of student portfolios, the evaluation of student academic performance can be more extensive. Starting in the fall of 1994, the State of Michigan mandated that all eighth graders start a portfolio and develop it throughout the student's high school experience; and by 1999, all students in the state will have them. As of 1995, the mandate has changed to a recommendation.)

The students' academic performances were divided into high and low responses. Using t-tests and Chi-square with a .01 level of significance, there was no significant difference between single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' rate of full-day attendance. Further, no significant difference existed between the rate of partial-day attendance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students, and no significant difference existed between single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' grade point averages.

Comparing the students' full day attendance rate, the students were grouped as missing six or fewer days or more than six school days during the

first semester for the 1989-90 school year. One hundred nineteen single and dual-parent families' attendance rates were compared. Forty-five percent of the single-parent family students and 44% of the dual-parent family students missed six or fewer full days of school. Using Chi-square with one degree of freedom, no significant difference existed between the groups.

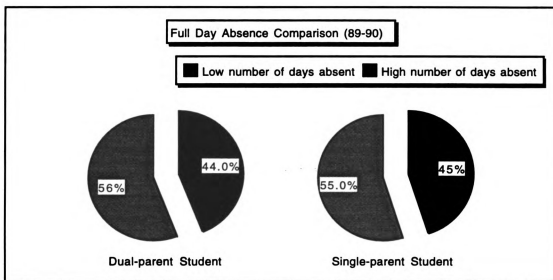
Table 4.1

Full-day Attendance Rate Comparison

Living arrangement

	Low rate	High rate	Total
	(0 to 6 absences)	(7 or more absences)	
Single-parent students	54	65	119
row%	45.3	54.7	50.0
column%	50.9	49.1	
Dual-parent students	52	67	119
row %	43.7	56.3	50.0
column%	49.1	50.8	
Column Total	106	132	238
Column %	44.5	55.5	100.0

Figure 4.1
Partial Day Absence Comparison



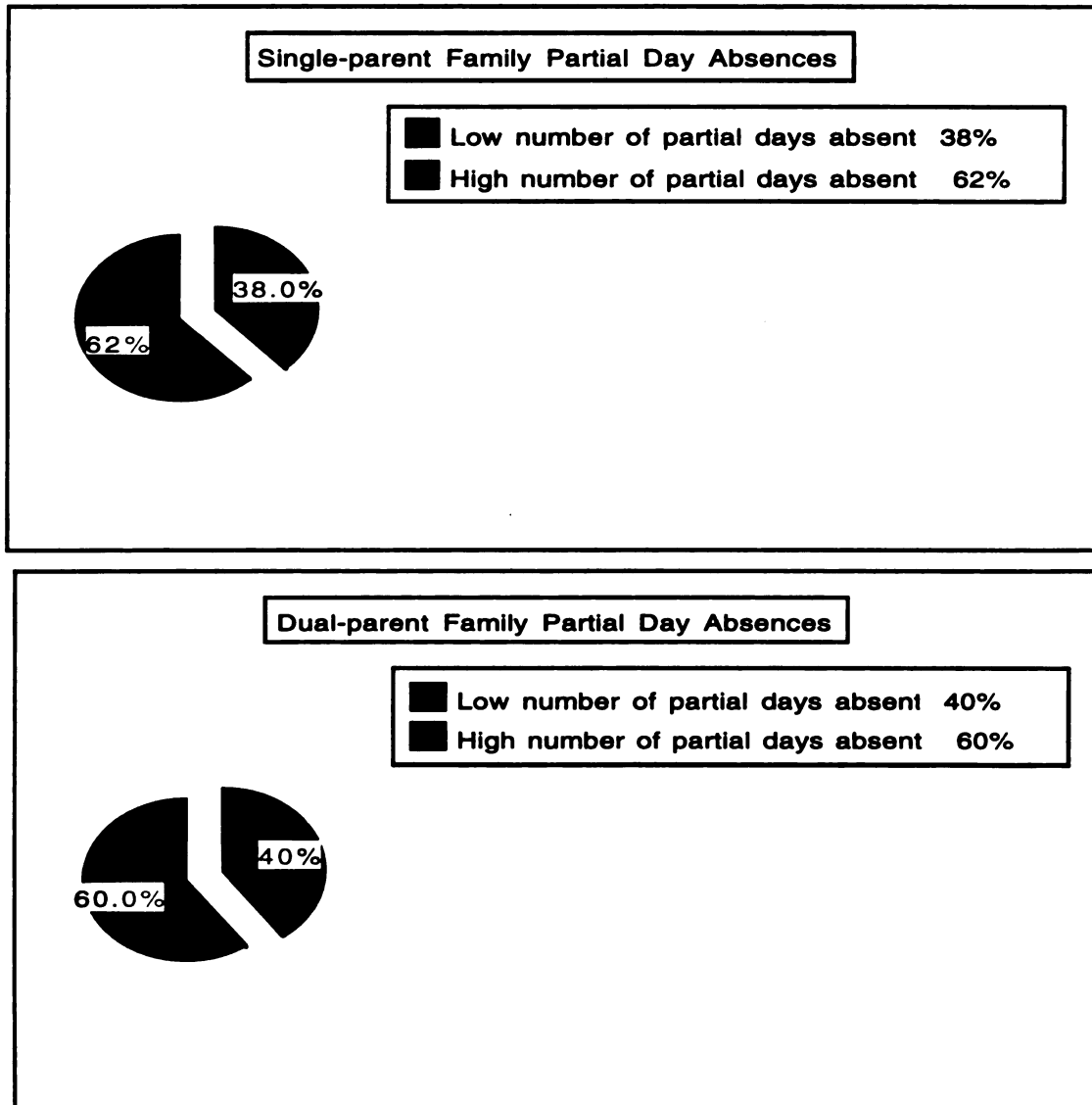
Comparing the students' partial attendance records, the students were grouped as missing at least a portion of a day, but not the entire day, on no more than six different days. One-hundred-nineteen single and dual-parent family students were compared. Thirty-eight percent of the single-parent family students and 40% of the dual-parent family students missed a portion of a day on no more than six days. Using Chi-square with one degree of freedom, no significant difference existed between the two groups. This means living in a single-parent family did not appear to affect single-parent family students' academic performance. The single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' academic experiences were similar.

Table 4.2

Partial-day Attendance Rate Comparison

	Low rate (0 to 6 days with a partial absence)	High rate (7 or more days with a partial absence)	Total
Single-parent students	45	74	119
row percentage	37.8	62.2	50
column percentage	48.4	51.0	
Dual-parent students	48	71	119
row percentage	40.3	59.7	50
column percentage	51.6	49.0	
Column Total	93	145	238
Column percentage	39.1	60.9	100.0

Figure 4.2
Partial-day Absence Comparison



The researcher examined the first semester GPAs (1989-90) of the students. For statistical purposes, the students were placed in two groups: high and low responses, high included a GPA of 2.5 or better on a 4.0 scale, and low, 2.49 or lower. One hundred and nineteen single and dual-parent family

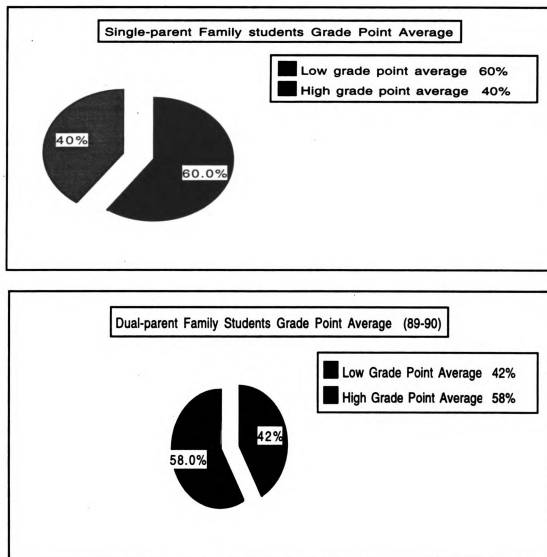
students' GPAs were compared. Forty percent of the single-parent family students and 58% of the dual-parent family students had above a 2.5 GPA. Using Chi-square with one degree of freedom, there was no significant difference between the single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' GPA.

Table 4.3

Grade Point Average Comparison

	Low GPA (2.49 or below)	High GPA (4.0 to 2.5)	Total
Single-parent students	72	47	119
row percentage	60.5	39.5	50.0
column percentage	60	40	
Dual-parent students	50	69	119
row percentage	42.0	58.0	50.0
column percentage	42	58	
Column Total	122	116	238
Column percentage	51.3	48.7	100

Figure 4.3

Grade Point Average Comparison

No significant difference was found when the single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' full-day attendance, partial-day attendance, or GPAs were compared. The first hypothesis that a single-parent family student's academic performance is likely to be significantly different from

that of students living with both parents was not retained.

Second Hypothesis

When combined, single-parent family students' academic performance, school attendance, and grade point average, will differ significantly from that of students living with both parents.

Chi-square tests were used to compare the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students. The measured school-related performances included full day attendance, partial day attendance, and grade point average. By combining the students' responses for two of the three variables, three comparisons were made. The comparisons:

Full Day Attendance and Partial Day Attendance

Full Day Attendance and GPA

Partial Day Attendance and GPA

Combining the students' efforts for these different categories may provide insight. If a relationship exists between academic performance and living in a single-parent family, combining the results may reflect the relationship. For example, fourteen single-parent family students and seven dual-parent family students with less than three absences had GPAs between 2.49 and 1.5. Reference Table 4.4 provides detailed categorization of surveyed single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar full-day attendance rates and GPAs.

Table 4.4

Interquartile Comparison**Absences**

	Mean	Median
All students in sample		
Dual-parent Students	4.5 days	7-12 days
Single-parent Students	9.7 days	7-12 days
Difference	5.2 days	
Interquartile range		
Dual-parent Students	7.7 days	
Single-parent Students	9.1 days	
Difference	1.4 days	

G.P.A.

	Mean	Median
All students in sample		
Dual-parent Students	2.65	3.49 - 2.50
Single-parent Students	2.27	2.49 - 1.50
Difference	.38	
Interquartile range		
Dual-parent Students	2.77	
Single-parent Students	2.27	
Difference	.5	

Table 4.5

Mean GPA and Days Absent					
	0-2 days	3-5 days	7-12 days	12-20 days	21+
Dual-parent Students	2.77	3.18	2.48	2.78	2.03
Single-parent Students	2.51	2.65	2.60	2.01	1.81
Difference	.26	.53	.12	.77	.22

Mean Absences and GPA					
	4.0-3.5	3.49-2.5	2.49-1.50	1.49-.5	.49-0.00
Dual-parent Students	7.8 days	7.0 days	10 days	11.8 days	+21 days
Single-parent Students	8.1 days	6.2 days	10.1 days	13.3 days	+21 days
Difference	.2 day	.8 day	.1 day	1.5 days	same

The combined academic performance of single and dual-parent family student variables (full-day attendance, partial-day attendance, and GPA) were examined. When the percentage of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar full-day attendance and GPA traits were compared, no predictable distribution pattern existed. However, single-parent family students tended to have a more average range of absences and GPAs and the dual-parent family students tended to have fewer absences and higher GPA. Thus, dual-parent family students had a tendency to have a higher academic performance than did single-parent family students.

Comparing the student's combined full day attendance and partial-day

attendance rates, no statistical significance was found. The same was true when comparing the students' partial-day attendance rates and grade point averages. Comparing the student's full-day attendance and grade point average, with one degree of freedom, a statistical level of significance existed. Single-parent family students had lower grades and poorer attendance than did dual-parent family students.

If a relationship existed, the compared, combined performances of the single-parent family students would be significantly different from the combined performances for the dual-parent family students. In the three comparisons, no significant difference was found. No relationship was found between a student living in a single-parent family and academic performance. Of the three combined comparisons, the combination of the students' full day attendance and GPA provided the greatest difference. However, the second hypothesis was not retained.

Five Family-Related Variables

The influences of five family-related variables on academic performance are examined next. The first of these variables is the student's perception of his/her biological parent's relationship with each other. The other variables are the student's perceptions of his/her relationship with each parent, family configuration, the student's role in the family, and the family's economic status.

The student responses were divided into two categories: high and low. The high response was considered positive and the low response was considered neutral or negative. For example, if a student perceived his/her parents as not supportive of each other, that answer was categorized as a low

response. If the student responded that the parents were supportive of each other, the answer was categorized as a high response.

If a single-parent family student and a dual-parent family student have similar family perceptions, experiences, and academic performance, then it would be reasonable to deduce that the combination of these factors would support academic performance. The number of parents living with an adolescent was not viewed as a major influence on academic performance. Indeed, the other variables were of greater consequence.

Perception and academic performance were the two types of variable comparisons made. The students' perceptions and experiences were combined with their academic performance and then compared.

The specific categories and number of survey questions considered within each category are as follows: parent mutual support (2 questions), student relationship with each parent (8 questions), family configuration (2 questions), family responsibility (15 questions), and family economic status (5 questions). A significant difference was expected between single and dual-parent family student comparisons. If the single-parent family student's perceptions were significantly different from that of the dual-parent family student's perceptions, the five hypotheses would be validated. Single-parent family students' academic performance would be affected by living in a single-parent family.

When all of the question comparisons were reviewed, the widest disparities between negative and positive student perceptions and academic achievement were found in the perceived relationship between parents. The widest disparity in the percentage of positive responses came from the student's perception of their parents' mutual support. The percentage of dual-parent

family students that perceived their parents as having a supportive relationship and earned a high GPA was more than twice that of single-parent family students with similar perceptions and GPA (50.8% dual-parent family students vs. 22.6% single-parent family students). The widest negative disparity found more single-parent family students perceiving his/her parent's relationship as neutral or non-existent being more likely to have poor partial school attendance (dual-parent family students 9.2% vs. 33.3 % single-parent family students).

When the students' separate academic performances (full day attendance, partial day attendance or GPA) are combined with student perceptions, there are four possible categories:

- a. good academic performance and positive perception
- b. good academic performance and negative perception
- c. poor academic performance and positive perception
- d. poor academic performance and negative perception

When comparing the percentages of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with similar academic performance and perceptions, the widest difference in the percentage of students with similar traits occurred when single-parent family students and dual-parent family students with high GPAs and positive perceptions of their parent's interrelationship were compared. A fifth of the single-parent family students have high grades and view their parents as having a supportive interrelationship; while half of the dual-parent family students had a similar GPA and perception of their parent's interrelationship. It was more likely for single-parent family students with low grades to view their parents as being non-supportive than dual-parent family students; and it was more likely for dual-parent family students with high grades to view their parents as supportive than

it was for single-parent family students.

Third Hypothesis

When comparing the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students having similar perceptions of their biological parent's relationships, the single-parent family students' academic performance will be significantly different.

For the third hypothesis to be confirmed, a significant percentage of the single-parent family students with similar perceptions of their parent's relationship needed to have a difference between their attendance rate or grade point average.

The predicted student responses were compared to their actual responses. Similar single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' survey responses were compared with the respondent's academic performance. The GPA of all students who responded that their parents were supportive of each other were compared.

Chi-square tests were used to compare the students high and low survey responses with their high and low academic performance. Two questions related to the student's perception of their parent's relationship were asked. One dealt with mutual parent support and the other related to level of parental conflict.

Single-parent family students who perceived their parent's interrelationship as supportive when compared to dual-parent family students who also viewed their parent's interrelationship as being supportive, have significantly lower academic performance. From the student's perspective, the level of support and conflict between their biological parents was compared with academic performance to determine the hypothesis' accuracy.

Table 4.6

Attendance and Perceptions of Parent's Interrelationship**Single-Parent Family Students****Full-day attendance**

Level of parental support	0-6 absences absences	more than 6 absences	Row Total
Supportive			
# of students	27	34	61
row %	44.3	55.7	51.3
column %	50.0	52.3	
Non-supportive			
# of student	27	31	58
row %	46.6	53.4	48.7
column %	50.0	46.0	
Column #	54	65	119
Total %	45.4	54.6	100

Table 4.6 (cont'd.)

Dual-parent Family Students

Full-day attendance			
Level of parental support	0-6 absences	more than 6 absences	Row Total
Supportive			
# of students	42	55	97
row %	43.3	56.7	81.5
column %	80.8	82.1	
<hr/>			
Non-supportive			
# of students	10	12	22
row %	59.1	40.9	18.5
column %	80.8	82.1	
<hr/>			
Column #	52	67	119
Total %	43.7	56.3	100.0
<hr/>			

Table 4.6 shows that about 44% of the single-parent family students who viewed their parents as supporting each other had six or fewer absences, while about 43% of the dual-parent family students fell into the same category. The percentages are nearly identical. Conversely, nearly 41% of the dual-parent family students and 53% of the single-parent family students who viewed their parents as having a non-supportive or neutral interrelationship exceeded six absences. The difference is about 12%.

Table 4.7

Combined Comparisons Parent's Interrelationship and GPA

	PIR+ GPA+	PIR+ GPA-	PIR- GPA+	PIR- GPA-
<hr/>				
Single-parent				
family student	19.7	28.2	19.7	32.4
Dual-parent				
family student	50.8	29.6	7.2	12.4

Parental Interpersonal Relationship (PIR) +/-

+ = Parents viewed as supportive

- = Parents viewed as neutral or non-supportive

GPA +/-

+ = 2.5 GPA or above

- = 2.5 GPA or below

Single-parent family students and dual-parent family students having a combination of either poor attendance and viewed their parental supportive (single-parent family students 28.6% and dual-parent family students 46%) or have good attendance and view their parents as having a neutral or no relationship constitute more than half of all of the responses (single-parent family students 22.7% and dual-parent family students 8.4%).

Many studies, including Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980), Mohler and Rosen (1992), Ahrons and Rodgers (1987), and Peck (1989), indicate that

parent's post-divorce relationship is the most critical factor in the family's ability to function. Students suffer when both parents are not mutually supportive of decisions affecting the children. A well adjusted child in a "broken-family" has more contact with the non-custodial parent and the parents are supportive of his/her academics (Guidubaldi et al., 1983, p. 320). According to Furstenburg and Cherlin (1991, p. 71), one of the best predictors of child adjustment to divorce is the degree to which parents established a cooperative, supportive relationship following the divorce. Students still involved in the personal adjustment of divorce have difficulty focusing on academic achievement. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p. 215) found that after five years, the most poorly adjusted students had parents refusing to cooperate and in continual disagreement.

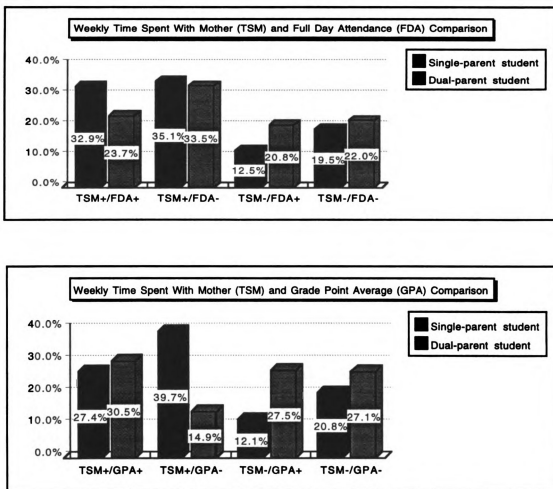
Conflict between parents is more often the source of student adjustment problems than is the actual parent separation (Emery, 1988). Home life strife prior to parental separation is contrasted with a non-contested single-parent family. A good portion of the impact of a broken home may relate to how the child viewed family life and parental relationships prior to the disintegration. One student put it best, "...you just wish that they (parents) would relax, so that you can. I think it'd be a lot easier if parents got along better because it makes things so much easier for kids and for everyone else" (Kline & Pew, 1992, pp. 199-200).

A significantly smaller percentage of single-parent family students than dual-parent family students have similar perceptions of their parent's relationship and have similar academic performance. The hypothesis was retained. This means that single-parent family students appear to be more affected by their perceptions of their parent's relationship than dual-parent

family students. Single-parent family students' academic performance was negatively influenced by their perceptions of their parent's interrelationship. This would mean the parents' negative reaction to their former mates has a negative influence on student performance in school; their children's academic performance is adversely affected.

Figure 4.4

Time Spent with Mother and Academic Performance



Fourth Hypothesis

Single-parent family students with similarly perceived student/parent relationships to that of dual-parent family students have significantly different academic performance.

The survey included eight related parent-student relationship questions. The predicted student responses were compared with their actual responses. Similar student survey responses were compared with the respondent's academic performance.

The student's perceived relationship with each parent was the next factor considered. The topics were mother or father's general support, mother or father support of student's educational effort, mother or father's contact with student, and the student's time spent with mother or father.

There is a significant difference between the single-parent family and dual-parent family students' perception of the maternal support for the student's efforts in school and the time spent with the father. There was no significant difference in the father's support of student's educational effort, mother or father's contact with student, and time spent doing things with mother.

Significantly fewer single-parent family students than dual-parent family students perceived their mothers as being supportive of their educational effort. Contact with both parents is important to proper student adjustment. This position is supported by Dworkin (1987), Lamb (1982), Teyber (1987), and Inglis (1982). Love expressed among parents and children provides emotional support and remains an important family function (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987, p. 17).

When a single-parent family is created, the amount of time a parent spends with children often is reduced. In one study, 50% of the mothers said they were spending less time with their children after a divorce. When mother-child contact time is reduced, the student may feel the parent is not supportive due to a reduction in contact. If an overburdened mother gives less time to the children, her children may derive diminished security because of receiving smaller dosage of parenting (Adams, Miner & Schrepf, 1984, p. 164). Given that just under 90% of the single-parent family households are matriarchal, the perception that a mother in a single-parent family is probably not supportive of her child's educational efforts is due, in part, to the reduction in contact time, opportunity, and personal energy.

Table 4.8

Student's Perception of Time Spent with Mother

	neutral or no mother support	positive mother support	Total
Single-parent Family Students			
time spent	40	79	119
predicted	29	91	
difference	11	-12	
Dual-parent Family Students			
time spent	17	102	119
predicted	29	91	
difference	-12	11	

Table 4.9

Student/Mother Relationship and GPA

Perceived Relationship to Mother (MOM) +/- GPA +/-

Mother viewed as supportive=+ +=2.5 GPA or above

Mother viewed as nonsupportive=- -=less than 2.5 GPA

	MOM+ GPA+	MOM+ GPA-	MOM- GPA+	MOM- GPA-
Single-parent Students	34.9	38.8	4.6	21.7
Dual-parent Students	50.8	30.1	7.2	11.9

Table 4.10

Maternal School Support and GPA

Perceived Maternal Support for School (MSS)+/- GPA+/-

Mother viewed as supportive=+ +=2.5 GPA or above

Mother viewed as nonsupportive=- -=less than 2.5 GPA

	MSS+ GPA+	MSS+ GPA-	MSS- GPA+	MSS- GPA-
Single-parent Students	34.9	35.0	4.6	25.5
Dual-parent Students	52.5	32.7	5.5	9.3

Table 4.11

Student/Father Relationship and GPA

Perceived Relationship to Father (DAD) +/-	GPA +/-			
Father viewed as supportive=+	+=2.5 GPA or above			
Father viewed as nonsupportive=-	-=less than 2.5 GPA			
	DAD+ GPA+	DAD+ GPA-	DAD- GPA+	DAD- GPA-
Single-parent Students	30.2	35.0	9.3	25.5
Dual-parent Students	44.9	26.7	13.1	15.3

Table 4.12

Paternal School Support and GPA

Perceived Paternal Support for School (PSS)+/-	GPA +/-			
Father viewed as supportive=+	+=2.5 GPA or above			
Father viewed as nonsupportive=-	-=less than 2.5 GPA			
	PSS+ GPA+	PSS+ GPA-	PSS- GPA+	PSS- GPA-
Single-parent Students	28.3	34.1	11.2	26.4
Dual-parent Students	50.0	38.4	8.0	3.6

Table 4.13

Student/Mother Relationship and Attendance

Perceived Relationship to Mother (MOM) +/-
Full Day Attendance(FDA) +/-

Mother viewed as supportive=+

Mother viewed as nonsupportive=-

+ = 6 or fewer absences

- = more than 6 absences

	MOM+ FDA+	MOM+ FDA-	MOM- FDA+	MOM- FDA-
Single-parent Students	32.9	38.7	12.5	15.9
Dual-parent Students	44.1	48.7	.4	6.8

Table 4.14

Maternal School Support and Attendance

Perceived Maternal Support for School (MSS) +/-
Full Day Attendance(FDA) +/-

Mother viewed as supportive=+

Mother viewed as nonsupportive=-

+ = 6 or fewer absences

- = more than 6 absences

	MSS+ FDA+	MSS+ FDA-	MSS- FDA+	MSS- FDA-
Single-parent Students	25.6	42.4	19.8	12.2
Dual-parent Students	40.8	52.1	3.7	3.4

Table 4.15

Student/Father Relationship and Attendance

Perceived Relationship to Father (DAD) +/-
Full Day Attendance(FDA) +/-

Father viewed as supportive=+
Father viewed as nonsupportive=-

+ = 6 or fewer absences
- = more than 6 absences

	DAD+ FDA+	DAD+ FDA-	DAD- FDA+	DAD- FDA-
Single-parent Students	35.4	35.1	10.0	19.5
Dual-parent Students	39.0	44.5	5.5	11.0

Table 4.16

Paternal School Support and Attendance

Perceived Paternal Support for School (PSS)+/-
Full Day Attendance(FDA) +/-

Father viewed as supportive=+
Father viewed as nonsupportive=-

+ = 6 or fewer absences
- = more than 6 absences

	PSS+ FDA+	PSS+ FDA-	PSS- FDA+	PSS- FDA-
Single-parent Students	25.6	35.1	19.8	19.5
Dual-parent Students	40.7	50.4	3.8	5.1

When students were asked about time spent with their fathers, a significant difference existed between the expected frequency of answers and the results (see Table 4.17). Fourteen more single-parent family students than predicted spent less time with their fathers; conversely, fifteen fewer single-parent family students than predicted spent more or the same time with their fathers. The dual-parent family students were asked about the contact they have had with their fathers over the past three years. Fourteen more than expected dual-parent family students spent more or the same time with their fathers and fifteen less than expected spent fewer time with their fathers.

Table 4.17

Time Spent with Father in the Last Three Years

	less time	more or the same	Totals
Single-parent Family Students			
time spent	86	33	119
predicted	72	48	
difference	14	-15	
Dual-parent Family Students			
time spent	57	62	119
predicted	72	48	
difference	-15	14	
Totals	143	95	238

In reviewing all of the student responses, the disparity between single and dual-parent family student responses exceeded 20% on six occasions: four times on positive responses and twice on negative responses. In the four positive responses more dual-parent family students had better attendance or GPA and a positive family perception than did the single-parent family students. The two negative response disparities had more single-parent family students with poorer attendance or GPA and a neutral or negative perception of his/her family.

When comparing the student relationship with each parent, only three of the good response comparisons favored single-parent family students over dual-parent family students by more than ten percentage points. The value assigned to student responses are good or negative. A good response would favor or support the family, positive relationships, and/or a positive performance in school. A negative response would detract from the keeping a family together, fostering a relationship, and/or from a successful school performance.

These were the only three good responses that favored the single-parent family students. The questions related to partial-day attendance and time spent with mother, full-day attendance and hours spent with father, and partial-day attendance and time spent with father.

The data indicate single-parent family students with similar perceptions of their relationships with their parents tend to perform poorer academically. However, the level of significance is too low to provide conclusive evidence to confirm the hypothesis. The hypothesis was not retained.

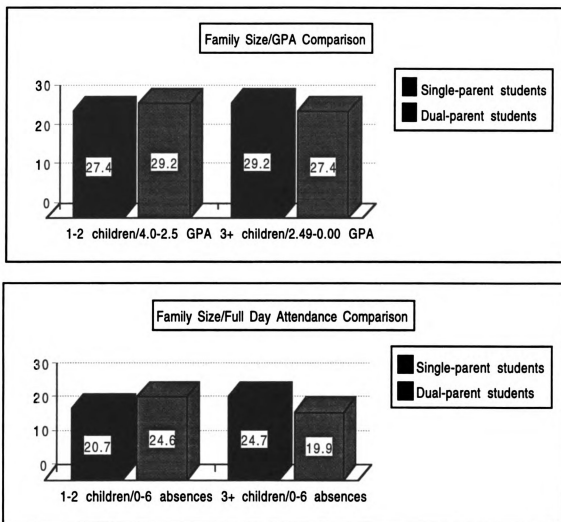
Fifth Hypothesis

Single-parent family students with similar family configurations to that of dual-parent family students have significantly different academic performance.

Two family-configuration survey questions considered the number of children in the family and the order in which the children were born. For each question the high and low single-parent family student responses were combined with each students academic performance and compared with the high and low dual-parent family student responses and their academic performance. For example, the full-day attendance rate of all students from a family with two children were compared and the GPAs of first born children in their family were compared.

Of the twelve comparisons between single-parent family student and dual-parent family students responses, only two had more than a 10% difference. Both differences included full-day attendance. Comparing the total percent of students responding the same within each grouping, over 12% more of the students from single-parent families with two or more children had poor attendance. Comparing the single-parent family students' birthing position, about 10% of the single-parent family students had more and about 10% of the single-parent family students had less than six full day absences from school than did dual-parent family students with the same attributes. This means that single-parent family students had mixed results.

Figure 4.5
Family Size and Academic Performance



In all but two of the comparisons the differences were less than 10%. The findings were inconclusive. The hypothesis was not retained. Academic performance of children with the same number of student in their family and the same birthing position does not appear to be affected by the number of parents in the home.

Sixth Hypothesis

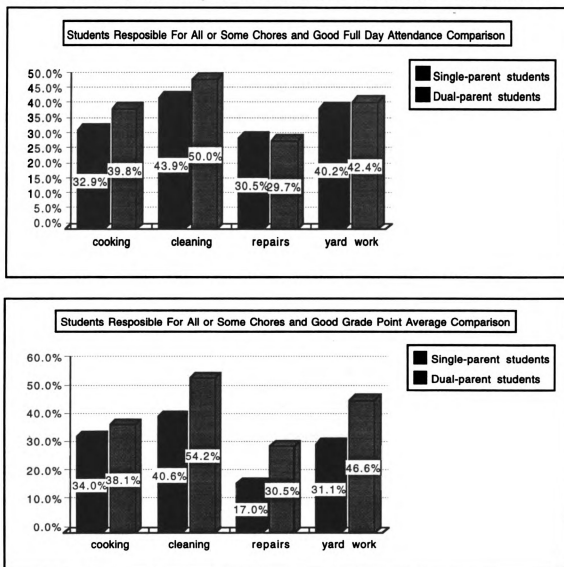
Single-parent family students that perceive their role in their family similarly to that of dual-parent family students have significantly different academic performance.

Fifteen student-family role related questions were asked. Two series of questions were about things the students took responsibility for within the family. The questions centered on the amount of time spent doing certain family-related chores.

A higher percentage of dual-parent family students than single-parent family students did all or some of the chores and had a good academic performance. A higher percentage of the single-parent family students than dual-parent family students did no chores and had poor academic performance. However, fewer than 3% difference occurred between the single-parent family students and dual-parent family students that did their chores and performed well academically. The percentage difference between the single-parent family students and dual-parent family students doing no chores and performing poorly academically was only near 6%.

The difference in the responses were inconclusive. The sixth hypothesis was not retained. Children with the same perception of family responsibility are not conclusively affected by the number of parents in the home.

Figure 4.6

Student Responsibility for Chores and Academic Performance

Seventh Hypothesis

Single-parent family students that perceive their household economic experience similarly to that of dual-parent family students have significantly different academic performance.

Five economic experience survey questions compared students' responses with their academic performance. Three of the questions related to the family focus on their economic condition. The other two questions were about student part-time jobs and the number of hours worked in the part-time jobs.

One-third of the possible negative response questions found the single-parent family students having poorer academic performances and negative responses to the financial questions. While six of fifteen of the positive responses found the dual-parent family students with a 10% or higher percentage than that of the single-parent family students. Two-thirds of the question area responses had less than a 10% difference in the single-parent family student and dual-parent family student responses. This means no consistent pattern between the two groups was present. The findings are inconclusive, thus the hypothesis was retained. Further, this means that children with similarly perceived economic status do not appear conclusively affected by the number of parents in the home.

Eighth Hypothesis

The academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1989 will not differ significantly from the single-parent family and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1994.

The single-parent family students and dual-parent family students academic performances were examined. This included comparing their full day attendance rate, partial day attendance rate, and grade point average. The second semester student performances for the given school year were reviewed. Since the number of students being examined was not equal, a comparison of their percentages was done. Little difference was found in each percentage comparisons. The comparisons reflect that student academic performance and family configurations have not changed much in the past five years.

A shift in attitude toward single-parent families may have occurred over the last twenty to thirty years. In the research, support is growing that students living in either single or dual-parent family household have similar academic performance (Zimmerman, 1995, Grissmer, 1994). According to Zimmerman, "Contrary to the stereotype, teens living with single mothers were not more likely to use alcohol and drugs, engage in delinquency or drop out of school. The adolescents in single-mother households actually received more parental support than those in two-parent homes." Indeed if there is a difference in single and dual-parent academic performance, it is due to factors other than the number of parents living in the home. According to Grissmer (1994), "... students in 1990 would be predicted to score higher, not lower, on tests than youth in families in 1970. This is because the two most influential characteristics--parents' education and family size--changed for the better." Further, Grissmer (1994) points out, "In addition, single-parent status by itself was not significant. This result suggests that any performance gap between students from one or two-parent families arises from other differences, such as family income or size or parents' education."

Attitudes may be changing. However, the income and educational level of Dexter parents has not changed significantly in the past five years. It makes sense that the academic performance of the students are similar in the comparisons. Therefore, the hypothesis is retained.

Table 4.19

Full-day Attendance Rate Comparison							
Living arrangement		Low rate (0 to 6 absences)		High rate (7 or more absences)		Total	
<hr/>							
SPK = Single-parent family student DPK = dual-parent family student							
		89	94			89	94
# of SPK		54	40	65	38	119	78
row%		45.3	51.3	54.7	48.7	50	49.7
column%		50.9	45.5	49.2	55.1		
# of DPK		52	48	67	31	119	79
row %		45.3	60.8	54.7	39.2	50	50.3
column%		49.1	54.5	50.8	44.9		
<hr/>							
Column Total		106	88	132	69	238	157
Column %		44.5	56.1	55.5	43.9	100.0	
<hr/>							

Figure 4.7
1989 and 1994 Full Day Attendance Comparison

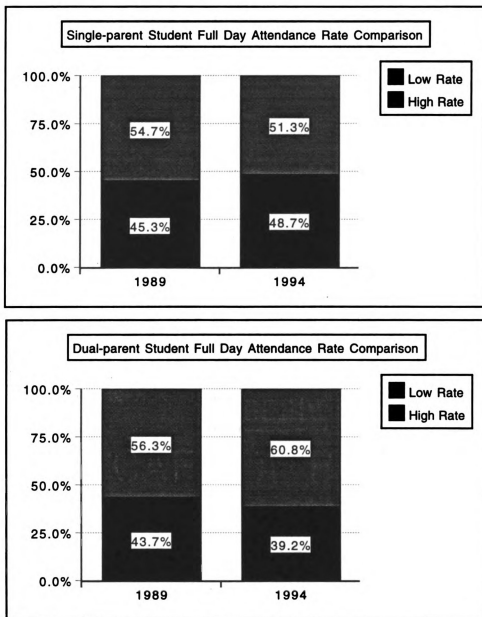


Table 4.20

Partial-day Attendance Rate Comparison

Living arrangement	Low rate		High rate		Total	
	(0 to 6 absences)		(7 or more absences)			

SPK = Single-parent family student

DPK = dual-parent family student

	89	94	89	94	89	94
# of SPK	45	33	74	47	119	80
row%	48.4	41.3	62.2	58.7	50.0	50.0
column%	40.5	47.8	55.0	51.6		
# of DPK	48	36	71	44	119	80
row%	40.3	45	59.7	55.0	50.0	50.0
column%	59.5	52.2	45.0	48.4		
Column Total	93	69	145	91	238	160
Column %	39.1	43.1	60.9	56.9	100	

Figure 4.8

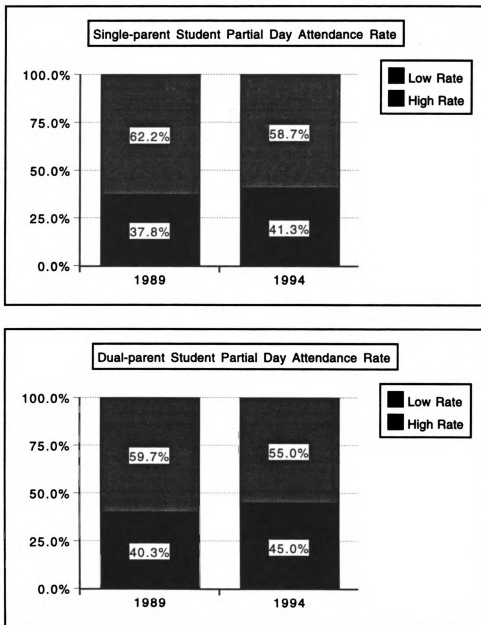
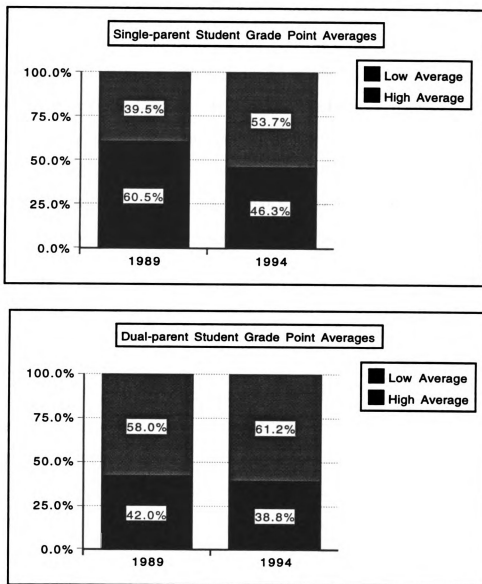
1989 and 1994 Partial Day Attendance Rate Comparison

Table 4.21

1989 - 1994 Grade Point Average Comparisons

Living arrangement	Low GPA (2.49 or below)		High GPA (4.0 to 2.5)		Total	
	89	94	89	94	89	94
# of SPK	72	37	47	43	119	80
row%	60.5	46.3	39.5	53.7	50.0	50.0
column%	59.0	54.4	40.5	46.7		
# of DPK	50	31	69	49	119	80
row%	42.0	38.8	58.0	61.2	50.0	50.0
column%	41.0	45.6	59.5	53.3		
Column Total	122	68	116	92	238	160
Column %	51.3	41.3	48.7	58.7	100.0	

Figure 4.9

1989 and 1994 Grade Point Average Comparison

Conclusion

The survey data analysis determined if the existence of, and life in, a single-parent family is related to student academic performance (grade point average and/or rate of attendance of the students involved) and whether other factors have any relation to the student's academic performance and/or rate of attendance in school. Elements of academic performance (full-day attendance, partial day attendance, and grade point average) were compared independently and in conjunction with the five family variables. These variables were the relationship between the student's biological parents, the relationship s/he has with each biological parent, the configuration of his/her family, the student's perception of his/her family role, and the student's perception of the family economic condition. The status of these conditions were determined through student perceptions and official academic records.

When comparing the single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' academic performances, no significant difference was found between the data collected in 1989 and 1994. This held true for all three academic categories: full day attendance, partial day attendance and grade point average. No significant difference was found when academic performance area results were combined, and there was no predictable pattern to the combined academic comparisons. The academic performances of the single-parent family students and dual-parent family students were not significantly different. This means that living in a single-parent family does not appear to have a significant impact on the academic performance of the single-parent family students when compared to dual-parent family students.

Next, academic performances of students with similar perception of their

family life were compared. The five areas examined were the student's perception of the biological parent's relationship, the student's relationship with each biological parent, the family configuration, the student's family role, and the family's economic condition.

The single-parent family student's combined responses tended to be negative and the dual-parent family student's responses tended to be positive. A higher percentage of single-parent family students with negative family perceptions had negative academic performances. Dual-parent family students tended to have a higher percentage of positive family perceptions and positive academic performances. This means that although not at a significant level, the indicators are that the creation of and/or existence in a single-parent family tends to have a negative influence on academic performance when the students' perception of the family are similar.

The greatest contrasts were produced when combining academic performance with students' perception of his/her parent's relationship. Two questions about the relationship between the student's parents were asked. The student could respond in a positive or neutral/negative way. Eleven of the twelve comparisons produced a 10% or greater disparity in the percentage of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students meeting the same criteria.

In each comparison, the percentage of single-parent family students having a neutral or negative perception and a poor academic performance was greater (6 of 6 comparisons) than the percentage of dual-parent family students with the same attributes. Further, in each comparison where a positive perception and a good academic performance occurred, dual-parent family students had a higher percentage of responses (5 of 6) than did single-parent

family students. For example, for every nine dual-parent family students with mutually supportive parents and fewer than six absences, only four single-parent family students had the same traits. And when comparing the single-parent family students and dual-parent family students, neutral or non-existent parent relationships, approximately five single-parent family students for every one dual-parent family student had more than six full-day absences.

This means a significantly greater percentage of single-parent family students perceived their parents' relationship as being poor. Fewer single-parent family students view their parents as having a positive relationship. These negative views appear to impact academic performance negatively. This data disaggregation indicates that the students' perceptions of their parents' relationship has a greater negative impact on the single-parent family students than it does on the dual-parent family students.

The next area with the greatest percentage of disparity is the perception of the student-parent relationship. In 9 of 24 categories, the single-parent family students had 10% or more negative responses and poor academic performance. In 11 of 24 categories that involved positive perception and good academic performance, more than a 10% difference favored dual-parent family students.

The perception of family economic conditions was the last variable considered. Less than one out of every six comparisons had a difference greater than 10%. Seventeen percent of the potential responses had a wide gap in responses. The positive responses favored the dual-parent family student and the negative responses favored the single-parent family student. This means that living in a single-parent family will mostly likely provide a negative influence in academic performance, if an impact is to be perceived.

The greatest similarity was found in the single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' family configuration responses. Only one question produced more than a 10% difference in the two groups' responses. When comparing similar family configurations, the students' academic performances were similar. This means that single-parent family students and dual-parent family students coming from similar family sizes and birthing orders have similar academic performance.

The next variable with the greatest similarity in the student responses was family role. Comparing the academic performance of students with similar family roles resulted in mostly comparable responses. Sixteen (only 9 percent) of 180 responses that had more than a 10% difference. Only 8% of the family role comparisons favored the dual-parent family students' responses by more than 10%. Thus the role a student plays in a family does not appear to be a major influence on student academic achievement.

The family configuration and family role variable comparisons produced the fewest questions with more than a 10% disparity in the single-parent family student and dual-parent family student response; there was little difference in the response ratios. Only 8% of the comparisons produced more than a 10% difference in the positive and negative responses. Compare this to the 46% of the student perceptions of parent relationships that produced the fewest questions with more than a 10% disparity in the single-parent family student and dual-parent family student response. The relationship with parent response had 25% and the economic status had 17%.

This would lead one to believe that the student perception of his/her parents relationship influences school performance. The relationship between child and parent and the perception of the economic condition are next in

importance in influencing performance.

The single-parent family student and dual-parent family student comparisons resulted in some skewed responses. Where differences of more than 10% occurred, a higher percentage of single-parent family students had neutral or negative variable responses in conjunction with a poor academic performance than did dual-parent family students. Where there was a 10% or greater difference in positive variable responses they were in conjunction with positive academic performance; and more dual-parent family students had the positive combination than did the single-parent family students.

When comparing the student responses of 1989 to those in 1994, no major differences were found in any areas. If anything the answers tend to be equal. This may be explained by the great importance middle class society places on education and less on the number of parents in the home. The academic community's perception of children in single-parent families may be changing.

The eight hypotheses have been tested using interviews and survey documentation. The study found no significant difference in the single-parent family students' and dual-parent family students' academic performances. However, the parental interrelationship in single-parent family appears to impact academic performance. In the next chapter, the single-parent family student research findings and this study's findings are merged. Further, the unexpected findings and areas of future research are presented.

Table 4.22

Largest Response Differentials

Variable and survey questions	% of Single-parent student responses	% of Dual-parent student responses	% of Difference
Positive responses			
1. Better GPA & perceived rapport between parents	22.6	50.8	28.2
2. Better GPA & perceived parental conflict	32.1	55.1	23%
3. Better full-day attendance & mother support of student's schooling	45.8	28.3	17.5
4. Better GPA & father's support of student's schooling	50.0	28.3	21.7

Negative responses

1. Poorer partial-day attendance & a neutral or no relationship between parents	33.3	9.2	24.1
2. Poorer GPA & no father support for school	26.4	3.6	22.8

The first number represents the number of times the percentage of responses from the type of parent exceeds the responses from the other type of parent by more than 10 percentage points. The second number represents the number of chances that the responses for that type of student to exceed the other type of students' responses by 10 percentage points.

Table 4.23

Full-day Attendance/GPA Comparison

Grade Point Averages						
	4.0 - 3.5 GPA	3.49 - 2.5 GPA	2.49 - 1.5 GPA	1.49 - 0.5 GPA	Below 0.49 GPA	Raw Total
SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY STUDENTS						
Full-day Attendance						
0 - 2 count	3	8	14	2	0	27
days row %	11.1	29.6	51.9	7.4	0	22.7
out column %	15	30	31.8	7.4		
3 - 6 count	10	6	5	6	0	27
days row %	37.0	22.0	19.0	22.0	0	22.7
out column %	50.0	23.0	11.4	22.2		
7 - 12 count	2	11	5	2	0	20
days row %	10.0	55.0	25.0	10.0	0	16
out column %	10.0	41.0	11.4	7.4		
12 - 20 count	2	2	12	9	0	25
days row %	8.0	8.0	48.0	36.0	0	21.3
out column %	10.0	6.0	27.3	32.0	0	
> 21 count	3	0	8	8	1	20
days row %	15.0	0	40.0	40.0	5.0	17.3
out column %	15.0	0	18.0	31.0	100.0	
S column count	20	27	44	27	1	119
I totals row %	16.8	22.7	37.0	22.7	0.8	100
N						
G						
L						
E-PARENT						

Table 4.23 (cont'd.)

Grade Point Averages

	4.0- 3.50 GPA	3.49- 2.50 GPA	2.49- 1.50 GPA	1.49- 0.50 GPA	Below 0.49 GPA	Total
DUAL-PARENT FAMILY STUDENTS						
Full-day attendance						
0-2 count	13	10	7	4	1	35
days row%	37.1	28.6	20.0	11.4	2.9	22.7
out column%	34.2	33.3	22.6	25.0	50.0	
3-6 count	8	6	3	1	0	18
days row%	44.4	33.3	16.7	5.6	0.0	15.0
out column%	21.1	20.0	9.7	0.0	0.0	
7-12 count	6	10	11	5	0	32
days row%	18.8	31.3	34.4	15.5	0.0	26.9
out column%	15.8	30.0	35.5	31.3	0.0	
12-20 count	8	3	5	2	0	18
days row%	44.4	16.7	27.8	11.1	0.0	15.0
out column%	21.1	10.0	16.1	12.5	0.0	
>21 count	3	2	5	5	1	16
days row%	18.8	12.5	31.3	31.3	6.3	13.7
out column%	7.9	6.7	16.1	31.3	50.0	
Dcolumn count	38	31	31	17	2	119
U totals row%	31.8	26.1	26.1	14.3	1.7	100
A						
L PARENT						

Chapter V

Purpose

The researcher's purpose in the study was to explain the student's perceptions of life in a single-parent family and discover how these perceptions related to the student's rate of attendance and grade point average. The central questions asked were: Is the existence of and life in a single parent family related to the academic performance {grade point average and/or rate of attendance) of the students involved? What other factors had any relation to the student's academic performance and/or rate of attendance in school? The conditions examined were the student's perception of the relationship between his/her biological parents, the relationship s/he has with each biological parent, the configuration of the family, the student's perception of his/her authority within the family, and the student's perception of the family's economic condition. Further, the (single parent) student stereotypes were examined. Socioeconomic and race factors were held constant by using mostly caucasian students from middle class suburban school districts.

Four of the five dissertation elements have been presented in the previous chapters: proposal, background information, methodology, and research findings. In this chapter the researcher merges the existing research data as explained in chapter 2 with the project's findings, draws conclusions, and makes further recommendations. The researcher also compares his findings with the research of others.

First Hypothesis

A single-parent student's academic performance is likely to be significantly different from that of students living with both parents.

No significant difference in the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students was substantiated. These findings held true for full-day attendance, partial-day attendance, and grade point average comparisons.

The existing literature presents a mixed picture. According to Furstenburg and Cherlin (1991, p. 70), the response to a family break-up varies greatly. Some findings indicate that single-parent family students' academic performance is significantly lower, at least short-term. Textor (1989, p. 28) indicated that teachers complained that after a divorce the affected students had increased tardiness, absences, and a decline in academic performance. Stinson (1991, p. 68) reports that single-parent family students living in female-headed households had increased maturity, communications skills, and independence. Others found insignificant or no differences. Zill and Peterson (1986) found single-parent family students were doing no worse than dual-parent family students in conflicted homes. According to Kurdek and Siesky (1979), single-parent family students acquired new strengths, developed new competencies, and became more confident. However, Mine, Meyers, Rosenthal and Ginsburg (1986) found lower math and reading achievement scores for single-parent family students when compared with dual-parent family students. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) project found, general academic and social adjustments were higher for dual-parent family students than single-parent family students. (Guidubaldi et al., 1983) and (Guidubaldi, Perry, & Cleminshaw, 1984). The same NASP study (1983) found

academic test scores were the same for children regardless of whether their families were divorced or intact.

Hetherington, Camera, and Fetherman (1983) and Garfinkel and McLanahan (1986) found the grades of single-parent family students to be "substantially lower" than those of dual-parent family students. In the Hetherington et al. study, the student's economic differences were controlled. Contradicting those studies, Burchinal (1964) found no difference in academic performance.

Research tends to support that living in a single-parent family has a negative effect on academic performance. This research did not validate that claim. Removing race and economic factors may have influenced the results.

Second Hypothesis

When combined, single-parent family students' academic performance, school attendance, and GPA will differ significantly from that of students living with both parents.

In comparing the student's academic performances, the distribution of scores was not predictable. In three comparisons, no significant differences were found. No relationship was discovered between a student living in a single-parent family and academic performance. The second hypothesis was not retained.

Previous research concerning the impact of a single-parent home on a student's academic performance is mixed. Some researchers, including Hutchinson and Spangler-Hirsch (1989), found living in a single-parent family did not contribute to poor academic performance. According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p. 233), single-parent family students were more likely to be late

and drop out of school. The research would lead one to believe that the single-parent family students will likely do worse in all areas of academic performance. The dip in academic performance may only be temporary (six months). According to Burchinal (1964), the immediate impact of divorce is emotionally distressing.

However, adolescents whose parents were divorced often recover in a short period of time. One student interviewed stated, "You don't remember when I was a freshman, I was a mess. But I got it together. Now I'm getting almost a straight four point. It took me three or four months to stop being sad and angry at my father for leaving my mother. He's a jerk and that's his problem." This research found the combined single-parent family students' academic performances were not significantly lower than the dual-parent family students' academic performance.

Other researchers had similar inconclusive findings. This research did not validate the hypothesis. Future researchers should look closer at differing amounts of time after the separation occurs. The students academic performance after three months is likely to look different from a student who has lived in a single-parent family for many years.

Third Hypothesis

When comparing the academic performance of single-parent family students and dual-parent family students having similar perceptions of the biological parent's relationship, the single-parent family students' academic performance will be significantly lower.

The level of support and the level of conflict between parents was examined. In this research, single-parent family students did have lower

academic performance when single-parent family students with similar perceptions of their parent's interrelationship were compared to dual-parent family students with the same responses. In all comparisons, a higher percentage of dual-parent family students rather than single-parent family students perceived their parents as supportive or not in conflict and maintained "good academic performance." Further, in all comparisons, a higher percentage of single-parent family students who perceived their parents as in conflict or non-supportive had "poor academic performance" when compared to the dual-parent family students who perceived their parents in conflict.

The response with the greatest disparity was the students' perception of their parents' relationship with each other and the students' GPA. Only a fifth (22.6 %) of the single-parent family students viewed their parents as having a supportive relationship; half (50.8%) of the dual-parent family students fell into this category. About 80% of the single-parent family students and 50% of the dual-parent family students had combined traits of parents with a supportive relationship and poor grades, parents without a supportive relationship and good grades, or parents without a supportive relationship and poor grades.

Hutchinson and Spangler-Hirsch (1989) indicate that parents in conflict, either single-parent family students or dual-parent family students, can produce unhappy children. In fact, the separation of parents may provide the children relief. Emery (1982) and Johnston, Campbell and Tall (1985) concurred that exposure to continued parental conflict could engender anxiety, model aggressive solutions to interpersonal difficulty, prevent children from observing constructive methods for resolving anger, and even dilute any positive effects associated with continued parental contact.

Students whose parents are not in conflict will have fewer problems than

those whose parents are in conflict. This phenomenon occurs regardless of marital status, according to Forehand, Long, and Brody (1989) and Jacobson (1959). Mutually supportive parents are desired if students are to have academic success.

Fighting parents may not support each other or their children. Many studies indicate the post-divorce relationship between parents is the most critical factor in the functioning of the family. Students become victims of the parental failure to support family decisions affecting the children. Further, researchers found the best predictor of child adjustment to divorce is the degree to which parents establish a cooperative, supportive relationship following the divorce. Students still involved in the personal adjustment of divorce have difficulty focusing on academic achievement. This study's findings tend to be supported by the literature. The hypothesis was retained.

Fourth Hypothesis

Single-parent family students with similarly perceived student/parent relationships to that of dual-parent family students have significantly different academic performance.

Parent support inquiries centered on three areas: general parent support, parent support of the adolescent's education, and time spent with the adolescent. Eight related survey questions were asked. The same questions were asked about each parent. The predicted student responses were compared with their actual responses. Similar student survey responses were compared with the respondent's academic performance.

The greatest significant difference existed between each group's academic performance when combined with their perception of maternal

support for their efforts in school and the time spent with father. Significantly fewer single-parent family students perceived their mothers as being supportive of their educational effort.

There was no significant difference in the other areas: father's support of student's educational effort, mother's or father's contact with student, and time spent doing things with mother.

When comparing the students' relationships with each parent, only three of the "good" response comparisons favored the single-parent family students over the dual-parent family student by more than ten percentage points. These were the only three positive responses that favored the single-parent family student. The questions related to partial-day attendance and time spent with mother, full-day attendance and hours spent with father, and partial-day attendance. This finding is consistent with the Amato (1987) study.

The research indicates continued student contact with and support from both parents is favorable. Students with continued relationships with both parents are less likely to have academic difficulties than students with relationships with one or neither parent (Guidubaldi et al., 1983). Further, Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found a large number of students that had continued contact with both parents expressed satisfaction with their lives.

The problems parents encounter adjusting to single-parent life can greatly influence the adjustment of their children. According to Hargreaves (1991, p. 37), "Children tend to have fewer behavior problems after divorce when their custodial parent is able to provide a consistent, stable environment." Appel (1985) determined that students perform better in school if they have a more organized home-life.

Furstenburg and Cherlin (1991, p. 71) found that the single-parent's

distress over adjusting to the new living arrangement led to many disorganized households, lax supervision, and inconsistent discipline. Further, it is not uncommon to find custodial mothers to be non-supportive (Heatherington, Hagean and Anderson, 1989). This means the parent, in part, becomes less supportive of school and homework. The single-parent family parents were likely to provide less support for a student. When receiving less support the student must become self-reliant. For some students this prompts premature maturation (Stinson, 1991, p. 68).

Parent support and expectations for student's good school performance can help compensate for living in a single-parent family (Mine et al., 1986). Being repeatedly reminded of the goal reinforces the behavior. An unknown author stated, "An obstacle is what you see when you take your eyes off of your goal." The vanished parent cannot help.

In one study, Zill and Rogers (1988) noted that over 50% of all adolescents living with a separated, divorced, or remarried mother had not seen their father in more than a year; and 35% of the children had not seen their fathers in the past five years. The noncustodial parent becomes more of a friend than a parent (Furstenberg & Nord, 1985). Ironically, working single parents tend to spend more time with their children than do married working mothers (Amato, 1987).

This study's findings are not conclusive. However, they tend to support the hypothesis, but due to the low level of significance found in the data, the hypothesis cannot be retained.

Fifth Hypothesis

Single-parent family students with similar family configurations to that of dual-parent family students have significantly different academic performance.

The family configuration relates to the number of children in a family and the order in which the survey child was born. For example, students from families with three children were compared. Further, second-born children in single-parent families were compared to the second-born children in dual-parent families.

In this study, little difference was found when making single-parent and dual-parent family student academic comparisons. There was more than a 10% percent difference in the percent of students from families of more than two children with poor attendance. Twelve percent more single-parent family students had poor attendance.

The research indicates there is no difference in the intelligence of single-parent family and dual-parent family students based on family configuration.

This project looked at performance. Intelligence and achievement are closely, but not perfectly, linked. Children from smaller families, regardless of the number of parents present, achieve more than children from larger families.

The birthing order comparisons revealed little difference. In only one of the comparisons was there more than a 10% difference in responses. When comparing the full-day attendance of students from families of two or less children, just more than 10% more of the dual-parent families had less than six absences.

According to Belmont and Marolla (1973), the birth order of children effects their achievement. First-born children tend to do better, regardless of whether they are living with one or two parents. This research did not contradict

their findings.

This study's findings are consistent with the literature. However, the hypothesis was not retained.

Sixth Hypothesis

Single-parent family students that perceive their family role similarly to that of dual-parent family students have significantly lower academic performance.

Fifteen survey questions were asked related to family responsibilities. The first series of questions relate to the time spent doing family chores. The second series of questions relate to time spent doing child-care chores.

A higher percentage of single-parent family students than dual-parent family students did no chores and had a poor academic performance. A lower percentage of single-parent family students than dual-parent family students did family chores and performed well academically. The differences in the responses were inconclusive. The sixth hypothesis was not retained. This means that the academic performance of adolescents with the same perceptions of their family responsibility are not conclusively affected by the number of parents in the home.

The research indicates that the creation of a single-parent family will cause a restructuring of the family unit. The family will go through a period of trial and error to reestablish rules and boundaries. The role of the noncustodial parent will be redefined. According to Heatherington (1981), single-parent family students are allowed more responsibility, independence, and decision making power. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) found that students in a single-parent family have "lost childhood" forever. Single parents often turn to

their children for stability and replacement of the departed spouse.

A student that lives with only one parent explained that she had taken over the responsibility for both her mother and her father. She said, "When my dad divorced my mom, she couldn't handle it very well. She was a basket case. When we found out my dad had a girl friend, he started acting like a young person with hormones racing through his body. Here I am with my five-year-old mom and my father acting like a teenage boy. I have my faith and that is keeping me sane."

When young children are in the home, the adolescents are often asked to pickup the child-care responsibilities. If single-parent family students move and leave their peer support systems, and new teachers are not familiar with their behavior patterns, the potential for negative impact is greater for single-parent family students. In addition, family changes offer the student other new challenges.

Seventh Hypothesis

Single-parent family students that perceive their household economic experience similarly to that of dual-parent family students have significantly lower academic performance.

The hypothesis suggests that a dual-parent family student who perceives his/her family as poor will perform better academically than a single-parent family student with a similar family financial status perception. The comparisons were in the percentage of single-parent or dual-parent family students with similar traits. Two-thirds of the single-parent and dual-parent family students' financial category response comparisons had less than a 10% difference in the percentage of students in each category. This means a single-

parent family student with similar perceptions of family economic status to that of a dual-parent family student is likely to have similar academic success. Further, a single-parent family student with similarly perceived economic status is as likely to earn high academic achievement as is a dual-parent family student. The findings are inconclusive, thus the hypothesis was not retained. No consistent pattern of great deviation between the two groups's responses was found.

In this study, three out of four single-parent family students had mixed or negative changes in the quality and quantity of things purchased after the creation of the single-parent family. The ability of that family to purchase food, housing, and clothing got more difficult for a third of these families. In contrast, half of the dual-parent family students responded that the quality and quantity of things their family purchased improved in the last three years. Only 7% of the dual-parent family students thought it was more difficult for their family to purchase food, housing and clothing in the last three years. This means economic conditions for single-parent family students are more likely to decline than they are for dual-parent family students. These findings support previous research.

The research indicates that most often when families are headed by a single parent, the families' economic condition declines. Single parents are less likely to be present in the home because of pressure to generate money to support the family. As a result, the students may be deprived of parental attention and guidance.

The negative shift in the family financial status is frustrating to the student. In fact it may cause a change in lifestyle. One student interviewed lived in a home valued at more than a half million dollars. After the parent's separation,

the student and her mother moved into a two room apartment. The student said, "It was all we could afford. I didn't mind."

The research indicates that single-parent family students are more likely to hold a part-time job than are dual-parent family students. However, the percentage of single-parent family students holding part-time jobs was lower than that of dual-parent family students (47.9 single-parent family students vs. 61.5 dual parent family students). Because of the rural nature of the community, transportation and child care responsibilities many single-parent students from having a job. This contradicts previous research findings (Francke, 1983).

Most Dexter students are bussed to school. These students do not live within walking distance to potential jobs and public transportation is limited, thus a part-time job creates transportation problems. With diminished economic resources, getting a car for transportation becomes an additional burden.

One student lives five miles from the school. He got a part-time job near the high school. His mother works in Ann Arbor until seven in the evening, but he was done working at five. The two or more hours of waiting for his mother became time during which he repeatedly got in trouble with the law. Finally she said, "I'd rather have him home after school where I know he will stay rather than roaming the streets. Maybe I will be able to reduce my (high) blood pressure medicine I'm taking this way."

The student's potentially increased responsibility does not necessarily mean the students will do poorly in school. Many of the single-parent family students are forced to mature. Students with similar responsibilities in single and dual-parent families have similar school achievement. Children need at least one person who cares for and supports them, gives them opportunities to

participate and contribute in meaningful ways, and has high expectations (B. Bernard, 1992, p. 7).

According to previous research, single-parent family students work more hours. The research confirmed single-parent family students' academic performance suffered. The marked higher percentage of dual-parent family students with good grades worked fewer part-time hours, though a marked higher percentage of single-parent family students with poorer GPAs worked fifteen or more hours a week. More potential time was available to devote to academics. When comparing the percentage of single-parent and dual-parent family students with poor grades working more than fifteen hours a week, almost half of the single-parent family students (46.2%), with part-time jobs, worked more than fifteen hours. Almost a third of the dual-parent family students fell into this category. This means that although more dual-parent family students worked, they worked fewer hours than did the single-parent family students. A higher percentage of single-parent family students worked more hours and their grades suffered.

A job may provide support for a single-parent family student that is not available at home. One student, who left high school without graduating, received "no help from mom or older brother." He got a job at a husband and wife owned local firm. This student showed interest in the business and became "like a son" to these people. They supported his growth in learning a trade and even paid for his college classes to further his professional growth. The student's delinquent behavior stopped and this high school drop-out had direction in his life.

B. Bernard (1992, p. 7) indicates,

It can take just one person or one group to compensate for the negative influence of others. Individuals who have succeeded in spite of adverse environmental conditions in their families, school, and/or communities have often done so because of the presence of environmental support in the form of one family member, one teacher, one school, one community person that encouraged their success and welcomed their participation.

Eighth Hypothesis

The academic performance of single-parent family students- and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1989 will not differ significantly from the single-parent family and dual-parent family students surveyed in 1994.

The differences between the single-parent family students' academic performance of 1989 and 1994 were insignificant. The same held true for the academic performance of the dual-parent family students. In recent research, Grissmer and Zimmerman find academic growth and the gap between single-parent family students and dual-parent family students academic performance has narrowed. According to Grissmer (1994), the level of education of single parents has risen and the number of children within a single-parent family has declined. Indeed, Zimmerman (1995) even indicates the gap is narrowing between the academic performance of single-parent minority students and the national norms. The differences are more likely to be related to economics. In order to live in the two communities studied, a higher than average standard of living is maintained. High parental expectations regarding the student academic performance were present in 1989 and 1994. The comparison reflects the consistently high expectations.

Unexpected Findings

The level of cooperation among potential single-parent family student interviewees was varied and pronounced. For many single-parent family students' answering the questions provided a release of pent-up feelings. At the conclusion of one interview, a student said, "I have always wanted to tell someone how I really felt. Being able to share the stuff that went on in my family is a relief." Some students and parents talked beyond the questions asked.

Others offered little or nothing. Given the researcher was an administrator in one of the two schools, he thought more students would be willing to take and complete the survey. The assumption was that an adult leader of the students' school would have credibility and would be able to elicit a high level of cooperation.

Of the 254 identified single-parent family students, fewer than half were willing to start the survey. This study's findings are based only on the single-parent family students who were willing to share. A minority expressed their feelings, not necessarily a sampling.

Surveyed single-parent family students reconciled the family situation to the point that they were willing to communicate their feelings. But the students not willing to share their opinions, feelings, and actions, have stories left untold. Readers must remember that single-parent family student generalizations are based only on those willing to share. This limitation pervades research in this area.

Single-parent family students have strong feelings. The experiences of many single-parent family students caused many to withdraw. By contrast, dual-parent family students were generally more willing to talk about

themselves and their families. Most of them found taking the survey was "no big deal."

Infantillization

**"What doesn't kill me makes me stronger."
Nietzsche**

Single-parent family students are often seen as dependent and vulnerable children. In fact, these "infantilized" adolescents suffer distress and still attend at school. Single-parent family students work more like adults than children. The evidence does not support the idea that single-parent family students are worse off academically. Single-parent family students are more resilient and sophisticated than many think. As in the case of the student that became responsible for her "five-year old mother" and "teen-age" father, she was able to pick-up the pieces and function day-to-day.

Many adolescents can deal with loss on the abstract plane, but pre-teens may not be as intellectually capable dealing with divorce and loss. This increase in mental "horsepower" help teens cope with the altered state and move on with life.

A majority of researchers see single-parent family students as disadvantaged. The former State of Michigan Superintendent for Public Instruction (Bemis, 1991) and others referred to single-parent family students as "children at risk." Educators often make the statement, "Isn't it awful the student only lives with one parent."

The opinion held by many is the single-parent family student is worse off academically than dual-parent family student. The loss of the family unit is a

significant event. Some researchers say single-parent family students must work through the grieving process. According to Inglis (1982), the trauma of divorce interferes with an adolescent's growth.

Drake (1981) said that the single-parent family students' attitude toward school declines; however, traditional morals and mores are reflected in the research. Is this a self-fulfilling prophecy at work? If teachers and administrators think that certain students are disadvantaged, even troubled - will these attitudes and actions cause the teachers and administrators to treat the single-parent family students that way? Like a mill stone hung around the neck, does the single-parent family student label work against these adolescents?

Family system changes are likely to affect student behavior. Students' interaction with the various systems will need adjusting. However, conclusive evidence does not support the notion that single-parent family students' academic performance is significantly different than dual-parent family students.

The research indicates the greatest likelihood of academic decline will occur during the first six months after the configuration of the single-parent family. This study's findings do not support the contention. No significant difference was found in the GPA of students who experienced a recent change and those that had lived in a single-parent family for an extended period of time. These adolescents are able to handle more adversity than is acknowledged.

Most single-parent family students live with a divorced parent. These students often go through the grieving process that may occur again and again as the noncustodial parent moves in and out of the student's life. Educators can offer care and empathy when young people are in pain. However, single-parent family students are resilient and must get on with their lives. The educators' role is to supply a supportive environment. Students need to feel

safe. Having an orderly routine may help a student stabilize his/her life. The routine of attending classes may be the only stability a student has in life.

Areas of Future Research

As society changes, so do families. The researcher looked at specific comparisons -- students living with one parent and no other adult in the home, and students living with both biological parents. The number of single-parent families are growing and dual-parent families are declining. "Blended families" are becoming a larger portion of American living arrangements. A blended family is created when at least one of the two adults has been previously married and had children. The second marriage, for at least one of the two adults, brings a second adult into the family that was not responsible for the birth of the children of the other. Often both parents bring children to the new "blended family."

The percentage of families that have both parents working outside the home is increasing. To better understand these emerging groups, more research is needed. Schools need to service these children and support their parents; educators need to understand their clients.

In the state of Michigan, as in many other states, high school students must pass a state-prepared test to earn a "state-endorsed" diploma. Since family living arrangements may affect the ability of students to pass the test, these factors need to be better understood.

Educators need to better understand how high schools are being transformed by their clients -- students and their families.. According to Spady

(1992), our schools will be transformed from time-oriented to outcomes-oriented institutions. Students need to demonstrate skills that will benefit them for life after high school. Will students no longer earn "time-center" Carnegie units? Should they be able to demonstrate exit outcomes? Changes in orientation and expectations will necessitate an understanding of how students in different living arrangements respond to the reorientation.

Final Conclusions

Findings of this study help to clarify the literature about the academic success of single-parent family students as compared to students living with both parents. Single-parent family student academic performance is not significantly different from dual-parent family students. However, the dual-parent family students' academic performance tend to be better. The students' perception of their parents' interpersonal relationship appears to impact academic performance, thus approximating findings in the literature.

The student's relationship with each parent, family role and family economic status tend to influence academic performance but not at a significant level. Students with similar family birthing position within single-parent and dual-parent families have similar academic results, thus validating the research of Belmont and Marolla (1973). Single-parent family students' academic performance were affected by the student's perception of the relationship between his/her biological parents.

Parental interrelationships were brought into focus. The greatest implication of this study is that a much lower percentage of single-parent family students (vs. dual-parent family students) viewed their parents as mutually

supportive (52% vs. 19%). The percentage of single-parent family students with good academic performances who viewed their parents as mutually supportive was small relative to the dual-parent family students. Conversely, a much higher percentage of single-parent family students had poor academic performances and viewed their parents as not being mutually supportive. There was no significant difference between the percentages of the dual-parent and single-parent family student groups with good grades and non-supportive parental relationships, the same was true for the difference in the percentages of the dual-parent and single-parent family groups with poor grades and supportive parents. The level of mutual parental support impacts the academic performance of students.

The implications of these phenomena are many. First, to increase the likelihood of student success, parents need to be mutually supportive. They need to separate their feelings for their children and themselves. Infantile behavior toward a former mate must be abandoned for the welfare of the children. Dealing with rejection and abandonment must manifest itself in ways that do not alter the perceived relationship between the parents. To accomplish this is a major challenge. Given the potential consequences to their children, meeting the challenge is imperative.

Rodriguez (1992) said, "When you look behind the success or failure of any young person, you will find an adult." Parents are often in that spot.

Second, having maternal support of the students' education increases the likelihood of academic success. Receiving the encouragement to do well in school, especially maternal, makes a difference to students. If both parents are supportive, the student has a greater likelihood of academic success.

Third, spending more time with the father seems to make a difference.

Non-verbal communications can be powerful. Being with someone is a statement of commitment. Having the father spending time with his adolescent may make a difference in the students academic outcome.

Fourth and last, students shifting from a dual-parent family to a single-parent family will likely suffer a family-income drop. Students have to learn to make do with less. Fewer single-parent family students than dual-parent family students held part-time jobs. The working single-parent family students put in more hours on the job and their academic performance was poorer, but not significantly.

Acting on this study's insights can benefit school practitioners. Educators need to help make the school accessible to both single-parent and dual-parent family student parents. They need to encourage these parents to be involved in their children's education. They must put aside their individual conflicts. Single-parent family students are more adult-like than child-like, but they look to their parents for guidance. Parents who achieve harmony for their children, even if not married, do much to enhance their children's academic achievement.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY

LISTED BELOW ARE A SERIES OF QUESTIONS. PLEASE ANSWER TRUTHFULLY AND TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

Please put your name on this survey form and on the provided answer sheet. As you answer the questions, put your answers on the answer sheet only. Using a #2 pencil, darken the appropriate letter that is your answer for each question.

1. Are you living with both of your biological parents?
a. Yes b. No

A BIOLOGICAL PARENT IS A PARENT THAT WAS PHYSICALLY INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF YOU.

IF THE ANSWER IS YES, STOP!!! YOU ARE COMPLETING THE WRONG SURVEY. THE PERSON AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM WILL GIVE YOU THE CORRECT SURVEY AND REVIEW THE INSTRUCTIONS. BEFORE YOU START THE PROCTOR WILL ANSWER ANY AND ALL QUESTIONS.

Student Name - first name only

2. Sex: a. Male b. Female
3. Age: a. 14 b. 15
 c. 16 d. 17 e. 18 or older
4. Grade: a. 9th b. 10th c. 11th d. 12th

SECTION I CREATION OF THE SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY

5. How was your single-parent family created?
a. Divorce
b. Death
c. Desertion
d. Adoption
e. Separation
6. Was the creation of your single-parent family expected?
a. Yes b. No

7. How long have you lived in your single-parent family?

- a. Less than six months
- b. Less than a year
- c. Less than two years
- d. More than five years
- e. Always

8. Did you have any of the following feelings or actions associated with the creation of your single-parent family; physical sickness or body pain, guilt, thought a lot about the parent that is gone, and/or hostile and angry feelings?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If you answered yes to this question continue with the next questions; If you answered no continue with question #13.

9. How long did the feelings of physical sickness or body pain last?

- a. One week or less
- b. One month or less
- c. One year or less
- d. More than one year
- e. I did not have these feelings

10. How long did the feeling of guilt last?

- a. One week or less
- b. One month or less
- c. One year or less
- d. More than one year
- e. I did not have any feeling of guilt

11. How long did you think about the parent that is gone from you family?

- a. One week or less
- b. One month or less
- c. One year or less
- d. More than one year
- e. I did not think about my parent that left

12. How long did you feel hostile and/or angry?

- a. One week or less
- b. One month or less
- c. One year or less
- d. More than one year
- e. I did not feel hostile and/or angry

13. Overall, the creation of the single-parent family has had a _____ effect on the parent with whom I am living.

- a. Very positive
- b. Positive
- c. Neutral
- d. Negative
- e. Very negative

14. Overall, the creation of the single-parent family has had a _____ effect on the parent not living with you.

- a. Very positive
- b. Positive
- c. Neutral
- d. Negative
- e. Very negative

15. Overall, the effects of living in a single-parent family have been _____ on my life.

- a. Very positive
- b. Positive
- c. Neutral
- d. Negative
- e. Very negative

16. Overall, the effects of living in a single-parent family have been _____ on my family.

- a. Positive
- b. Neutral
- c. Negative

17. With which parent are you now living?

- a. Mother
- b. Father

SECTION II LOCATION IN THE FAMILY

18. Who else is living in your home at the present time?

- a. No one besides my parent
- b. Brother(s) only
- c. Sister(s) only
- d. Brother(s) and sister(s)
- e. Other

19. Do you have any half brothers or half sisters in your family?

- a. Yes
- b. No

20. Has any one other than the parent that left your family moved from your home?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If you answered yes, continue, if you answered no, proceed to question #22.

21. If yes, who?

- a. Brother
- b. Sister
- c. Others

22. Besides your biological parent, brothers and/or sisters, _____ lives with you.

- a. Step-brother(s)
- b. Step-sister(s)
- c. Step-brother(s) and step-sister(s)
- d. No one

23. There are _____ children created by your biological parents.

- a. one
- b. two
- c. three
- d. four
- e. five or more

24. I am the _____ child born in my family.

- a. first
- b. second
- c. third
- d. fourth
- e. fifth or higher

SECTION III ECONOMICS

25. Has the quantity and quality of things you want to buy and do changed since you single-parent family was created?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

If yes, then continue; if no, continue with #28.

26. The economic changes were _____ .

- a. Positive
- b. Mixed
- c. Negative

27. If you have experiences change was the economic change caused _____ by the creation of your single-parent family.

- a. Directly
- b. Indirectly
- c. Both directly and indirectly

28. Do you hold a part-time job?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, continue; if no, continue with #31.

29. How many hours a week do you work?

- a. Under five hours
- b. Between five and fifteen hours
- c. Between fifteen and twenty-five hours
- d. More than twenty-five hours

30. Of the three categories listed below, how is the greatest share of your earnings spent?
- Helps with family expenses
 - Goes toward college and/or my savings account
 - Goes toward my personal use
31. Which of the following family discussion topics causes you the greatest discomfort to talk about?
- Money
 - Grades
 - Your missing parent
 - Family rules
32. Next to what you selected in question #31, which family discussion topic causes you the greatest discomfort to talk about?
- Money
 - Grades
 - Your missing parent
 - Family rules
33. Which of the following family discussion topics causes you the least discomfort to talk about?
- Money
 - Grades
 - Your missing parent
 - Family rules
34. Is money a topic of regular discussion in your family?
- Yes
 - No
35. Which statement best describes the majority of your family discussions about money?
- They are positive and make me feel good.
 - They are negative and make me feel bad.
 - I don't pay any attention to discussions about family finances.
36. Since the creation of your single-parent family, has money been more frequently discussed?
- Yes
 - No
37. Since the creation of your single-parent family, your family's ability to pay for food, housing, and clothing has _____.
- gotten to be smaller
 - stayed the same
 - gotten to be more difficult

SECTION IV RESPONSIBILITY

Please answer questions 38 through 45 associated with the following question: What is your level of responsibility for the following areas in your family?

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 38. Cooking | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 39. Laundry | a. All | b. Some | c. None |

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 40. Cleaning | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 41. Transportation | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 42. Repairs | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 43. Money management | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 44. Yard work | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 45. Child supervision | a. All | b. Some | c. None |

46. Did your level of family responsibility change after the creation of your single-parent family? It

- _____ .
- a. Increased
 - b. Decreased
 - c. Stay about the same

47. At present, handling all of your family responsibilities takes on an average approximately _____ hours a week.

- a. Less than an hour
- b. Five hours or less
- c. Ten hours or less
- d. Fifteen hours or less
- e. More than fifteen hours

48. The amount of family responsibility placed on my shoulders is fair.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Neutral

49. Are you responsible for any person in your family at any time beside your self?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, continue; if no, continue with #58

50. For whom are you responsible?

- a. Younger brother
- b. Younger sister
- c. Younger brother and sister
- d. More than two younger children
- e. Other

Please respond to items 51 through 57 about your level of responsibility with the children:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 51. Feeding | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 52. Supervision | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 53. Transportation | a. All | b. Some | c. None |

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 54. Dressing | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 55. Cleaning their rooms | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 56. Physical hygiene | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 57. Homework | a. All | b. Some | c. None |

**PART V
PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

58. Which of the following statements best describes your view of your family?
- a. My family is typical
 - b. My family is unusual in a positive way.
 - c. My family is unusual in a negative way.
59. The relationship between my parents is _____ .
- a. Warm, caring, and supportive
 - b. Hot and cold, but supportive
 - c. Neutral
 - d. There is no relationship
60. Which statement best describes the level of conflict between your parents?
- a. There is no conflict
 - b. There is some conflict
 - c. There is continual conflict
61. My relationship with my mother is _____ .
- a. Warm, caring, and supportive
 - b. Hot and cold, but supportive
 - c. Neutral
 - d. There is no relationship
62. Is your mother supportive of your efforts in school?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Neutral
63. My relationship with my father is _____ .
- a. Warm, caring, and supportive
 - b. Hot and cold, but supportive
 - c. Neutral
 - d. There is no relationship
64. Is your father supportive of your efforts in school?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Neutral

65. Since the creation of your single-parent family, do you spend (more, less, or the same) amount of time with your mother?
- More
 - Less
 - Same
66. Since the creation of your single-parent family, do you spend (more, less, or the same) amount of time with your father?
- More
 - Less
 - Same
67. On an average, how much time are you with your mother each week?
- No time
 - Ten hour or less
 - Twenty-eight hours or less
 - Forty hours or less
 - More than forty hours
68. On an average, how much time are you with your father each week?
- No time
 - Ten hour or less
 - Twenty-eight hours or less
 - Forty hours or less
 - More than forty hours
69. On an average, while with your mother, how much of this time is spent doing things with her each week?
- No time
 - Ten hour or less
 - Twenty-eight hours or less
 - Forty hours or less
 - More than forty hours
70. On an average, while with your father, how much of this time is spent doing things with her each week?
- No time
 - Ten hour or less
 - Twenty-eight hours or less
 - Forty hours or less
 - More than forty hours
71. In general, when you have a problem or concern and you need advice, to which parent do you turn for advice?
- Mother
 - Father
 - Either
 - Neither

72. What is the highest level of formal education your mother has earned?

- a. Attended high school
- b. Earned a high school diploma
- c. Attended college or training school
- d. Earned an undergraduate college degree
- e. Attended college on the graduate level

73. What is the highest level of formal education your father has earned?

- a. Attended high school
- b. Earned a high school diploma
- c. Attended college or training school
- d. Earned an undergraduate college degree
- e. Attended college on the graduate level

PART VI
AUTHORITY

74. Which one of the following categories best describes your role in your family?

- a. Leader of the family
- b. Co-leader of the family with my parent
- c. The invisible member
- d. The person who gets blamed for everything
- e. The shining star for the leaders of my family
- f. I am none of the above

75. Since the creation of your single-parent family, your level of authority to make decisions about when and where you go is _____.

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

76. Since the creation of your single-parent family, your level of authority to make decisions about house rules is _____.

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

77. Since the creation of your single-parent family, your level of authority to make decisions about school is _____.

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

78. As you have gotten older, your level of authority to make decisions about when and where you go is _____.

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

79. As you have gotten older, your level of authority to make decisions about school is

-
- a. Greater
 - b. Remained the same
 - c. Smaller

80. As you have gotten older, your level of authority to make decisions about school is

-
- a. Greater
 - b. Remained the same
 - c. Smaller

81. When major family purchases are made does your opinion count in making the final decision?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Smaller

82. What percent of the family decisions are influenced by your opinion?

- a. 0%
- b. 25% or less
- c. 50% or less
- d. 75% or less
- e. 100%

83. When it comes to your education, what percent of the decisions made are influenced by your opinion?

- a. 0%
- b. 25% or less
- c. 50% or less
- d. 75% or less
- e. 100%

84. Have you always lived in the same house in which you are presently living?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If you answered no please continue; however, if you answered yes continue on with question #87.

85. How many different homes have you lived in?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three
- d. Four
- e. Five or more

86. In how many school districts have you attended school?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three
- d. Four
- e. Five or more

87. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about living at home?

- a. I would like to leave my home now.
- b. I would like to leave my home at graduation.
- c. I would like to continue living at home after I graduate.

88. How would you rate your educational experience so far?

- a. Excellent
- b. Above average
- c. Average
- d. Below Average
- e. Poor

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEY

LISTED BELOW ARE A SERIES OF QUESTIONS. PLEASE ANSWER TRUTHFULLY AND TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

Please put your name on this survey form and on the provided answer sheet.
As you answer the questions put your answers on the answer sheet only.
Using a #2 pencil darken the appropriate letter that is your answer for each question.

1. Are you living with both of your biological parents?
a. Yes b. No

A BIOLOGICAL PARENT IS A PARENT THAT WAS PHYSICALLY INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF YOU.

IF THE ANSWER IS NO, STOP! YOU ARE COMPLETING THE WRONG SURVEY. THE PERSON AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM WILL GIVE YOU THE CORRECT SURVEY AND REVIEW THE DIRECTIONS BEFORE YOU START. THE PROCTOR WILL ANSWER ANY AND ALL QUESTIONS.

Please complete the following information,

Student Name - first name only

2. Sex: a. Male b. Female
3. Age: a. 12 b. 13 c. 14 d. 15
 e. 16 f. 17 g. 18 h. 19 or older
4. Grade: a. 9th b. 10th c. 11th d. 12th

SECTION II LOCATION IN THE FAMILY

5. Who else is living in your home at the present time?
a. No one besides my parent
b. Brother(s) only
c. Sister(s) only
d. Brother(s) and sister(s)
e. Other

6. Do you have any half brothers or half sisters in your family?

- a. Yes b. No

7. Besides your biological parent, brothers and/or sisters, _____ lives with you.

- a. Step-brother(s)
b. Step-sister(s)
c. Step-brother(s) and step-sister(s)
d. No one
e. Others

8. There are _____ children created by your biological parents?

- a. One
b. Two
c. Three
d. Four
e. Five or more

9. I am the _____ child born in my family.

- a. First
b. Second
c. Third
d. Fourth
e. Fifth or higher

SECTION III ECONOMICS

10. Has the quantity and quality of things you want to buy and do changed in the last five years?

- a. Yes b. No c. Don't Know

If yes, then continue; if no, continue with #13.

11. Were the changes

- a. Positive
b. Mixed
c. Negative

12. Were the changes due to things that happened _____?

- a. Within your family
b. Outside of your family control
c. A combination of both factors

13. Do you hold a part-time job?

- a. Yes b. No

If yes, continue; if no, continue with # 16.

14. How many hours a week do you work?
- Under five hours
 - Between five and fifteen hours
 - Between fifteen and twenty-five hours
 - More than twenty-five hours
15. Of the three categories listed below, how is the greatest share of your earnings spent?
- Helps with family expenses
 - Goes toward college and/or my savings account
 - Goes toward my personal use
16. Which of the following family discussion topics causes you the greatest discomfort to talk about?
- Money
 - Grades
 - Family rules
17. Next to what you selected in question #13, which family discussion topic causes you the greatest discomfort to talk about?
- Money
 - Grades
 - Family rules
18. Which of the following family discussion topics gives you the least discomfort to talk about?
- Money
 - Grades
 - Family rules
19. Is money a topic of regular discussion in your family?
- Yes
 - No
20. Which statement best describes the majority of your family discussions about money-
- They are positive and make me feel good
 - They are negative and make me feel bad.
 - I don't pay any attention to discussions about family finances.
21. In the past three years, has money been more frequently discussed?
- Yes
 - No
22. In the past three years, your families' ability to pay for food, housing and clothing has _____.
- Gotten to be easier
 - Stayed the same
 - Gotten to be more difficult

SECTION IV RESPONSIBILITY

Please answer questions 23 through 30 associated with the following question:., What is your level of responsibility for the following areas in your family?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 23. Cooking | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 24. Laundry | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 25. Cleaning | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 26. Transportation | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 27. Repairs | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 28. Money management | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 29. Yard work | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 30. Child supervision | a. All | b. Some | c. None |

31. Has your level of family responsibility changed in the past three years? It_____.

- a. Increased
- b. Decreased
- c. Stay about the same

32. At present, handling all of your family responsibilities takes on an average approximately _____ hours a week?

- a. Less than an hour
- b. Five hours or less
- c. Ten hours or less
- d. Fifteen hours or less
- e. More than fifteen hours

33. The amount of family responsibility placed on my shoulders is fair?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Neutral

34. Are you responsible for any person in your family at any time besides your self? a. Yes
b. No

If yes, please continue; if you answer no, advance to question # 43.

35. For whom are you responsible?

- a. Younger brother
- b. Younger sister
- c. Younger brother and sister
- d. More than two younger children
- e. Other

Please respond to items 36 through 42 about your level of responsibility with the children:

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 36. Feeding | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 37. Supervision | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 38. Transportation | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 39. Dressing | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 40. Cleaning their rooms | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 41. Physical hygiene | a. All | b. Some | c. None |
| 42. Homework | a. All | b. Some | c. None |

PART V PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

43. Which of the following statements best describes your view of your family?
- a. My family is typical
 - b. My family is unusual in a positive way
 - c. My family is unusual in a negative way
44. The relationship between my parents is_____.
- a. Warm, caring and supportive
 - b. Hot and cold but supportive
 - c. Neutral
 - d. There is no relationship
45. Which statement best describes the level of conflict between my parents.
- a. There is no conflict
 - b. There is some conflict
 - c. There is continual conflict
46. My relationship with my mother is _____.
- a. Warm, caring and supportive
 - b. Hot and cold but supportive
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Tolerable at best
 - e. There is no relationship
47. Is your mother supportive of your efforts in school?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Neutral
48. My relationship with my father is _____.
- a. Warm, caring and supportive
 - b. Hot and cold but supportive
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Tolerable at best
 - e. There is no relationship

49. Is your father supportive of your efforts in school?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Neutral
50. Compared to three years do you spend (more, less or the same) amount of time with your mother?
- a. More
 - b. Less
 - c. Same
51. Compared to three years ago, do you spend (more, less or the same) amount of time with your father?
- a. More
 - b. Less
 - c. Same
52. On an average, how much time are you with your mother each week?
- a. No time
 - b. Ten hours or less
 - c. Twenty-eight hours or less
 - d. Forty hours or less
 - e. More than forty hours
53. On an average, how much time are you with your father each week?
- a. No time
 - b. Ten hours or less
 - c. Twenty-eight hours or less
 - d. Forty hours or less
 - e. More than forty hours
54. On an average, while with your mother, how much of this time is spent doing things with her each week?
- a. No time
 - b. Ten hours or less
 - c. Twenty-eight hours or less
 - d. Forty hours or less
 - e. More than forty hours
55. While with your father, how much of this time is spent doing things with him?
- a. No time
 - b. Ten hours or less
 - c. Twenty-eight hours or less
 - d. Forty hours or less
 - e. More than forty hours

56. In general, when you have a problem or concern and you need advice, to which parent do you turn to for advice?

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. Either
- d. Neither

57. What is the highest level of formal education your mother has?

- a. Attended high school
- b. Earned a high school diploma
- c. Attended college or a training school
- d. Earned an undergraduate college degree
- e. Attended college at the graduate level

58. What is the highest level of formal education your father has?

- a. Attended high school
- b. Earned a high school diploma
- c. Attended college or a training school
- d. Earned an undergraduate college degree
- e. Attended college at the graduate level

PART VI AUTHORITY

59. Which one of the following categories best describes your role in your family?

- a. Leader of the family
- b. The invisible member
- c. The person that gets blamed for everything
- d. The shining star for the leaders of my family
- e. None of the above

60. In the past three years, your level of authority to make decisions about when and where you go is _ ?

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

61. As you have gotten older, your level of authority to make decisions about house rules is _____?

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

62. As you have gotten older, your level of authority to make decisions about house rules is _____?

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

63. As you have gotten older, your level of authority to make decisions about school is _____?

- a. Greater
- b. Remained the same
- c. Smaller

64. When major family purchases are made does your opinion count in making the final decision?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Neutral

65. What percent of the family decisions are influenced by your opinion?

- a. 0%
- b. 25% or less
- c. 50% or less
- d. 75% or less
- e. 100%

66. When it comes to your education, what percent of the decisions made are influenced by your opinion?

- a. 0%
- b. 25% or less
- c. 50% or less
- d. 75% or less
- e. 100 %

67. Have you always lived in the same house in which you are presently living?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If you answered no please continue; however if you answered yes continue on with question # 69

68. How many different homes have you lived in?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three
- d. Four
- e. Five or more

69. In how many school districts have you attended school?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three
- d. Four
- e. Five or more

70. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about living at home?

- a. I would like to leave my home now.
- b. I would like to leave my home at graduation.
- c. I would like to continue living at home after I graduate.

71. How would you rate your educational experience so far?

- a. Excellent**
- b. Above average**
- c. Average**
- d. Below average**
- e. Poor**

APPENDIX C

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)
206 BERKEY HALL
(517) 353-9738

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1111

December 2, 1988

IRB# 88-406

Mr. David Messener
Dexter High School
2615 Baker Road
Dexter, MI 48130

Dear Mr. Messener:

Subject: "PROPOSAL REGARDING THE STUDY OF ADOLESCENTS
LIVING IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES AND ATTENDING
HIGH SCHOOL IRB# 88-406"

UCRIHS' review of the above referenced project has now been completed. I am pleased to advise that since reviewer comments have been satisfactorily addressed, the conditional approval given by the Committee at its November 7, 1988 meeting has been now changed to full approval.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval one month prior to November 7, 1989.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by the UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



John K. Hudzik, Ph.D.
Chair, UCRIHS

JKH/sr

cc: P. Cusick

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, P. L., Milner, J. R., & Schrepf, N. (1984). Fatherless children. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ahrons, C. R. & Rodgers, R. H. (1987). Divorced families: A multidisciplinary development view. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Akers-Hanson, M. (1987). God must have blinked. The Single Parent, 30, 34.
- Amato, P. R. (1987). Family processes in one-parent, stepparent, and intact families: The child's point of view. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 44(2), 327-337.
- Anderson, E. R., Hetherington, E. M., & Clingempeel, W. G. (1986). Pubertal status and its influence on the adaptation to remarriage. Paper presented at the First Conference on Social Research into Adolescence, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Ann Arbor Education Association (1995). Pop Quiz. Ann Arbor Observer, 19, 28.
- Appel, K. W. (1985). America's changing families: A guide for educators. Phi Delta Kappan, 219.
- Bedell, J. W. (1972). The one-parent family: Mother absent due to death (Doctoral dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1971). Dissertation Abstracts International, 32, 4734.

- Belmont, L. & Marolla, F. A. (1973). Birth order, family size, and intelligence. Science, 182(4117), 1096-1101.
- Bemis, D. (1990). The changing profile of education in Michigan (draft copy).
- Benedek, R. & Benedek, E. (1979). Children of divorce: Can we meet their needs?. Journal of Social Issues, 35, 155-169.
- Bernard, B. (1992). Resilient children and youth share traits that protect them from negative environments. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory Clipboard, 22, 7.
- Bernard, J. M. (1982). The divorce myth. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 60, 67-71.
- Bernard, J. M. (1989). School interventions. In P. M. R. Textor (Ed.), The divorce and divorce therapy handbook. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Bianchi, S. & McAurthur, E. (1991). Family disruption and economic hardship: The short-run picture for children. Current Population Report(Series P-70 Household Economic Studies - #23). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census.
- Black, K. and others (1981). The effects of parental absence on sex role development and scholastic achievement. Proceedings of the Convention of the Association for Women in Psychology, 15, 456.
- Blake, J. (1979). Is zero preferred? American attitudes on childlessness in the 1970's. Journal of Marriage and the and the Family, 245.
- Block, D., Block, J., & Gjerde, P. F. (1986). The personality of children prior to divorce. Child Development, 57, 827-840.
- Borg, W. & Gall, M. (1974). Educational research: An introduction. (4th ed.). New York: David McKay Company, Inc.

- Bowen, W. & Finegan, T. A. (1969). The economics of labor force participation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bower, B. (1991, June 8). Data diminish divorce aftermath on kids. Science News, p. 357.
- Burchinal, L. J. (1964). Characteristics of adolescents from unbroken, broken, and reconstructed families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48-50.
- Budik, M. (1987). Kidstress. The Single Parent, 30, 36-37.
- Caple, F, & Smalls, M. (1988). Restructuring family life. In Elizabeth A. Mulroy (Ed.), Women as single parents, Dover, MA: Auburn House Publishing Company.
- Cashmore, E. (1985). Having to--the world of one parent families. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Chavez, E. (1988). Personal interview, Golden, CO.
- Cherlin, A. J., Furstenberg, F. F., Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Kiernan, K. E., Robins, P. K., Morrison, D. R., & Teitler, J. O. (1991). Longitudinal studies of effects of divorce on children in Great Britain and the United States. Science, 252, 1386-1389.
- Clay, P. (1980). The schools and single parents: Accessibility is the key, National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 64, 40-63.
- Coddington, R. D. (1972). The significance of life events as etiologic factors in the diseases of children - II. A study of normal population. Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine Research, 16, 205.
- Cohen, P., Dizenhuz, I. M., & Winget, C. (1977). Family adaptation to terminal illness and death of a parent. Social Casework, 58, 223-228.
- Cooney, T. M. (1988). Young adults and parental divorce: Exploring important issues. Human Relations, 41, 805-822.

- Crescimbeni, J. (1972). The effect of family disorganization on academic achievement of pupils in the elementary school. Dissertation Abstracts International, 25 -8, 4475.
- Davis, R. (1990, October). Helping single parents. Better Teaching, 3.
- Devaul, R. & Zisook, S. (1976). Unresolved grief clinical considerations. Postgraduate Medicine, 59, 68.
- Diamond, S. A. (1985). Helping children of divorce: A handbook for parents and teachers. New York: Schocken Books.
- Drake, E. (1981). Helping children cope with divorce: The role of the school. In I. R. Stuart & L. E. Abt (Eds.), Children of separation and divorce. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co.
- Duncan, G. J. & Rodgers, W. L. (1985). Economic consequences of marital instability. In M. David & T. Smeeding (Eds.), Horizontal equity, uncertainty, and economic well-being. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dworkin, Dorothy (1987). Teaching the teacher about your children. The Single-Parent, 30, 31.
- Economics of single-parent households. (1992, November/December). Society Magazine, 30, 2.
- Emery, R. E. (1982). Interparent conflict and the children of discord and divorce. Psychological Bulletin, 92, 310-330.
- Emery, R. (1988). Marriage, divorce and children's adjustment. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Essen, J. (1979). Living in one-parent families: Attainment at school. Child Care, Health, and Development, 5(3), 189-200.

- Farrell, C. (1992). Where have all the families gone? Business Week, 3272, 90-91.
- Ferri, E. (1976). Growing up in a one-parent family: A long-term of child development. London: National Foundation for Educational Research.
- Francke, L. B. (1985). Growing up divorced. New York: Linden.
- Furstenburg, F. & Cherlin, A. (1991). Divided families: What happens to children when parents divorce. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Furstenburg, F. & Condran, G. A. (1988). Family change and adolescent wellbeing: A reexamination of U.S. trends. In A. Cherlin (Ed.), The Changing America Family and Public Policy, 117-192.
- Furstenburg, F. & Nord, C. W. (1985). Parenting apart: Patterns of childrearing after marital disruption. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 47(4), 893-904.
- Garfinkel, I. & McLanahan, S. S. (1986). Single mothers and their children: A new American dilemma. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.
- Gelman, D. (1990). A much riskier passage. Newsweek(Special Edition), 10.
- Glass, G. V. & Stanley, J. C. (1970). Statistical methods in education and psychology. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Glick, P. C. (1979). Children of divorced parents in demographic perspective. Journal of Social Issues, 215.
- Goetting, A. (1981). Divorce outcome research: Issues and perspectives. Journal of Family Issues, 2, 355.
- Goode, W. J. (1956). After divorce. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Grissmer, W. D., Kirby, S., Nataraj, B. M., & Williamson, S. (1994). Student achievement and the changing American family. Santa Monica, CA. RAND Corporation.

- Guidubaldi, J., Cleminshaw, J., Perry, J. D., & McLoughlin, C. S. (1983). The impact of parental divorce on children: Report of the nationwide NASP study. School Psychology Review, 12, 300-323.
- Guidubaldi, J., Perry, J., & Cleminshaw, H. (1984). The legacy of parental divorce: A nationwide study of family status and selected mediating variables on children's academic and social competencies. In B. B. Lahey & A. E. Kadzin (Eds.), Advances in clinical child psychology (Vol. 7, pp. 108-15). New York: Plenum Press.
- Hallorin, W. (1989). Remarks made to the first annual combined meeting of the Reading Council of Washtenaw County and the Washtenaw County Consortium for Professional Development. Ypsilanti, MI.
- Hargreaves, M. B. (1991). Leaving under stress: Children of single parents and the schools. Metuchen, N.J.: Women's Action Alliance, Scarecrow Press.
- Hess, R. D. & Camara, K. A. (1979). Post-Divorce family relationships and mediating factors in the consequences of divorce for children. Journal of Social Issues, 35(4), 79-97.
- Hetherington, E. M. (1981). Parents, children, and siblings: six years after divorce. In R. Hinde & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds.), Relationship within Families (Vol. 2, p. 20). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hetherington, E. M., Camara, K. A., & Fetherman, D. L. (1983). Achievement and intellectual functioning children in one-parent households. Achievement and Achievement Motives. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.
- Hetherington, E. M., Cox, M., & Cox, R. (1976). Divorced father. Family Coordinator, 25(4), 417-428.

- Hetherington, E. M., Stanley-Hegean, M., & Anderson, E. R. (1989). Marital transitions: A child's perspective. American Psychologist, 44(2), 303-312.
- Hodges, W. F. (1986). Interventions for children of divorce: Custody, access, and psychotherapy. New York: Wiley.
- Hutchinson, R. L. & Spangler-Hirsch S. L. (1989). Children of divorce and single-parent lifestyles: Facilitating well-being. Journal of Divorce, 12, 5-12.
- Institute for the Development of Educational Activities. (1980). The most significant minority: One-parent children in the schools (192 438). Dayton, Ohio.
- Inglis, R. (1982). Must divorce hurt the children?. London: Temple Smith.
- Isaacs, M. B., Maltalvo, B., & Abelson, D. (1986). The difficult divorce: Therapy for children and families. New York: Basic Books.
- Jacobson, D. S. (1978). The impact of marital separation/divorce on children: Parent-child separation and child adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 1, 341-360.
- Jacobson, D. S. (1978). The impact of marital separation/divorce on children: Interparent hostility and child adjustment. Journal of Divorce, 2, 3-19.
- Jacobson, D. S. (1978). The impact of marital separation/divorce on children: Parent-child communication and child adjustment and regression analysis of findings from overall study. Journal of Divorce, 2, 175-194.
- Jacobson, P. (1959). American Marriage and Divorce. New York: Rinehart.
- Johnston, J. H. & Campbell, L. G. (1988). Impasses of divorce: The dynamics and resolution of family conflict. New York: Free Press.

- Johnston, J. H., Campbell, L. G., & Tall, M. C. (1985). Impasses to resolution of custody and visitation disputes. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 55, 112-129.
- Kalter, N. (1977). Children of divorce in an outpatient psychiatric population. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 47, 40-51.
- Kalter, N. (1990). Growing up with divorce. New York: The Free Press.
- Kaslow, F. & Schwartz, L. L. (1987). The dynamics of divorce: A life cycle perspective. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Kitson, G. C. (1992). Portrait of divorce: Adjustment to marital breakdown. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Klein, C. (1973). The single parent experience. New York: Walker and Company.
- Kline, K. & Pew, S. (1992). For the sake of the children. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing.
- Krantz, S. E. (1988). Divorce and children. In S. M. Dornbusch & M. F. Strober (Eds.), Feminism, children, and the new families (Vol. 9 pp. 249-273). New York: Guilford Press.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1989). Children's Adjustment. In P. M. R. Textor (Ed.), The divorce and divorce therapy handbook. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Kurdek, L. A. & Siesky, A. E., Jr. (1979). An interview study of parents' perceptions of their children's reactions and adjustments to divorce. Journal of Divorce, 3, 5-17.
- Lamb, M. (Ed.). (1982). Nontraditional families: Parenting and child development. Hilldale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Levitan, S. A. & Belous, R. S. (1981). What's happening to the American family?. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Leerhsen, C. (1985). Reading, writing, and divorce. Newsweek, 105, 74.
- Lindeman, E. (1944). Symptomology and management of acute grief. American Journal of Psychiatry. Lombana, J. H. (1983). Home-school partnerships. New York: Grune and Stratton, Inc.
- Luepnitz, D. (1982). Child custody. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Manning, S. (1991). Children of divorce. Scholastic Update, 124, 13.
- McLanahan, S. (1985). Family structure and the reproduction of poverty. American Journal of Sociology, 90, 873-901.
- McLanahan, S. & Bumpass, L. L. (1988). Intergenerational consequences of family disruption. American Journal of Sociology, 94, 130-152.
- Mesce, D. (1990, June 17). More men running on 'daddy track'. Ann Arbor News, p. 11.
- Miller, A. (1990). Work and what it's worth. Newsweek, 115(Special Issue, Summer/Fall), 28-30.
- Miller, N. (1992). Single parents by choice. New York: Plenum Press.
- Milne, A. M., Meyers, D. E., Rosenthal, A., & Ginsburg, A. (1986). Single parents, working mothers, and the educational achievements of school children. Sociology of Education, 59, 125-139.
- Mohler, M. & Rosen, M. D. (1992). Broken ties: Five ways to help kids cope with divorce. Ladies Home Journal, 109, 46-52.
- Nollar, P. & Callan, V. (1991). The Adolescent in the Family. New York: Routledge.
- Parsons, T. & Bales, R. (1955). Family, Socialization and Interaction Process. New York: Free Press.
- Peck, J. S. (1989). The impact of divorce on children at various stages of the family life cycle. Journal of Divorce, 12(2-3), 81-106.

- Peterson, J. L. & Zill, N. (1986). Marital disruptions, parent-child relationships, and behavior problems in children. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48, 295-307.
- Peterson, R. (1989). Women, work & divorce. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Pollitt, K. (1992). Why I hate family values. The Nation, 255(88), 92-98.
- Polit-O'Hara, D. & Berman, J. (1984). Just the right size. New York: Praeger.
- Raspberry, W. (1993). Single-parent families bad for country -- as a rule. Michigan City, IN: News-Dispatch.
- Renaissance Program (Producer & Director). (1989). Eagle's Eye (Video). Minneapolis, MN: Jostens Inc.
- Ricci, I. (1980). Mom's house, dad's house: Making shared custody work. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Rich, D. (1987). Schools and families: Issues and actions. Washington, D.C.: NEA Professional Library.
- Rich, D. (1988). Megaskills: How families can help children learn in school and beyond. Washington D.C.: Home and School Institute, Special Projects Office.
- Rodriguez, C. C. (August, 1992). A statement made on J.P. McCarthy's Focus Show, Detroit: WJR radio.
- Rutter, M. (1971). Parent-child separation psychological effects on the children. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 12, 233-260.
- Santrock, J. W. (1978). Paternal absence, sex-typing, and identification. Child Development, 43, 455-469.
- Shinn, M. B. (1978). Father absence and children's cognitive development. Psychological Bulletin, 295.

- Spady, W. (1992, June). Student outcomes. At Michigan Association of Secondary School Principal's workshop on student outcomes, Ypsilanti, MI.
- Spanier, G. B. (1984). Parting: The aftermath of separation and divorce. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Steinberg, A. (Ed.). (1988). Who's minding the children? The Harvard Education Review, 58.
- Steinberg, L. & Dornbusch, S. M. (1991). Perils of part-time work for teens. Science News, 139, 205.
- Stinson, K. M. (1991). Adolescent, family, and friends social support after parents' divorce or remarriage. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Swift, W. (1991). Are after school jobs necessary? USA Today (periodical), 120, 15-16.
- Textor, M. (1989). The divorce and divorce therapy handbook. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Teyber, E. (1985). There's no such thing as an ex-parent. The Single Parent, 30(1), 28.
- Thomas, K. (1990, May 21). Stop blaming students, experts warn schools. Chicago Tribune. pp. 1, 6.
- U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census. (1990). Current Populations Report: Households and Family Characteristics (Series P-20, No. 447). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Wallace, N. (1991). A Portrait of Change. Scholastic Update, 124, 4.
- Wallerstein, J. (1991). The long-term effects of divorce on children: A review. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 30, 349-360.

- Wallerstein, J. & Blakeslee, S. (1989). Second chances: Men, women and children a decade after divorce. New York: Ticknor & Fields.
- Wallerstein, J. & Corbin, S. B. (1986). Family-child relationships after divorce: Child support and educational opportunity. Family Law Quarterly, 20, 109-128.
- Wallerstein, J. & Huntington, D. S. (1983). Bread and roses: Nonfinancial issues related to fathers' economic support of their children following divorce. In J. Cassetty (Ed.), The parental child-support obligation: Research, practice, and social policy (pp. 135-155). Lexington, MA:Lexington Books
- Wallerstein, J. & Kelly, J. B. (1976). The effects of parental divorce: Experiences of the child in later latency. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 46, 256-269.
- Wallerstein, J. & Kelly, J. B. (1980). Surviving the Breakup. New York: Basic Books.
- Wanat, C. (1993). State-level policy and the school needs of single-parent children. The Education Digest, 58, 53-57.
- Warren, N. J. & Konanc, J. T. (1989). Single-Parent Families. In P. M. R. Textor (Ed.), The divorce and divorce therapy handbook. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Wessel, M. A. (1978). The Grieving Child. Clinical Pediatrics, 17(7), 559-568.
- Whitehead, B. D. (1993). Dan Quayle was right. The Atlantic Monthly, April, 271, 47-84.
- Wodarski, J. S. (1987). Social Work Practices with Children and Adolescents. Springfield, IL: Thomas.

- Zill, N. (1978, February). Divorce, marital happiness, and the mental health of children: Findings from the FCD national survey of children. Paper presented at the NIHM Workshop on Divorce and Children, Bethesda, MD.
- Zill, N. & Rogers, C. (1988). Recent trends in the well-being of children in the United States and their implications for public policy. In A. J. Cherlin (Ed.), The changing American family and public policy (pp. 31-115). Washington D.C.: Urban Institute Press.
- Zimmerman, M. A., Maton, K. L., & Salem, D. A. (1995). Family structure and psychosocial correlates among urban African-American adolescent males. Child Development, 66(6) 1598-1613.