

---

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL STRESS AND  
PARENTING STYLES AMONG SINGLE MOTHERS IN DAGORETTI  
SOUTH CONSTITUENCY, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

<sup>1</sup>\*Jane Gichuki, <sup>2</sup> Prof. Niceta Ileri & <sup>3</sup>Dr. Alice Omondi

<sup>1</sup>Master's Student, Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya

\*E-mail of the Corresponding Author: [janeggichuki@gmail.com](mailto:janeggichuki@gmail.com)

---

**Publication Date: May 2026**

**ABSTRACT**

Parental stress significantly influences the Parenting Styles among Single Mothers. This study examined parental stress's impact on parenting styles among single Mothers of Dagoretti South Constituency in Nairobi County. The specific objective was to examine the relationship between parental stress and parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The target population for the study was 2000 single mothers. Proportionate simple random sampling was used to select 179 single mothers, while Snowball sampling was used to include 12 social workers. The study adopted attachment theory and Role Theory. Questionnaires, interview guides and the focus group discussion guides were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using both inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation coefficient) and descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 29. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and presented in a verbatim form. The study found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between parental stress and parenting styles ( $r = 0.523$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that higher stress is associated with harsher and less effective parenting practices. The study recommends that policymakers strengthen economic and social protection for single mothers through affordable childcare, housing support, and flexible labor policies. Community-based parenting education and psychosocial support services should be expanded to reduce stress and promote positive parenting.

**Key words:** *Kenya, Dagoretti South, Parental Stress, Parenting Styles, Single Mothers*

## 1. Introduction

As described by Rusu (2020), parental stress refers to feelings of emotional or mental strain caused by challenging circumstances or events arising from raising children. Parental stress can have detrimental effects on mental and physical health if not managed effectively and can affect the behavior of an individual. Dushant (2018) argued that parental stress is a physiological and psychological response to demands placed on parents, mainly due to parental responsibilities. For single mothers, parental stress can be particularly pervasive due to the many roles they juggle, including breadwinning, homemaking, and parenting. Financial strain, social isolation, and a lack of support exacerbate stress levels for single mothers, impacting their mental, physical, and parenting styles.

Cronin (2024) noted that the influence of parenting stress on parenting styles among single mothers can manifest in various ways. High levels of parental stress may result in authoritarian or permissive parenting styles characterized by inconsistent discipline or overcontrol, as single mothers struggle to manage their emotions and maintain authority. Conversely, parental stress-induced fatigue and emotional depletion may lead to neglectful parenting styles, where the mother lacks the energy or resources to attend to her children's needs adequately. Parental stress can also impair communication and bonding between single mothers and their children, hindering the development of secure attachment relationships.

According to BenArieh et al. (2014), parenting style is a collection of parents' attitudes and behaviors toward children, accompanied by the emotional climate in which the parents' behaviors are expressed. Zhang (2022) says that parenting style refers to parenting techniques and standards that parents use in child-rearing. Mukola (2022) stressed that a significant number of the psychosocial problems, such as depression and anxiety, can be traced to parental failure, especially where parents fail to give warmth and guidance to children. Lauren and Sharlene (2016) argued that parents help to meet a child's physical and psychological needs, emphasizing the pivotal role of parents as the primary individuals in a child's life.

Smetana (2017) noted that there are four parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive (indulgent), and neglectful (uninvolved). The authoritarian parent does not allow children much freedom to develop their choices (Starr, 2019). Authoritative parenting is also known as balanced parenting and shows the right balance between displaying authority and showing responsiveness to the children. The authoritative parent gives encouragement and thorough reasoning behind any rules that are set and other preferred methods of discipline that are implemented. This helps the children understand that they are loved but must be punished if they violate any rules. The permissive (indulgent) parent does not impart a sense of discipline on children but rather emphasizes allowing the children to do whatever they want, regardless of the consequences. The neglectful or uninvolved parent fulfills children's needs and is completely removed from any emotional or disciplinary guidance (Ghogare & Telgote, 2023).

Parental stress is an inevitable, normal experience when a parent is unsure if they will meet the demands associated with raising children (Maldonado, 2018). Depending on the context, parental stress can be of a positive and conducive nature or toxic and damaging to the emotional and mental well-being of a parent (CDC, 2015). According to Dor (2021), parenting stress is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses the negative emotional, psychological, and physical strain experienced by parents in the process of raising and nurturing their children. Parental stress arises from many factors, including the demands of caregiving, financial pressures,

societal expectations, and the challenges associated with meeting the evolving needs of growing children (CDC, 2015; Dor, 2021).

Research on parenting has shown that beyond individual characteristics such as age, gender, and physical health, there are ecological and contextual factors, including geographical location, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity, that impact the level of stress and threaten the physical and mental health of parents (Beeber et al., 2014; Pollmann-Schult, 2018). Several studies have concluded that parents who experience greater economic stress also experience greater parenting stress (Sturge-Apple, 2022). Behere and Basnet (2017) stated that stress requires the individual to readjust his or her usual behavior patterns to create a positive reaction. Stress, connected with the relationship between the person and environment, accounts for behavior and how the individual manages the emotional response to stressors (Behere et al., 2017).

Makino et al. (2010) showed that changes in relationships caused by divorce, death of a partner, separation, imprisonment, or desertion led to disruptions in resources and routines, which, in turn, increases strain and affects the relationship between a parent and child. While the traditional family setting included a mother and father, the contemporary society we live in today has birthed a new ‘institution’ of single parenthood. According to Ekpenyong (2016), single motherhood refers to a family dynamic in which a mother is solely responsible for raising and caring for the family without assistance, support, or involvement from a partner. OECD (2021) estimates that globally, the United States (23%) and the United Kingdom (21%) have the highest number of single mothers. India was noted to have 5% of single-mother households. Statistics show that instances of single motherhood are at 84.3%. Multiple reasons have been listed for single mothers establishing their own homes, such as divorce, separation from a spouse, widowhood, male migration, intimate partner violence, abandonment, a quest for independence, and social norms or laws that make it difficult for women to remarry or enter a new union.

In Sub-Saharan African countries, statistics show that the proportion of children living in a single-mother family differs by country. Nigeria (10.1%), Uganda (19.8%), Kenya (15.9%), Tanzania (17.3 %), and Zambia (17.8 %) have the lowest percentages of children staying in a single mother family and higher percentages are found in South Africa (34.4%), Namibia (27.3%) and Zimbabwe (26.3%). In most cases, single mothers emerge through demographic and social antecedents that occur in the societies, such as divorce, premarital childbearing, widowhood, and voluntary and deliberate choice (Masarik & Conger, 2017).

In East Africa, Uganda has the most significant number of single-mother families living in poverty with no state welfare. The causes of this are deaths through HIV/AIDS, malaria, and abandonment (Uganda Reflex, 2024). On the other hand, Tanzania is one of the countries facing a growing rate of single-parenthood and the negative effects of single-parented life.

Studies have also shown that for most single-mother families, the mothers bear the hardest part as they naturally become the caregivers of the children (Masarik & Conger, 2017). Single mothers, often shouldering the dual responsibilities of breadwinning and caregiving, embody resilience and strength in the face of unique challenges (Bastin, 2019). Whether by choice or circumstance, single mothers navigate the complexities of parenting without the traditional support of a partner. They play a crucial role in shaping their children's lives, demonstrating remarkable adaptability and determination (Bastin, 2019). Juggling work, household responsibilities, and parenting duties, single mothers often face financial strain and emotional stress.

Masarik and Conger (2017) contended that single mothers often bear the sole burden of providing for their families, which increases the stress of the responsibility of providing for the family. Limited financial resources can lead to difficulties in affording childcare, quality education, and necessities, amplifying the stress of meeting their children's needs. Employment-related challenges, such as the demands of long working hours or inflexible schedules, contribute to the parental stress experienced by single mothers, who must navigate the delicate dance between professional obligations and parenting duties (Nisarga, 2023).

Bastin (2019) opined that single mothers often lack the emotional and practical support a partner provides. The absence of a co-parent can lead to feelings of loneliness and an increased sense of responsibility. Social stigmas and judgments can also compound this isolation, exacerbating stress levels. Additionally, the emotional toll of separation or divorce, especially if accompanied by legal battles or strained relationships with the other parent, can contribute to heightened stress for single mothers (Beblo, & Solaz, 2020).

Single mothers are stereotypically described as deviant, and different from married mothers in the eyes of society. Additionally, single mothers are considered to bring up dysfunctional children and families (Puff & Renk, 2014). Considering these stereotyped standards that mothers must attain, many single mothers are challenged psychosocially in comparison to their married counterparts. Single mothers are more likely to have fewer household resources, lower income, to rent rather than own a house, and to be unemployed, poor, and suffer from low self-esteem (Feldhaus, & Preetz, 2021). Single mothers are more likely to be very insecure economically resulting from low earning capacity, lack of child support, and insufficient/inadequate public benefits. These disparities create an environment that is stereotypical and acts as a stressor on the single mother's part. These disparities are thought to be essential on the choice of a parenting style among single mothers (Gałezewska & Perelli-Harris, 2017).

According to Barnes (2023), parenting style refers to how parents interact with their children, and the four main types are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved. Mendez (2021) explained the four parenting styles as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved. Authoritarian Parenting: Parents of this style tend to have a one-way mode of communication where the parent establishes strict rules that the child must obey. The child has little to no room for negotiation, and the rules are not usually explained. They expect their children to uphold these standards without making errors, and mistakes lead generally to punishment. Authoritarian parents are typically less nurturing, have high expectations, and exhibit limited flexibility. Michael (2023) argued that parenting styles are influenced by the level of stress experienced by the parents. Stress tends to spill over into child rearing, making parents less responsive and affectionate toward their children. This decline in the quality of parenting may lead to a variety of negative outcomes for children, such as feelings of rejection, lowered self-esteem, disruptive and aggressive behaviors, and social withdrawal. Conversely, less distressed parents tend to be more responsive, warm, rational, and moderate in the control they use with children. Child characteristics associated with such parenting practices include high self-esteem, school achievement, and effective social skills. A study by Miranda (2020) revealed an association between parenting stress and child behavior problems, which was linked to the parents' parenting styles.

The choice of parenting style is influenced by, among other factors, the level of stress among single parents. The unique challenges faced by single mothers, such as financial strain and

social isolation, contribute to heightened stress levels, which in turn impact the dynamics of parent-child relationships (Harkness, 2018). The emotional well-being of single mothers also influences parenting styles. High levels of stress, anxiety, or depression can affect a mother's ability to regulate her emotions and respond to her child in a calm and supportive manner. Chronic stress may lead to emotional exhaustion, making it challenging for single mothers to engage in positive interactions and maintain a nurturing environment for their children (Montgomery, 2015). Moreover, the stress associated with single parenthood may impact decision-making processes related to parenting. Choices regarding childcare arrangements, educational priorities, and extracurricular activities may be influenced by the need to manage stressors and find practical solutions rather than solely based on ideal circumstances.

In Kenya, marriage is an important institution both for the individual and the society at large. One of the primary roles of marriage is to create a stable foundation for the family unit. Conventionally, religious and social establishments, media, and most government entities define the ideal family as that comprised of two happily married, heterosexual biological parents living with their children (Lai & Kwok, 2015). Through the formalization of commitments and responsibilities, marriage establishes a framework for shared decision-making, financial collaboration, and emotional support. With this level of importance of marriage in mind, it is easy to see how the plight of single mothers plays out in the larger society that by large perceive them as being guilty of violating the marriage institution. The number of registered births by single mothers in Kenya has increased, an economic survey by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2019) has shown. The survey, showed an increase in the number of single mothers, compared to the married ones from 2018 to 2022. The proportion of registered births by married women decreased to 85.6 percent in 2022 from 85.9 percent in 2021, while the proportion of registered births by single mothers increased slightly to 13.9 percent in 2022 from 13.5 percent in 2021. Among the registered births, 0.1 percent were from divorced mothers, another 0.1 percent were from widowed, and 0.3 percent of the mothers did not state their marital status. The societal narrative surrounding family structures can inadvertently contribute to feelings of shame for single mothers, who may internalize societal expectations and norms (Hiyoshi et al., 2015). Whether by choice or circumstance, the absence of a partner in the parenting journey can lead to a sense of inadequacy or failure in the eyes of a society that often upholds the nuclear family ideal.

The perception that single parenthood is synonymous with instability or inadequacy can lead to a sense of isolation and alienation. The fear of being negatively labeled or judged by others may contribute to a reluctance to seek help or share their struggles openly, intensifying the emotional burden (Galezewska et al., 2017). The emotional stress experienced by single mothers is compounded by the absence of a co-parent to share the emotional load. The constant need to make decisions alone, address behavioral challenges, and navigate the emotional needs of their children can lead to emotional exhaustion. The fear of not providing sufficient emotional support or failing in their role as nurturers can contribute to a pervasive sense of stress and shame.

Dargoretti constituency is one of the seventeen constituencies in Nairobi County in the Republic of Kenya and has an area of 25.30 km<sup>2</sup> (9.8 sq mi). Dargoretti constituency is cosmopolitan and is populated by the working-class and businesspeople. Amidst the urban setting, a sizeable portion of its population resides in informal settlements, or slums, where daily existence is marked by adversity and struggle. Within the community, single mothers carry on their duty of parenthood with courage and determination. Raising children under these conditions may be especially taxing for single mothers, although single motherhood is common. Such an environment

adds to the stress and psychological strain single mothers are likely to experience as they endeavor to protect, nurture, and care for their children in this challenging setting. The stressful experiences encountered by single mothers informed the need for this study to address existing gaps.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The proportion of single-mother families in Kenya is growing steadily (Kubai, 2023). Statistics estimate that one in five families, on average, is a single-mother household (Kabiru, 2024; Kabue & Kabue, 2021). As noted by Clark (2023), the proportion of registered births in Kenya by married women decreased to 85.6% in 2022 from 85.9% in 2021, while the percentage of registered births by single mothers increased from 13.5% in 2021 to 13.9% in 2022. Kubai (2023) asserted that divorce and separation rates coupled with early pregnancies among the youth have made the case worse. Numerous studies show that single mothers are at a higher risk of physical and, above all, psychological problems than married mothers (Okelo et al. 2022) and this has had an impact on their parenting styles.

Parental stress for single mothers often arises from a critical economic situation, little social support, and the increased demands arising from the child's sole parenting and upbringing (Mwongera, 2024). Research suggests that, after a divorce or separation, or the death of a partner, mothers tend to take on more responsibility as single parents than the responsibilities they shared with their previous spouse. Without physical and emotional support, divorced mothers tend to experience higher levels of parenting stress than married mothers' experience (Kabiru, 2024). Although researchers have acknowledged the potential challenges and stressors faced by single mothers daily, they have not elaborated on how parental stress influences the parenting styles of single mothers in Kenya. This study aimed to fill this literature gap by examining the relationship between parental stress and parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **2.2 Objective of the Study**

To examining the relationship between parental stress and parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **2.3 Research Question**

What is the relationship between parental stress and parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya?

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

This study utilized attachment theory by John Bowlby (1969). Bowlby (1969) defined attachment as an emotional relationship between the infant and caregivers, expressed through attachment behaviors such as crying, clinging, and seeking proximity to the caregiver, especially in stressful situations. This connection, formed in childhood, significantly influences individuals later in life. The theory suggests that infants are biologically predisposed to form attachments as a survival mechanism, and their emotional and social development is deeply influenced by their early relationships with parents or caregivers.

Attachment theory posits that the quality of early caregiver-child relationships influences individuals' emotional and social development throughout their lives (Santrock, 2017). It suggests that secure attachments formed in infancy provide a foundation for healthy relationships and adult emotional regulation. In the context of the study on parental stress's impact on single mothers'

parenting styles, attachment theory offers valuable insights into how stressors may disrupt the formation of secure attachments and influence parenting behaviors.

#### **4. Relationship between Parental Stress and Parenting Styles**

Parenting young children can be stressful, impacting parenting styles and child behavior, leading to difficulties later in life. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between these factors. Miranda (2020) investigated the relationship between parenting stress and perceived child behavior problems in a study conducted in China. The study involved 371 parents with preschool-aged children (3 to 7 years old). The results revealed that higher levels of parenting stress were associated with a greater reported incidence of child behavior problems. Additionally, parenting stress was found to be positively correlated with negative parenting styles, and these negative styles partially mediated the relationship between parenting stress and child behavior problems. These findings suggest that reducing parenting stress can improve child behavior through positive adjustments in parenting styles. Therefore, early support and parenting skills training aimed at enhancing the parent-child relationship are crucial for the well-being of both parents and children and for fostering healthier family dynamics.

Ajilchi (2012) investigated the correlation between parenting styles among overstressed mothers and the level of self-esteem in Iran. The study involved 250 elementary school children and their mothers. Mothers were assessed using the parenting stress index, and based on the results, 80 overstressed mothers were selected to complete the Parenting Skills Inventory. Additionally, the children, with an average age of 10.6 years, completed the Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CESI). The study revealed a significant connection between children's self-esteem, parenting styles, and maternal stress levels through multiple regression analyses. Findings further indicated that both parenting style and maternal stress levels were linked to the self-esteem levels observed in the children under study.

Santa (2020) examined the correlation between parenting style and stress among parents during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. This research utilized a parenting pattern questionnaire to identify different parenting styles and depression, anxiety, and stress scales to assess stress levels. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation analysis were conducted using SPSS 20.0 software. The study found that 75% of the mothers were not employed. Results showed that 65% of parents reported either no or minimal stress, 17.5% experienced mild stress, 15% reported moderate stress, and 2.5% suffered from severe stress. Moreover, 82.5% of parents employed democratic parenting, 10% practiced authoritarian parenting, and 7.5% adopted permissive parenting. Interestingly, the study revealed no significant correlation between parenting style and stress levels among parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this study was done in Indonesia and the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current study sought to find out the impact of parental stress on parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency in Nairobi County.

Thakre and Shet (2020) investigated the influence of mothers' parenting styles on their children's coping styles. The study involved 341 adolescent girls and boys aged 13 to 14, attending 8th and 9th grades in English-medium schools in Mumbai. Two assessment tools were utilized: the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1992) and the Coping Responses Inventory-Youth (Moos, 1993). Data analysis involved a one-way analysis of variance and Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test. The findings revealed a significant difference in coping styles based on parenting styles. Adolescents raised in authoritative parenting environments exhibited

higher levels of positive reappraisal and problem-solving coping strategies compared to those in permissive and authoritarian environments. Conversely, cognitive avoidance as a coping strategy was more prevalent among adolescents with authoritarian parenting styles compared to permissive and authoritative styles. The cited study, however, lacked sufficient discussion about parenting stress, which was explored in the current study.

### 5 Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The target population for the study was 2000 single mothers. Proportionate simple random sampling was used to select 179 single mothers, while Snowball sampling was used to include 12 social workers. The study adopted attachment theory and Role Theory. Questionnaires, interview guides and the focus group discussion guides were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using both inferential statistics (Pearson’s correlation coefficient) and descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 29. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and presented in a verbatim form.

### 5. Research Findings

#### 6.1 Relationship between Parental Stress and Parenting Styles among Single Mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency

The third objective of this study sought to examine the relationship between parental stress and parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was conducted to assess the strength and direction of this relationship. The results are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Relationship between Parental Stress and Parenting Styles among Single Mothers (n=163)**

	Parental Stress	Parenting Styles
Parental Stress	Pearson Correlation	.523**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	163
Parenting Styles	Pearson Correlation	.523**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	163

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 1 show a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between parental stress and parenting styles among single mothers in Dagoretti South Constituency ( $r = 0.523, p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that as parental stress increases, changes in parenting styles also increase. In practical terms, higher stress levels are associated with a greater likelihood of adopting rigid, inconsistent parenting approaches, while lower stress supports more balanced and positive parenting practices. These findings align with prior research by Abidin (1992) who established that elevated parental stress predicts less adaptive parenting behaviors.

Similarly, Anthony et al. (2005) found that higher stress levels were associated with more authoritarian and inconsistent parenting styles. Consistent with the Family Stress Model proposed by Conger and colleagues, stress appears to undermine parental emotional regulation and responsiveness, thereby shaping parenting approaches. The current study therefore reinforces existing evidence that parental stress is a significant determinant of parenting style patterns.

This finding is consistent with the Family Stress Model (Conger & Donnellan, 2007), which explains that economic pressure and emotional strain impair parents' psychological functioning, leading to less effective parenting behaviors. Similarly, Abidin (1995) notes that elevated parental stress disrupts patience, communication, and emotional availability, which are critical for healthy parent-child interactions.

Social workers interviewed strongly affirmed this relationship. One noted, *"when stress is high, mothers become easily irritated and rely more on strict control than dialogue."* Another explained that financial pressure, single-handed decision-making, and lack of rest often push mothers into reactive and harsh disciplinary practices. These perspectives demonstrate how stress directly shapes parenting behavior in real-life contexts.

The social workers further highlighted how stress and economic pressures affected parenting practices. One social worker explained, *"Many single mothers report that when they are overwhelmed with bills and work, they tend to become stricter than they intend. The stress really affects how they interact with their children."*

Another noted, *"Exhaustion often makes it difficult for mothers to remain calm and supportive, which can lead to inconsistent or more authoritarian discipline."* These observations illustrate that chronic stress and financial strain significantly reduce emotional regulation, making it harder for single mothers to maintain balanced parenting approaches.

In the focus group discussions, single mothers elaborated on how stress accumulates throughout the day and spills over into parent-child interactions. Significant number of mothers described coming home physically and emotionally drained, which limited their patience for negotiation or explanation. Some admitted that in such moments, they defaulted to issuing commands or imposing immediate consequences rather than engaging in dialogue. One single mother remarked, *"When I am tired, I just want things done quickly, so I don't explain, I just insist."*

Others highlighted the emotional conflict that followed strict reactions. Several mothers expressed regret after reacting harshly, noting that they often apologized later once they had calmed down. A few participants also pointed out that stress sometimes led to inconsistency, being overly strict on some days and more lenient on others, depending on their financial or emotional state. The participants in the focus group discussions revealed that parental stress not only increases strictness but also affects consistency, emotional responsiveness, and the quality of communication within single-mother households. Research by Deater-Deckard (2004) found that high parental stress is associated with harsh discipline, emotional withdrawal, and reduced warmth. In contrast, lower stress levels enable parents to engage in more authoritative practices characterized by warmth, reasoning, and consistent guidance (Steinberg, 2020). This mirrors the study's earlier findings that authoritarian parenting was the predominant style among highly stressed mothers.

The positive relationship observed in this study therefore suggests that parental stress is a key driver of parenting behavior among single mothers in Dagoretti South. Persistent stress not only affects mothers' mental health but also shapes how they relate to, discipline, and nurture their children. Thus, these findings highlight the urgent need for interventions that reduce parental stress through economic empowerment, psychosocial counseling, and community support systems. By lowering stress levels, single mothers are more likely to adopt healthier and more effective parenting styles, ultimately improving children's emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that there is a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between parental stress and parenting styles ( $r = 0.523$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that higher stress is associated with harsher and less effective parenting practices. The study recommends that policymakers strengthen economic and social protection for single mothers through affordable childcare, housing support, and flexible labor policies. Community-based parenting education and psychosocial support services should be expanded to reduce stress and promote positive parenting.

## References

- Aguinis, H., Gottfredson R. K., Culpepper S. A., Dalton D. R., De Bruin G. P. (2013). Doing good and doing well: On the multiple contributions of journal editors. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(1) 564-578.
- Akinola M., Martin A. E., Phillips K. W. (2018). To delegate or not to delegate: Gender differences in affective associations and behavioral responses to delegation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(5) 1467-1491.
- Amna, S. (2024). *The comparative study of coping strategies in single parent adolescents in orphanage and domestic homes*. Accessed from <http://www.ijhs.com.pk/index.php/IJHS/article/view/401>
- and co-parenting alliance on marital satisfaction among Chinese fathers and mothers. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(12), 3506-3515.
- Badura, K. (2018). Gender and leadership emergence: A meta-analysis and explanatory model. *Personnel Psychology*, 71(1), 335-367.
- Barnes, P. (2023). Parenting styles: and what they mean for your child. Accessed from <https://momlovesbest.com/parenting-styles>
- Beeber, L. S., & Schwartz, T. A. (2014). Parenting enhancement, interpersonal psychotherapy to reduce depression in low-income mothers of infants and toddlers: A randomized trial. *Nursing Research*, 62(2), 82-90.
- Center on the Developing Child-Harvard University. (2015). *Key concepts: Toxic stress*. Retrieved from [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/key\\_concepts/toxic\\_stress\\_response/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/key_concepts/toxic_stress_response/)
- Clark, S. (2023). *Single motherhood and stress in a Kenyan slum: the importance of paternal and kin support*. Accessed from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0192513X221150978>
- Dor, A. (2021). Single motherhood by choice: Difficulties and advantages. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 11(1), 18-27.

- Doyen, S., Klein, O., Pichon, C.-L., & Cleeremans, A. (2012). Behavioral priming: It's all in the mind, but whose mind? *PloS one*, 7(1).
- Dushant, K. (2018). *Physiology of Stress and its Managements*. Accessed from file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/STRESS/Physiology\_of\_Stress\_and\_its\_Management.pdf
- Ekpenyong SN, Udisi L. (2016). Single-parent families and their impact on children: A study of
- Feldhaus, M., & Preetz, R. (2021). Analyzing Transitions in Intimate Relationships with Panel. Retrieved from [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/key\\_concepts/toxic\\_stress\\_response/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/key_concepts/toxic_stress_response/)
- Gray, K., & Wegner, D. M. (2009). Moral typecasting: divergent perceptions of moral agents and moral patients. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 505-520. doi: 10.1037/a0013748
- Hammond, R., Cheney, P., & Pearsey, R. (2015). *Sociology of the family textbook*. Rocky Ridge Press. <http://freesociologybooks.com/>.
- Harshim, S. (2024), Pretesting Survey Questionnaire: A Guide on Dissemination: *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences* 11(3), 2-18.
- Hiyoshi, A., Fall, K., Netuveli, G., & Montgomery, S. (2015). *Remarriage after divorce and In.; 2019*.
- Jensen, M. (2024). *Parent strategies to help emerging adults manage stress are associated with their mental health: A dyadic coping perspective*. Accessed from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/famp.12991>
- Kabiru, C. (2024). Single motherhood and stress in a Kenyan slum: the importance of paternal and kin support. *Sage Journal Reviewer Gateway*, 2(4), 4-18.
- Miranda, C. (2020). *The Relation between Parenting Stress and Child Behavior Problems: Negative Parenting Styles as Mediator*. Accessed from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-020-01785-3>
- Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, A. (2013). *Research methods: quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Mwongera, P.K. (2024). *Mitigation strategies to the challenges of women singlehood in Kerith Churches of Kenya*. Accessed from <https://editoncpublishing.org/ecpj/index.php/ECJAHSS/article/view/472>
- Nisarga, V. (2023). *Single parenting: impact on child's development*. Accessed from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09731342231179017>
- Okelo, K., & Onyango, S. (2023). Parent and implementer attitudes on gender-equal caregiving in theory and practice: perspectives on the impact of a community-led parenting empowerment program in rural Kenya and Zambia. *BMC Psychol*, 10(1):162.
- Shinwoo, C. (2024). Challenges and Coping Strategies of Families with Young Children amid Hurricanes: A Qualitative Inquiry. *The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 2(6), 2-28.

- Uganda Reflex. (2024). *Combating poverty and deprivation in Uganda*. Accessed from <https://www.ugandareflex.org/>
- Wamukoya, M. (2015). The Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance of slum dwellers, 2002–2019: Value, processes, and challenges. *Global Epidemiology*, 44(2), 462–471.