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PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAKURU WEST, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

JECINTA NYAMBURA WAWERU

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

SEPTEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

This dissertation is entirely original with no submissions to other universities for credit towards a degree.

Signature:  Date: 29th September, 2025

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MACPNKR250022

Word Count: 33,155

Supervisor Declaration

As university supervisors, we have given our consent for this thesis to be submitted for review.

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Second Supervisor

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my devoted spouse and children in appreciation of their support.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to God Almighty for providing me with health and strength to get to this stage. My profound gratitude goes out to my supervisors, Dr. Jane Ngure and Dr. J. Njeri Gacohi, for their leadership and assistance in determining the course of this research dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

Single parents face challenges of managing household responsibilities and this can lead to increased stress, anxiety and feelings of isolation. The purpose of this study was to evaluate effect of single parenthood psychological effects on the academic performance of the students from single-parent households in Nakuru West. Social learning and Ecological Systems theories guided the study. The target population comprised 3803 students from selected secondary schools in Nakuru West, with the sample size of 110 respondents. A total of 101 students participated in the study. Eight participants were targeted for interview from each of the participating schools, of which 26 took part. A descriptive research design and mixed-methods approaches were adopted in the study. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to gather the data. The respondents' anonymity was also respected. The quantitative data was analyzed through means and standard deviations for descriptive statistics that characterized the population, while p values and t-tests and ANOVA from regression evaluation were used to test hypotheses. Data was presented in tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Level of depression and stress ($\beta = -.514$, $t = -5.957$, $p < 0.05$), Depression ($\beta = -.452$, $t = -5.042$, $p < 0.05$) and Stress ($\beta = -.562$, $t = -6.764$, $p < 0.05$) were found to be significant predictors of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. Coping strategies were found not to be significant ($\beta = .072$, $t = 0.719$, $p = 0.474 > 0.05$). The study concluded that the degree of stress and depression is a strong predictor of the academic achievement of students from Nakuru West Sub-County single-parent households. According to statistical analysis, there was a significant negative correlation between academic scores and stress ($r = -.452$, $p < 0.05$) and between academic scores and depression ($r = -.562$, $p < 0.05$). Academics, upcoming researchers and counselors will benefit from the study. The study recommended that schools need to have trained counsellors to assist students showing symptoms of depression, a peer support network, and encourage extracurricular activities to help students manage stress. This study added to the understanding of the psychological effects of single parenthood on academic achievement among academics and professionals in the fields of psychology, counseling and education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ANOVA: Analysis Of Variance

DASS: The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS)

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

KDHS: Kenya Demographic Health Survey

NACOSTI: National Commission of Science and Technology and Innovation

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Scientists

SPUERC: St. Paul University Ethical Review Committee

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Education Fund

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter provides the study's background, problem statement, objectives, research questions and justification. It also covers the study's significance, scope, limitations and assumptions, as well as definitions of the key terms used in the research.

1.1 Background of the Study

A child's development is embedded within a complex system of relationships. Among the many relationships that influence children's growth and development, perhaps the most influential is the one that exists between parent and child (Frosch, et al., 2019). Recognition of the importance of early parent-child relationship quality for children's socio-emotional, cognitive, neurobiological and health outcomes has contributed to a shift in efforts to identify relational determinants of child outcomes (Pribesh, et al, 2020). Due to its balanced provision of social modeling, financial stability and emotional support, the two-parent family has long been regarded as the best family structure for raising children. However, the number of single-parent households worldwide has significantly increased due to societal changes over the past few decades. Due to a number of factors, including divorce, separation, the death of a spouse, adolescent pregnancies and socioeconomic hardships, single parenthood has increased in both developed and developing nations, including Kenya (Chavda, 2023).

According to Mabelane (2019) and Lebni (2020) families headed by a single parent are becoming increasingly widespread, with women heading the majority of these single parent households. This has been reported to be quite challenging, placing extraordinary demands on both the parent and the children academically. A number of divorce cases leading to single parenting have risen considerably in Europe since 1960 and most affected countries include the United Kingdom, Portugal, Denmark and Belgium. Sangeet (2022) stated that globally, students with single parents experience psychological effects and perform worse academically than those with two parents. In the United Kingdom, it was found that the family unit occupies a vital position in society and serves as the main nurturing environment for children's physical emotional and psychological growth (Han, 2023).

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In Nigeria, a study conducted by Salami and Alawode (2000) concluded that the academic success of teenagers in secondary schools is impacted by single parenthood. In addition, Bengesai and Nzimande (2020) found a negative correlation between high school graduation and family structure disturbance.in South Africa. In Uganda, numerous factors including institutional, social economic, motivation and family factors—which are thought to be the main agents in terms of socialization—can influence students' academic performance at different educational levels, especially at the secondary level. Poor exam scores, low grades, a small percentage of students completing both levels of education and the inability to pursue further education after each level all point to academic performance in a few chosen secondary schools in Bitereko Sub County in Uganda that is below the national average at both the Ordinary and Advanced levels (Bago, 2022). Single-parent families in Tanzania often struggle with economic hardships, which translate to reduced educational opportunities for children brought about by financial difficulty, a lack of parental care and socialization (Rubamande et al. (2021); Mahanyu & Mnjokaya (2023).

Stress and depression are two of the most common psychological side effects associated with being a single parent. Teenage depression can take many different forms, such as chronic melancholy, irritability, exhaustion, low self-esteem and a loss of interest in once-enjoyable pursuits (Selph & McDonagh, 2019). A student's capacity to concentrate, attend class consistently and achieve academic success may be adversely affected by these symptoms. Contrarily, stress can cause emotional and physical exhaustion, cognitive decline and heightened vulnerability to risky behaviours and peer pressure, all of which can impede academic success (Martínez-Líbano, et al., 2024).

Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory served as the foundation for the study's theoretical framework. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, a child's development is influenced by a variety of environmental systems. This theory holds that a child's behaviour and results are impacted by both broader societal influences (macrosystems), such as cultural attitudes and economic circumstances as well as by immediate relationships (microsystems), such as family and school (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The ecological systems approach aids in the explanation of how a student's psychological health and academic achievement are impacted by the loss of one parent and

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the ensuing social, emotional and financial adjustments in the context of this study. In contrast, Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes the significance of modeling, imitation and observational learning in the development of behaviour. Teenagers living in single-parent households might not have any positive role models, particularly if there is little parental involvement. If students adopt unhealthy coping mechanisms or imitate unfavorable peer pressure, this absence may exacerbate behavioural and academic problems. On the other hand, despite family difficulties, resilience and academic success can be fostered by constructive coping mechanisms acquired through social interaction (Bandura, 1986).

Single parenting is becoming more prevalent and accepted in Kenya. In a research conducted in Taita Taveta, Magara (2017), found out that the educational status of single parents was correlated with the academic success of their children. Single parents, frequently mothers, may struggle to provide for their families, leading to limited access to educational resources such as textbooks, school fees and extracurricular activities that enhance learning (Ng'eno & Mwoma, 2018). Additionally, the lack of sufficient parental support and guidance can result in lower academic achievement as students may not receive the necessary help with homework and studying. The psychological stress associated with single parenthood, such as anxiety and feelings of neglect, further compounds these educational challenges (Sethuli, 2023). Concerns regarding the psychological health and academic achievement of impacted children have been raised by this change in household structure among educators, psychologists and legislators. This trend has also affected Nakuru County, especially Nakuru West Sub-County. The percentage of single-parent households is increasing in urban areas such as Nakuru, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2019). This raises serious concerns about how this shift will affect children's education.

In Nakuru West, many single parents have to work long hours due to lack of funds which forces them to leave their children mostly unattended, contributing to an emotional void (Clark et al., 2023). The resulting strain and emotional deprivation not only compromises children's capacity to pay attention to their academic tasks but also renders them vulnerable to developing different mental health issues (Muindi et al., 2020). Despite the high percentage of single-parent households in the setting of in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya, the body of studies on the psychological effects of children's academic achievement being raised in

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single-parent households is limited. There is limited research done to determine how this family structure affects children's psychological wellbeing, which in turn has an influence on their performance.

Therefore, this study aimed to close this gap by assessing the psychological impact of single parenthood on high school students' academic achievement in Nakuru West, Nakuru County. The study's four primary goals were to determine how depression and stress levels, the presence of depression, the presence of stress, and the coping mechanisms these students use, affect academic outcomes overall. Students who are impacted by the increase in single parenthood face many difficulties, especially with regard to their mental health and level of education. Stress, depression and poor coping strategies can all seriously impair a student's academic performance. However, it is possible to promote resilience and academic success in students from single-parent households if proper support systems are in place and the psychological dynamics at work are understood. By attempting to offer a thorough analysis of these dynamics within the distinct sociocultural setting of Nakuru West, this study hoped to provide insights that were both practically applicable and empirically supported

1.2 Problem Statement

Single parenthood has become increasingly prevalent in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya, with approximately 35% of households being headed by single parents, primarily single mothers (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Research indicates that students from single-parent households are more likely to experience psychological challenges such as heightened stress, anxiety and feelings of neglect, which can negatively impact their academic outcomes (Ng'eno & Mwoma, 2018). Karari, et al. (2022) further support this, highlighting that the psychological toll of single parenthood can undermine students' academic achievement. According to their study, the third most common cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 29 is suicide. Untreated adolescent mental health issues have long-term effects on an adult's physical and mental well-being (WHO, 2024). Nearly 35% of Kenyan secondary school students will not finish upper secondary education by 2030 according to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on how well nations are doing in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. This indicates that over half a million students will not finish their senior secondary education

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by 2028 out of the 1.4 million students in Grade 5 who are anticipated to join junior secondary in 2023 (Teachers Arena, 2022).

In particular, Nakuru West's slum areas, including Rhonda and Kaptembwo, home to approximately 190,000 residents face unique challenges as many students in these areas are raised in single-parent households (Ngeta, 2010). Given the increasing prevalence of single-parent households in Nakuru West, it is crucial to investigate the psychological effects on high school students' academic performance to develop targeted interventions and support systems. The results of this study aimed to inform policies and programs that can mitigate the negative psychological effects and provide better academic support for students from single-parent households, ultimately enhancing their educational outcomes.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This section presents the general and specific objectives that guided the research study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective was to evaluate the psychological effects of single parenthood on high school students' academic achievement in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were;

i. To determine the level of depression and stress among high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.
ii. To determine the effect of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.
iii. To evaluate the effect of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.
iv. To establish the coping strategies employed by high school students from single-parent households in handling depression and stress in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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1.4 Research Hypotheses

HO_1: Level of depression and stress has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

HO_2: Depression has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

HO_3: Stress has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

HO_4: Coping strategies have no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.4 Justification of the Study

The psychological well-being of an individual greatly influences their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. To have a good performance, high school students require good mental well-being. Optimal psychological well-being helps in building resilience to manage difficult situations and use appropriate problem-solving skills to bring about academic success. Higher academic grades require a certain degree of psychological soundness. However, because single-parent families sometimes have few resources, it may be difficult for adolescents to put their mental health first. As a result of not receiving proper attention while seeking psychological counseling or medical assistance for mental health, other issues may arise such as poor academic performance. Additionally, when psychological problems occur, pupils in such situations might not have a thorough knowledge of what they may be going through.

The findings of this study were shared with the County Government to bring out more information on psychological effects of single parenting on the academic performance of high school students and thus promote programs that would address the issues. The government may play a key role in encouraging mental health and subsequently improving academic performance inside educational institutions by addressing any recognized psychological issues through informed policy initiatives.

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The findings were used by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to take necessary policy action to address psychological issues addressed in the research. If research is not done, policy development that targets the mental well-being of high school students may not be achieved, and this may continue to affect their academic performance. This study was therefore, a significant step in ensuring the academic success and overall development of high school students coping with the unique psychological challenges associated with being raised by a single parent.

Scholars such as academicians, upcoming scholars and counselors in the area of psychological counseling and adolescent academic performance would benefit from the study as they would learn the factors that drive the youth from single parent households to perform poorly in their academics as well as the coping strategies that can be employed to combat the same.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study were beneficial to a variety of stakeholders in the academic, research, and counseling professions.The study will add to the body of knowledge on the relationship between family structure and academic success in Kenya, which has received little attention in comparison to Western literature. Aspiring researchers would gain a foundation and direction for future research as the study served as a baseline and reference point for future research in family psychology, child development, and education.

The results would produce critical information that can help in the development of social and emotional approaches that would improve teenagers' mental health in single-parent families. By raising awareness of the psychological effects that single parenthood has on students' academic achievement, the information would help the community as a whole and change how members of the community view these students. The findings might be used to shape a psychological counselling awareness campaign aimed at educating high school students on how to cope with stressful issues in life.

Scholars in the area of psychological counseling and youth development and academic performance can develop tailored mental health programs to assist these students in overcoming challenges and achieving academic success.

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The research would be helpful to school administrations and educational authorities, such as the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, in formulating policies meant to address psychological challenges in learning institutions. The government and scholars would benefit from the study in that the information will help in the creation of targeted policies that would alleviate some of the psychological challenges that high school students from single parenthood face. Policy prescriptions could also help fill the gap in psychological counselling among high school students. The information will create self-awareness in high school students, thus helping them to manage their emotions when going through psychological issues.

1.6 Scope of the Study

High school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya, were the subjects of this study. The study sought to investigate how their academic performance was impacted psychologically, particularly by levels of stress and depression, and the coping strategies used by the students. The accessible target population was 3803, comprising students from Crater View Secondary School, Moi Secondary School, Nakuru West Secondary School and Uhuru Secondary School. Since the target population was still high, the study employed the Nassiuma (2008) formula to determine a sample size of 110 respondents. A mixed methods approach was employed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. There were eight interview participants from each of the participating schools, making a total of 32.

The study sought to determine how depression affects students' grades and overall academic outcomes and evaluate the impact of stress on their academic performance. Additionally, it investigated the coping strategies employed by these students to manage depression and stress. In order to give an in-depth understanding of these students' psychological health, the study also evaluated their levels of stress and depression. Data was collected from high schools within Nakuru West to ensure a representative sample and relevant findings for this specific geographical and social context. The study was conducted in the year 2024/ 2025

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1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study had a few limitations. Reliance on self-reported data from students about their levels of depression, stress and coping strategies could lead to biases, as students might not always accurately assess or report their feelings. Using validated, well-structured questionnaires, such as standardised depression or stress scales, along with conducting pilot testing to identify and address any confusion or bias, helped in reducing inaccuracies in self-reported data.

1.8 Assumptions

The study made the assumption that a sample of high school students from single-parent households, representative of the population being studied, was present in the chosen high schools in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, and that the sample population was willing to cooperate and provide appropriate answers to the research questions during data collection. The study made the assumption that high school students from single-parent homes in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya, suffered from stress and depression, both of which could have an adverse effect on their academic achievement. The study also made the assumption that these students would use coping mechanisms to deal with their depression and stress.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

In this research study, the following terms were referenced;

Academic performance: This is the student assessment based on their achievements, including grades, examination scores, attendance and overall engagement in school work (Lamas, 2015). In this study, stress refers to those physical, mental or emotional pressures that the students from single-parent households experience. In this study, academic performance refers to the performance of the students from single-parent households in Nakuru West.

Depression: This is a mood disorder in which a person has feelings of extreme sadness, suicidal thoughts, avoids social interactions, has trouble sleeping and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, with

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indicators such as difficulty concentrating, changes in appetite and weight, loss of energy and loss of interest or pleasure/ activities once enjoyed (Kanter et al., 2008)

Psychological effect: The effect of a situation, occasion or event on people's or groups' mental and emotional health, which leads to a shift in behaviour and perspective, with indicators such as withdrawal or avoidance of social interactions, emotional responses like anxiety, cognitive issues like difficulty concentrating and physical symptoms like headaches or fatigue (Hoque, 2016). In this study, it refers to the responses that the students from single-parent households experience.

Single parenthood: A family led by a single parent that has child or children, they may choose to live alone and be single or they may be separated, divorced or widowed. They may be young or old, male or female, educated or not (Weinraub & Kaufman, 2019)

Stress: A state of pressure that can be physical, mental or emotional. It is characterised by behavioural and psychological responses. The demands of a situation become greater than their capacity to handle (Shahsavarani et al., 2015). In this study, stress refers to those pressures that the students from single-parent households experience.

Coping mechanisms : . The cognitive and behavioural attempts people make to lessen negative feelings (such as grief, fear, or rage) when dealing with stress, trauma or illness are frequently referred to as coping (Stallman, 2020). In this study, coping mechanisms refer to those measures taken by the students from single-parent households to manage their depression and stress.

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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical review, an empirical literature review and a conceptual framework and discusses the summary and gaps of the review.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study was grounded in the Ecological Systems Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner and the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura. The two theories discussed in the following section served as the foundation for the research. A theory is a concept that seeks to explain or forecast how various events will interact with one another. It is a systematic and logical way to explain a reality (Vanden Bos & American Psychological Association, 2015). The theories describe the interrelationships between the study variables.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura introduced the Social Learning Theory in 1970. According to Bandura's theory, development results from the reciprocal influence of the external or social environment, meaning that a person's conduct is influenced by both their internal makeup and earlier learning. Learning, in Bandura's view, is caused by social model imitation. As a result, the relationship between behavioural consequences and social and environmental determinants was the main focus. According to the hypothesis, people learn when they see the results of other people's actions (National Academies Press, 2020). Bandura's theory goes beyond cognitive theories, which take into account psychological factors like memory and attention, and behavioural theories, which contend that all behaviours are learnt through conditioning. It also expounds/explains that people can watch conduct/behaviour directly through social contacts with other people or indirectly through media, according to Bandura. Rewarding behaviours are more likely to be copied, whereas punishing behaviours are avoided (Springer, 2024).

One of the most influential models of parent-child relationships is Social Learning Theory, which, in its broadest sense, contends that children's exposures and experiences in real life

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either directly or indirectly shape their behaviour. As such, its central tenet is the importance of moment-to-moment exchanges: if a child experiences an immediate reward for his or her behaviour, such as receiving parental attention or approval, then that behaviour is likely to recur, whereas if the behaviour is ignored (or punished), the child is less likely to repeat the behaviour. Teenagers from dysfunctional families may experience psychological setbacks that could ultimately have an impact on their performance in and out of the classroom, as it is expected that teenagers with excellent parenting would have favourable behavioural tendencies (McLeod, 2025).

According to Gana, et al. (2024), teenagers may not receive good parenting when one parent's absence causes the home to become dysfunctional. Research has confirmed the widely held belief that children need the attention of both parents to maintain psychological well-being in life. Children pick up behaviours from their families in Bandura's view. A child who sees their parents being irresponsible will adopt the same behaviour. Without a trustworthy connection with their parents, children are more inclined to struggle in building meaningful interactions with their environment. Therefore, the only way a good outcome can be achieved is if parents model the conduct they would like their teenagers to learn.

Since the Social Learning Theory sees behaviour as a learned phenomenon, it was appropriate for this research. It assumes that teenagers pick up behaviour from watching their parents or other important adults behave in a certain way. Children may choose to behave irresponsibly themselves if they witness their parents doing so and if the parents lack satisfactory relationships with the teens, the teens might not feel the same way about the individuals they live with or the people they see outside the house (Firmansyah, et al., 2022).

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, was relevant to this study as it highlights the role of observation and imitation in learning behaviours and attitudes. In single parenthood, parents do not have enough time to observe what an adolescent has learned if it is good they reinforce if it is bad they punish. Due to this, adolescents may express behaviours such as a lack of focus and emotional instability hence affecting their psychological well-being. In the context of single-parent households, high school students may observe and model their behaviour based on their single parent's coping strategies and emotional

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responses. This modeling can influence how students manage their stress and depression, potentially impacting their academic performance.

2.2.2 Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) is a valuable tool for researching the psychological impact of single parenthood on the academic achievement of high school pupils from single-parent homes. The Theory sheds light on how various environmental factors, from close family relationships to larger cultural influences, may affect the academic performance of high school students in Nakuru West. Bronfenbrenner's theory posits that a child's development is influenced by multiple layers of environmental systems, ranging from immediate family interactions to broader societal factors (Shelton, 2018).

In the context of single-parent households, this theory helps to explain how various environmental contexts, such as family dynamics, school environment and community support systems, interact to affect students' psychological well-being and academic performance. For example, the stress and depression experienced by students from single-parent families are not only a result of their immediate family situation but also influenced by factors in their mesosystem (e.g., interactions between family and school) and ecosystem (e.g. parental employment conditions) (Deng, et. al., 2022).

A thorough understanding of these relationships can help to identify how various environmental factors contribute to academic difficulties and guide the development of focused treatments that would assist these students. Students are influenced by a complex combination of life changes, wider societal influences and immediate family dynamics, according to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. Every system in this ecological framework works in harmony to help students from single-parent households succeed academically. The theory helps in comprehending how students are the result of various interrelated settings, each of which has a distinctive effect on academic achievement. For instance, the immediate family environment (microsystem) may contribute to stress and depression, which directly impact academic performance (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2019). The mesosystem's interactions between family and school can further influence academic outcomes, as inadequate support at home may affect school performance. The ecosystem's

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broader influences, such as the economic strain experienced by single parents, can also indirectly affect students' well-being and academic success. Additionally, the macrosystem's cultural and societal attitudes towards single-parent families can shape the support and resources available to these students (Konstantinidis, 2024).

2.2.3 Summary of Theoretical Framework

According to Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and modeling based on social context. This theory is relevant to single parenthood because fewer role models can influence behaviour, self-discipline, and attitudes toward education. Behavioural imitation can affect the single parent's relationships with others, attitudes toward learning, and coping strategies for stress. Performance and motivation may suffer if reinforcement is reduced. Peers can also have an impact on academic behaviour.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory uses nested environmental systems such as microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem to explain human development. These theories are applicable to situations involving single parents. A comprehensive explanation is provided by combining the two theories. The Social Learning Theory contributes to the understanding of how particular attitudes, behaviours and coping strategies are learned in single-parent households. On the other hand, Ecological Systems Theory places these actions in the larger socio-environmental frameworks that influence and maintain them over time.

Teachers, counselors and policymakers can use these theories to identify both proximal and systemic interventions in the context of Nakuru West, where disparities in education, economic difficulties and societal attitudes toward single parenthood may be prominent. Understanding the intricate psychological and learning experiences of students from single-parent households in Nakuru West requires an understanding of the Social Learning Theory and the Ecological Systems Theory. Teachers, scholars and legislators can more effectively pinpoint the reasons behind subpar academic achievement, create contextually appropriate interventions, and promote students' overall development by utilizing these frameworks.

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2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Level of Depression and Stress among High school students from single-parent Households

Liu (2021) claims that students from single-parent households frequently feel more neglected and unstable which worsens psychological distress and has a negative impact on their general wellbeing. The study found that high levels of stress and depression had a significant negative impact on academic performance. According to Chen's study, which examined how family structure affected Chinese high school students psychologically, students from single-parent households reported significant higher levels of stress and depression than their counterparts from two-parent households. Parental absence, financial difficulties and lack of emotional and social support within the family were important contributing factors. These results highlight how urgently customized interventions that cater for the particular.

Gaylor (2023), investigated suicidal thoughts and behaviours among high school students and found that the prevalence of considering suicide among female students grew from 24.1% to 30% between 2019 and 2021, as did the prevalence of formulating a suicide plan (from 19.9% to 23.6%) and attempted suicide (from 11.0% to 13.3%). The quality of parent-child interactions in single-parent families plays a critical role in mediating the effects of parental absence on teenager's psychological health. Katsantonis and McLellan, (2023) suggest that supportive relationships can mitigate some of the negative impacts on students' psychological well-being. These findings emphasize how important it is to offer single-parent students targeted support and therapies to meet their unique psychological needs. The emotional and financial instability associated with single parenthood significantly contributed to increased psychological distress and lower overall well-being (Chibala et al., 2023).

Manengelo, et al. (2023) investigated the impacts and challenges of single parenting on students' learning in government secondary schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania using mixed methods. The study population included 30 secondary school students and 15 parents, to make the sample size of 45 respondents. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Key

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findings indicated low academic performance, lack of time to control and guide their children, Lack of economic support, insufficient social support, lack of parental attention and nurturing, inability to buy school requirements, lack of opportunity to check their children's progress, poor communication based on academic matters leads to psychological problems such as life stress, instability, anxiety and depression. The study concluded that single parenthood is likely to be caused by divorce, separation, death and being unmarried, which negatively affects the students' academic performance in secondary schools.

High school students from single-parent households are more likely than their classmates from two-parent households to experience stress and sadness, according to numerous studies. Liang et al. (2019) found that children from single-parent families often face greater emotional and psychological challenges, which are linked to increased levels of depression and anxiety. This is supported by recent findings from a study conducted in Kenya, which revealed that single-parent students report significantly higher levels of stress and depressive symptoms compared to those from intact families (Mwoma, 2021).

Ayiro et al. (2023) found that majority of the students in Kenya had high levels of stress (31%), and moderate levels (66%). Just 11 pupils (3%) said they were under a low level of stress. Additionally, the study found a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) between stress and coping strategies. According to Awino (2023) local researchers in Kaptebwa Nakuru, found links between single parenthood, home economic restrictions, increased student stress/self-esteem difficulties and inferior academic achievements. These studies collectively highlight that high school students from single-parent households face higher levels of depression and stress, which are influenced by various factors including economic instability, family dynamics and reduced parental support. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective interventions to support these students' psychological health and academic success.

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2.3.2 Effect of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households

Salami and Alawode (2000) found that globally, single parents are on the rise due to family dynamics and the evolution of culture, leading to high levels of depression. Compared to children from two-parent households, children from single-parent households were more likely to have depressive symptoms. These symptoms were assessed through structured methods such as validated self-report questionnaires and standardized clinical interviews, which are commonly used to measure emotional well-being and psychological health (McLeod, 2017). Depression has been identified as one of the psychological elements that has a detrimental impact on high school adolescents who are from single-parent families. These findings suggest that early identification and intervention are crucial to prevent long-term negative consequences such as impaired academic performance (Hackstadt, 2021).

As reported by Liu (2021), students living in single-parent households experienced higher levels of depression, which had a detrimental effect on their academic achievement. The research highlighted that depression impaired students' cognitive functions and motivation, leading to lower academic achievement. According to Baker (2017), teenagers from single-parent households lack adequate emotional support, and single parents often face significant financial burdens and emotional stress, which can contribute to higher rates of depression among this population.

This, in turn, can affect their academic performance, social interactions and overall well-being. They experience less supervision when one parent is experiencing depression or anxiety disorders, since it may be difficult for the parent to provide adequate support and guidance towards the teenager's educational goals. As a result, teenagers grow up facing more obstacles than necessary while trying to achieve optimal scholarly outcomes alongside their peers who enjoy more advantages within multi-parent households. This is primarily because they possess fewer worries regarding basic needs being met, let alone overcoming academic hurdles like peer pressure-based challenges (Krammer, et al., 2023).

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Shaikh and Chandio (2024) assessed the effect of depression on academic performance of Pakistani university students. The cumulative Grade Point Average of the students was used to evaluate their academic success. Purposive sampling was used to gather a sample of 101 responders, and a 1 % significance level indicated that increases in depression account for 37.8% of changes in students' performance. Furthermore, the regression analysis showed that, at a 1% significance level, a unit change in depression hurts the student's cumulative Grade Point Average of 0.426 per subject.

Gitonga (2024) investigated how single parenting affects secondary school pupils' academic performance in Mukurweini, Nyeri County. The study sought to investigate the causes of single parenting, the difficulties single parents encounter, methods used to lessen adverse effects on adolescents' academic achievement and the function of school-based support networks in enhancing results. One thousand Form Three pupils from three secondary schools in Mukurwe-ini Sub-County participated in the study; thirty per cent of the teachers and one hundred Form Three students were chosen. According to the study, poor performance was caused by the parents' work overload, lack of discipline and the other parent's absence. The study suggested that in order to help single-parents children perform better academically, schools in Mukurwe-ini Sub-County should set up a robust support structure.

The percentage of students in Nakuru West who have a single parent is increasing. According to KDHS (2017), 45.8% of all students in Nakuru West are from single-parent households. Research done by Murage (2016) in Nakuru Municipality on the impact of family organisation, high school performance and student educational success found that family background has a substantial impact on teens' educational accomplishment and school academic performance owing to depression.

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2.3.3 Effect of Stress on the Academic Performance of High School Students from Single-Parent Households

Single parenting can have various psychological effects on both parents and their children, which, in turn, can influence the academic performance of students. Here are some potential psychological effects and how they may impact academic performance: chronic stress can

impair cognitive function, including attention, memory and problem-solving ability, which can negatively impact academic performance (Kabat-Zinn, 2023). As a result, single parents often experience higher levels of stress due to the increased responsibilities of raising children alone. This stress can be transmitted to teenagers, making it more challenging for them to concentrate on their studies and perform well academically. Adolescents from single parenthood may experience a range of emotions such as sadness, anger or resentment, related to family dynamics (Demszky et al., 2020). According to research by Elaine (2018), stress may be responsible for as much as 40% of the variation in student grades across different classrooms and institutions. These emotional challenges can be distracting and may affect a student's focus and performance in school.

Banerjee (2022), explained that bad exam outcomes are caused by high levels of cortisol, a hormone released in reaction to stress, which has been related to impaired cognitive flexibility, working memory and decision-making abilities, all of which are necessary for academic performance.

These students are often overwhelmed because they help their parents with house chores, businesses and at times take care of their siblings in addition to their school work. Chronic stress can also lead to a lack of motivation and decreased engagement with academics, resulting in lower academic performance (Kouyoumjian, 2018).

According to Kataoka (2017), children who play two roles experience high levels of stress and academic pressures, such as feeling unprepared or excluded, which make them easily agitated due to pent-up feelings that they have no one to express to. They might experience emotional anguish, bewilderment or a sense of loss in relation to family dynamics. These emotional difficulties can cause pupils to lose concentration in their academic work, experience stress, and have weaker time management skills, which can lower their cognitive ability in comparison to their peers from two-parent households.

Single parents may also find it difficult to address their children's emotional needs due to a lack of time and resources, which can make them feel alone and unsupported (Davis, et al.,

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2022). There are stereotypes regarding single parents' incapacity to provide for their kids' emotional needs, stressing that divorce and single parenting are processes impacted by a variety of factors, including changes in family dynamics and the economy (Wajim, 2020). These changing conditions could lead to differences in the way emotional support is given and received. Additionally, studies sometimes overlook disparities in single-parent family structures, such as those between custodial and non-custodial parents, or fail to critically assess the methods used to measure emotional support (Donohue, 2023).

Lack of emotional support for the adolescent can cause feelings of loneliness and isolation, which raises one's chance of developing depression. The impact of depression on cognitive ability, memory and motivation has been well-documented in the literature (Stanek & Ones, 2023). Depression can significantly affect memory, leading to impairments in cognitive function. Additionally, it can also influence motivation, affecting an individual's drive and engagement in various activities. Students with symptoms of depression were more likely to report having grown up in poorer financial circumstances, highlighting the overlap between mental health challenges and socioeconomic disadvantage (Ramon-Arbués, et al., 2020). Sekhar et. al. (2021) reported that approximately 14% of high school students had a positive screen for depression based on the PHQ-9 scale, with depression significantly associated with lower GPAs and a higher likelihood of dropping out. Teenagers who are depressed may find it difficult to concentrate, complete their schoolwork and perform well in examinations, which lowers their academic performance (Meng & Zhang, 2023).

According to Pützer, Brüne, Hatt, and Wolf (2020), adolescents raised by a single parent suffer from "vicarious stress" or "secondary traumatic stress," in which they absorb the tension of that parent. This exposure to parental stress may have a negative impact on teenagers' mental health as they occasionally face social shame and discrimination. This feeling of being different from their classmates and the negative stereotypes kids might come across regarding their family structure could cause them to experience increased anxiety (Ins Barrow, 2015; Ashari & Anwar, 2022). They frequently find themselves more susceptible to harmful influences from their peers since they look for connection and support outside of their

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homes. Because they are more vulnerable, they might do risky things, which can make them feel more anxious (Hubbard, 2022).

The detrimental effects of single parenting can be debilitating, yet teens raised by a single parent can also benefit greatly, as the family can spend more time together. Moreover, trust is established, which lowers stress and anxiety levels since parents often develop a unique and strong bond with their teenagers that might not have been possible in a two-parent home (Okyere-Manu, 2021). As a result, it is easier for these teenagers to deal with negative emotions when they arise because they are more resilient, understand their parents' struggles, take on parental responsibilities, mature earlier, participate in family decision-making and have better emotional control and problem-solving abilities (Moorman, 2020).

Lasisi, et al. (2024) evaluated the effects of single parenting on junior secondary school student's academic performance in mathematics in Nigeria. 40 students were selected purposively, all of whom were from single and intact parenthood. Responses were analyzed at 0.05 using an independent sample t-test. The first hypothesis showed a statistically significant difference in the academic performance of students from intact and single-parent families in mathematics (t-cal = 1.82). Chavda and Nisarga (2023) explained that the absence or loss of one parent and conflicts between separated and divorced parents affect not only the child's mental health but also the child's physical health, overall growth and future relationships. Single parents are often overburdened with the responsibilities of 2 parents, face social stigma and lack social support; as a result, they have difficulty spending time with their children. Hence, children of single parents have poor academic performance, decreased social interactions, and emotional and behavioural problems/ challenges.

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2.3.4 Coping Strategies Employed by high school students from single-parent households in handling depression and stress

Coping is a strong predictor of academic success among high school students and is acknowledged as a critical variable in the process of minimizing, reducing or tolerating stress (Khan, Gul & Zeb, 2023). The way people think and the actions they take to deal with the demands of stressful events, both internal and external, are central to the coping process

(Biggs, Brough, & Drummond, 2017). Previous research has identified a variety of strategies, including both healthy and unhealthy ones. Positive strategies include turning to social support networks or engaging in leisure activities, while maladaptive strategies, such as escape/avoidance, are employed by some people to cope with stress (Haskell et al., 2020).

Villosillo-Balbuena (2022) developed a foundational framework for understanding coping mechanisms that distinguished between two main categories: emotion-focused and problem-focused. Coping involves managing emotional suffering, controlling the distressing situation and preserving well-being. Emotion-focused coping includes maladaptive tactics like escape avoidance and daydreaming as well as adaptive strategies such as humour, seeking social support and maintaining emotional distance (Zade-Mohammadi & Aslani, 2021). Problem-focused coping involves actions such as obtaining information, seeking advice, drawing on experience, bargaining and problem-solving (Folkman, 2020).

In a study on adolescents' coping strategies when facing family-related stress, Zammuner (2019) found that students from single-parent households commonly employed problem-focused strategies like seeking help from teachers or peers as well as emotion-focused strategies such as engaging in hobbies and relaxation techniques. The study highlighted that effective coping strategies were associated with better adjustment and academic outcomes.
Building on these foundational frameworks, Li and Li (2024) examined coping strategies among adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds, including single-parent households. The study emphasized the importance of social support networks, such as friends and mentors, in helping students cope with stress and depression. Teens who actively looked for social support and engaged in positive activities, such as extracurricular activities, reported improved academic and emotional outcomes. In their investigation of teenage coping techniques, Butler et al. (2022) observed that students from single-parent households often coupled active coping strategies like problem-solving and advice-seeking with passive coping mechanisms like avoidance and diversion. Better academic results and stress management were associated with the effective application of these techniques. More adaptive methods, such as asking for help and communicating honestly, were used by students who had access to supportive relationships, such as classmates, instructors and counsellors. These strategies

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were linked to improved academic achievement and decreased depression levels. In order to manage stress and depression in single-parent households and subsequently improve pupils' academic performance, Okyere-Manu (2021) came to the conclusion that proactive problem-solving and social support are essential.

Huang and Wang (2023) study found that socioeconomic status (SES) significantly impacts students' mental health during university closures, influenced by perceived social support and self-efficacy. Students with higher SES have access to resources like supportive relationships and efficacy beliefs, leading to better psychological well-being and reduced stress. Conversely, students with lower SES often lack these resources, resulting in increased distress and reduced life satisfaction. Technology plays a crucial role in modern coping behaviours, but its interaction with coping strategies, particularly within disadvantaged populations is not thoroughly examined.

González-González, et al. (2025) found that there are several obstacles in university life that might have an impact on students' academic success and emotional health. Developing successful support techniques requires an understanding of how kids handle these difficulties. Targeting 464 university students in all, this study used a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design and a quantitative methodology. The Brief COPE inventory was used to evaluate coping mechanisms, and an online form was used to gather socio-demographic information. The most common coping mechanisms among female students were religion, instrumental help and emotional support. On the other hand, substance use and positive interpretations were more common among male students. Additionally, there were statistically significant variations in humour usage and academic level. These results highlighted how socio-demographic characteristics influence university students' coping mechanisms.

Ntoiti et al. (2024) investigated the connection between undergraduate students' academic performance in Kenya and mental distress and evaluated the function of coping mechanisms in this relationship. A descriptive survey and correlational research design were used in the study. 277 students (48% male, 52%female) were randomly selected from four Kenyan universities (two private and two public). The study received ethical approval from the

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appropriate authorities. Most (91.3%) were older than eighteen years. The Stress Coping Strategies Questionnaire (SCSQ) and the DASS-21 scale were used to gauge coping mechanisms and mental health, respectively. Students provided the university system with their Grade Point Average (GPA). The results showed a strong negative relationship between GPA and overall mental discomfort ($r = -.15$, $p = .01$). Interestingly, the relationship between mental discomfort and academic performance was not mediated by coping mechanisms.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate the significant role of coping strategies in managing stress and depression among adolescents, particularly those from single-parent households. The findings highlight the importance of adaptive strategies, especially those involving social support and proactive problem-solving, in promoting emotional well-being and academic success.

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2.4. Conceptual Framework

In this study, the conceptual framework explored how the independent variables depression, stress, level of depression and stress, and coping strategies can affect the dependent variable, academic performance, among high school students from single-parent households.

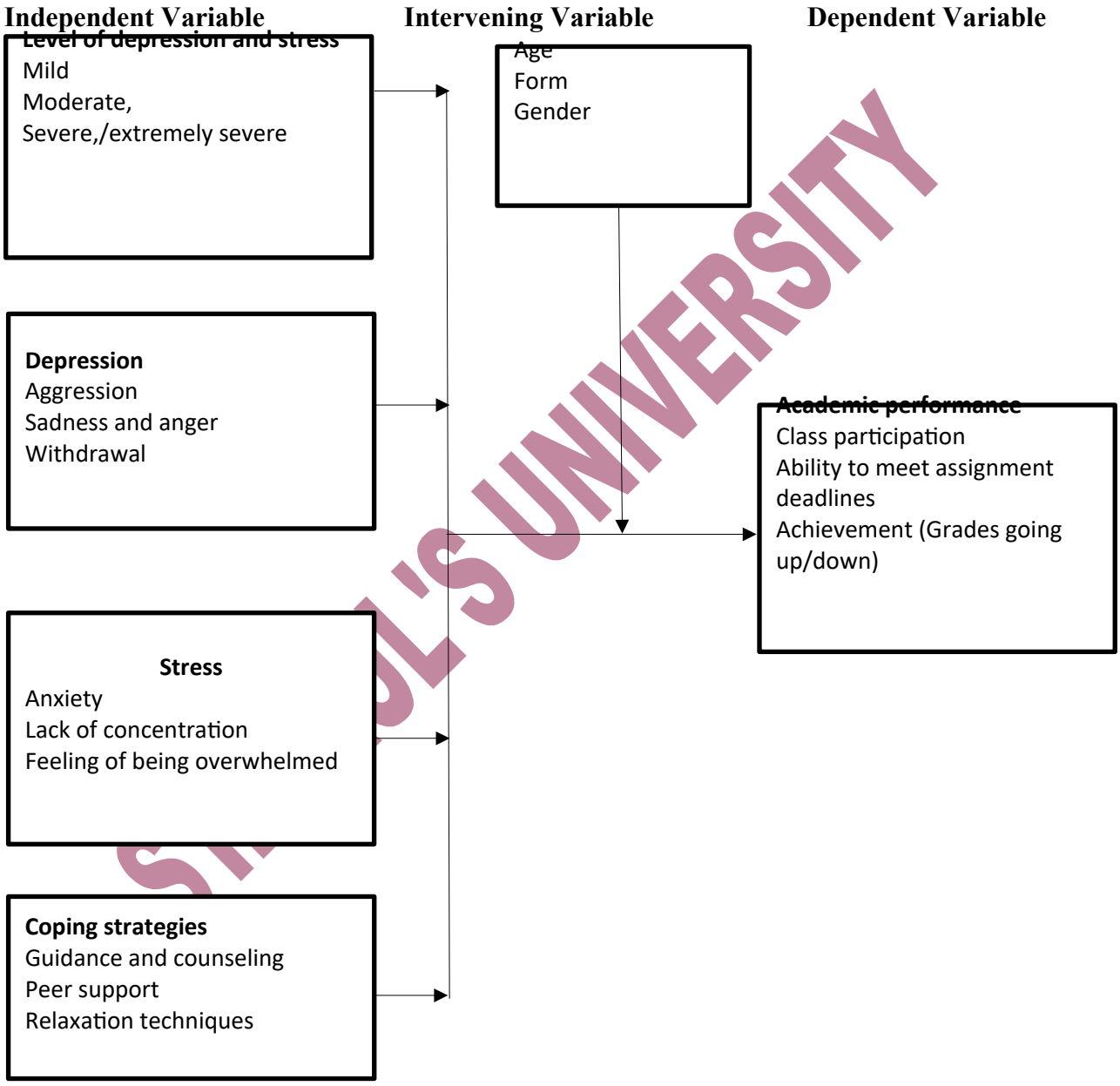


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

The level of depression, stress and coping strategies made up the independent variables while the dependent variable was made up of students' academic performance. High levels of

depression and stress can lead to difficulties in concentration, reduced motivation and impaired cognitive functioning, which can detrimentally affect academic performance (Palmer, 2013). The level of depression and stress was measured using the DASS-21 tool and can be either mild, moderate, severe or extremely severe. Depression was assessed via the students' aggression, feelings of sadness and anger and withdrawal from others or other activities. Stress was measured through anxiety, lack of concentration and feeling of being overwhelmed. Coping strategies were measured by seeking guidance and counseling, peer support, and engaging in relaxation techniques. Academic performance was measured through class participation, ability to meet assignment deadlines and achievement in terms of the grades either going up or down. Age, form and gender were the mediating variables in this framework, for their change can affect academic performance.

Participation in the study was random (except that they came from single-parent households) as a means to control for confounding effects. The students were not separated in terms of whether they had been seeking counseling sessions, participating in recreational activities or having a particular level of performance. Randomization helped to ensure that extraneous variables such as participant variables were equally distributed across all groups, minimizing their impact on the study's results (SAGE, 2017).

2.5 Research Gaps

Even though research on the psychological effects of single parenthood on students is growing, little is known about the precise interactions between stress, depression and academic performance among high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya. Existing studies focus broadly on the effects of single parenthood without delving deeply into the nuanced ways in which depression and stress individually impact academic performance and how coping strategies mediate these effects. There is little empirical research on high school students in Kenya or Africa and majority of the literature currently in publication is centered on Western and Asian contexts (such as China, the United States and Pakistan). Findings should be localized to reflect the economic, social and cultural realities of Nakuru West and Nakuru County.

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Although private and public educational settings may provide different academic and emotional support networks, previous research frequently generalizes findings without making a distinction between the two. There is also a thematic gap in that although stress and depression are frequently discussed; few studies integrate these factors in a comprehensive model that looks at how coping strategies influence academic performance in situations involving a single parent. A methodological gap exists whereby a large number of earlier research projects were exclusively qualitative or quantitative. Mixed-method approaches that would offer a deeper and more complex understanding of students' academic and psychological experiences are scarce. In addition, few studies use sophisticated techniques to establish statistical relationships like causality or correlation. Furthermore, they are not thorough in measuring the combined impact of stress and depression on academic performance.

Little is said about school-based interventions or support networks that are tailored to the academic and emotional needs of students from single-parent households. Additionally, the unique socioeconomic and cultural context of Nakuru West has not received much attention in localized research, leaving a knowledge gap regarding the ways in which regional characteristics influence the relationship between psychological distress and educational outcomes. By filling these gaps, we can make it easier to understand the psychological challenges faced by high school students who have a single parent and inform the development of workable strategies to support their academic success and mental well-being.

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2.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed previous research on the psychological impact of single parenthood on high school students' academic achievement. Rresearch on the psychological effects of single parenthood on high school students showed that students from single-parent families experience higher levels of depression and stress than their peers from two-parent households. The study was grounded in two theoretical frameworks, Ecological Systems Theory and Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, dysfunctional family dynamics can reinforce negative behaviours because adolescents mimic behaviour from their surroundings. According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, a

student's growth and academic achievement are influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural and societal structures, as well as family and school.

According to the reviewed literature, high school students who come from single parent families experienced substantial psychological effects that had an impact on their academic performance. Students from single-parent households were particularly affected by psychological issues like stress and depression. Due to parental absence, financial strain and lack of emotional support, these students had higher rates of depression (Liu (2021; Salami & Alawode, 2000). Their motivation and cognitive function were negatively impacted by this depression, which led to subpar academic performance.

Teenagers in single-parent households also endured ongoing stress due to heightened domestic duties, emotional instability and inadequate parental supervision (Kataoka, 2017; Kabat-Zinn (2023). Additionally, the literature identified a variety of coping mechanisms used by teenagers, ranging from maladaptive (such as avoidance and escapism) to adaptive (such as social support and problem-solving) techniques. According to studies by Butler et al. (2022) and Villosillo-Balbuena (2022), social support and emotional resilience are crucial for assisting students in overcoming psychological obstacles. Overall, research showed that adolescents' academic performance was greatly impacted by the psychological strain of coming from a single parent household. It also suggested that specific coping and support strategies may help them become resilient and succeed academically.

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CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods that were employed to examine the psychological impact of single parenthood on Nakuru West High School students' academic achievement. These consist of the research design, target population sampling techniques, data collection tools and procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and conclusions.

3.2 Research Design

The research adopted a descriptive survey design, which is the gathering of data from a representative group of people by asking them questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). Descriptive survey design uses questionnaires, interviews or observation to methodically collect data from a target population in order to characterize the state of a phenomenon at the moment (Creswell, 2014).

A mixed-methods research design is a technique that uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a single study to create a more complete knowledge of a research problem. This design combines numerical and descriptive data, giving rise to richer insights in comparison to using either method alone. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), mixed techniques allow researchers to draw on the benefits of both methodologies, providing a full view of the topic under investigation.

Qualitative data collection refers to the methods used by researchers to collect non-numerical information, which is typically descriptive and exploratory, in order to better understand participants' experiences, perceptions and meanings. It focuses on depth rather than a broad approach to data collection (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Quantitative data collection is the process of collecting numerical data that can be quantified and analyzed statistically. It focuses on quantifying attitudes, actions, beliefs or other specific characteristics and generalizing the results from a larger sample size (Creswell, 2014).

The designs were used concurrently because of the varied nature of the study. Qualitative data were elicited through semi-structured interviews, which included open-ended questions that

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would provide an in-depth understanding of the complex parts of the participants' experiences with single parents. The high school students voluntarily shared their personal experiences in response to the questionnaires (Weyant, 2022). Quantitative data were gathered through Likert-scale questions that allowed participants to rate their experiences numerically. This structured format enabled the conversion of responses into numerical values for statistical analysis (Low et al., 2022).

3.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria are characteristics that the prospective subjects must have if they are to be included in the study (Paderno et al., 2020). Form 3 and Form 4 students in the four Nakuru West Sub County secondary schools who consented to participate were included in the study.

3.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion criteria are those characteristics that disqualify prospective subjects from inclusion in the study (Sudhir & Suresh, 2021). Form 1 and Form 2 students, as well as those in Form 3 and 4 who were around and those who refused to sign the consent form, were excluded from the study.

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3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in four schools within Nakuru West Sub-County. These are; Crater View Secondary School, Moi Secondary School, Nakuru West Secondary School and Uhuru Secondary School. Given the increasing prevalence of single-parent households in Nakuru West, it was crucial to investigate the psychological effects on the academic performance of high school students to develop targeted interventions and support systems. The results of this study aimed to inform policies and programs that can mitigate the negative psychological effects and provide better academic support for students from single-parent households, ultimately enhancing their educational outcomes.

3.4 Target Population

The population that a study aims to collect data from to make meaningful conclusions is known as the target population. It defines the specific group that the scholars intend to investigate and about which they seek to make informed assessments (Barnsbee et al., 2018). The accessible target population for this study was 3803 comprising Form 3 and Form 4

students from Crater View Secondary School, Moi Secondary School, Nakuru West Secondary School, and Uhuru Secondary School. Form 1 and Form 2 students were excluded since they may not have stayed in the area long enough, or may not have had a proper grasp of the psychological effects of single parenthood on academic performance. According to Cooper et al. (2018), a population is a well-defined set of people, services, elements, events, groups or households under investigation. The target population is as depicted in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3. 1: Target Population

Schools	Number of Students
Nakuru West	1,100
Crater View	800
Moi Secondary School	1,003
Uhuru Secondary School	900
Total	3803

Source: TSC Nakuru West (2024)

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3.5 Sample Design & Sample Size

3.5.1 Sample Design & Procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset (sample) of a larger group (population) to represent the whole, allowing findings from the sample to be generalized to the entire population. According to Kothari (2004), sampling is the process of picking a subset of an aggregate or totality in order to make conclusions about the whole.

The list of students from single-parent households in each of the schools formed the sampling frame for that particular school. A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or procedure the study would adopt in selecting items for the sample. Edu Gorilla (2024) defined sampling as a procedure of selecting members of a research sample from the accessible population which ensures that conclusions from the study can be generalized to the study population. Proportionate stratified random sampling, was used to identify students to participate in the study (Cooper et al., 2018). The main factor was determining a manageable sample size which was adequately

representative of the entire population under study. Since the target population was still high, the study employed Nassiuma's (2008) formulae to determine the size of the sample as follows.

Where

n = Represents sample size,

N = Represents study population

C = Represents the coefficient of variation ($21\% \leq C \leq 30\%$), and

e = Represents the error margin ($2\% \leq e \leq 5\%$).

Calculating the sample size,

$$n = \frac{3803\ (0.21)2}{0.212 + (3803-1)0.022}$$

$$n = 110.27$$

$$n = 110 \text{ respondents}$$

3.5.2 Sample Size

Based on the figures above, 110 responders were expected to make up the study sample size. The entire target population was categorized into strata using proportionate stratified random sampling. The following formula was used to determine the sample size of responders from each stratum.

$N=a/N\times C$

a – is the population of the stratum

N – Is the total target population

C – Is the sample size

Z – Is the number of respondents obtained from each stratum

Example from,

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Nakuru West Secondary School: $\frac{1100 \times 110}{3803}$

$z = 32$

Crater View: $\frac{800 \times 110}{3803}$

$z = 23$

The same formula was applied to the rest of the Schools.

The sample size is as shown in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3. 2: Sample Size

Name of School	Number of Students	Sample
Nakuru West	1,100	32
Crater View	800	23
Moi Secondary	1003	29
Uhuru Secondary	900	26
Total	3803	110

Source: TSC Nakuru West (2024)

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires and an interview schedule were used to collect data. The questionnaire and interview schedule were deemed ideal for collecting data as the Form 3 and 4 high school students could interact with the same and provide the necessary feedback for the purposes of realising the study's objectives.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a prepared list of questions created to obtain data on a particular subject from respondents. To collect statistically significant data from different groups, individuals or entire populations, questionnaires are vital instruments that must be carefully designed and appropriately distributed (Roopa & Rani, 2012).

The questionnaire was divided into four distinct sections to address various aspects of the study. Age, gender and family structure supplied demographics data in the first segment to provide context. The first section concentrated on how depression affects high school

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students' academic performance. The second section concentrated on how stress affects high school students' academic performance, and the third section looked at how the level of depression and stress affects academic performance. Validated measures of stress, depressive symptoms and their effects on academic outcomes were used. The fourth section explored coping strategies employed by students to manage their academic performance amidst stress and depression. This section included open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights into the strategies students use to handle academic pressures. The fifth section explored the students' perception of their academic performance amidst stress and depression.

3.6.2 Interview Schedule

The researcher conducted interviews using a structured interview schedule as a guide. The interview schedule was structured such that the respondents were asked the same list of questions and aimed at capturing all the objectives. 8 students from each of the 4 schools were interviewed, making a total of 32. The participants were drawn from both of the population's subgroups: single-parent students and students from two-parent households. The interviewees were selected by the teachers in charge of guidance and counseling in the respective schools. Including participants from two-parent families enabled comparative analysis with single-parent families, providing context and control for variables unrelated to family structure.

To guarantee representation, participants were chosen through stratified random sampling within each grouping. Guidelines for answering the questions and maintaining uniformity throughout the interview were included in the structured interview plan. The questions contained both closed-ended and open questions. These questions allowed them to express their thoughts and academic experiences related to depression and stress. An in-depth understanding of the topic was attainable due to the complementarity between the quantitative data acquired from the Likert scale replies and the qualitative data acquired from the interviews.

3.6.3 Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS)

The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) was utilized in the study to assess various aspects of negative emotional states experienced by high school students in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya. The DASS is a standardized self-report measure developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) to evaluate dysphoric mood states, arousal states and negative

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emotional liabiality to stressors. According to Norton (2007), the Depression Scale of the DASS assesses dysphoric mood states, such as anhedonia, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, and hopelessness.

In this study, the DASS-21 version was administered, which consisted of 21 items with each item rating '0' to '3' (0=did not apply to me at all, 3=applied to me very much, or most of the time). Participants rated the items based on their suitability, and the scores were calculated. The letters D, A, and S denoted the scale to which each object belonged, and the scores of the recognised item for each scale (D, A, and S) were added up. Since the DASS21 is a shortened version of the DASS42, each item group's final score was multiplied by two. Each score was then transferred to the DAS profile sheet after being multiplied, allowing comparisons across the three scales as well as allowing for percentile rankings and severity classifications.

3.7 Piloting of the Instrument

The instruments were subjected to a pilot study, which aimed at assessing the clarity, practicality, reliability and overall structure of the study. It was conducted to detect weaknesses in design, such as ambiguous or confusing questions, and ensure that the instruments effectively capture the intended data and provide proxy data for the selection of a probability sample (Blair, 2014). Questionnaires and interview schedules were piloted in Nakuru East Secondary School, which had similar characteristics to the target population school, and this improved the relevance and applicability of the results. According to Lewis (2021), the required sample size for pilot and feasibility studies varies from 10 to 60-75 per group, depending on the study's main objective. Based on this, a sample of thirty respondents, being 30% of the target sample size, was used in the pilot study to ensure the language used was clear and sustainable.

The supervisors' opinions were sought to help confirm the instruments' content and continued validity. This input from supervisors was essential in improving the instruments. They specifically assessed content validity, organisation and clarity of the questions to ensure that they were in line with the objectives of the study. Pre-testing of both the questionnaires and interview questions evaluated whether the questions were clear, the response options were suitable, and the overall design was student-friendly. It guaranteed that any deficiencies and weak points were fixed. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, were secured from

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all participants, and their confidentiality was maintained. The pilot findings facilitated the establishment of validity and reliability of the instruments and did not form part of the final analysis.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Validity

A research study's validity is determined by how well it measures the subject that the study was intended to assess. Validity is about the meaningfulness of a research instrument (Baldwin, 2018). The study adopted content validity, which was used to show whether the test items represented the content that the test was designed to measure (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2016). The university supervisors examined and evaluated the instruments to make sure that every item employed in the research tool was valid and consistent. They evaluated the research instruments based on established theoretical frameworks and ensured alignment with the study's objectives.

A checklist was provided to guide them in assessing the clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the items. Before being utilised for data collection, face validity was tested, whereby the items were reviewed to check for ambiguities, which were then revised using techniques such as paraphrasing, simplifying complex language or rephrasing questions. The instruments were refined based on expert feedback, pilot testing and the target population's perspectives to ensure they accurately reflected the constructs being studied. Experts from the university, including the supervisors, gave feedback to help adjust the instruments' items, thus making sure that they are aligned to theory. Testing in real-life situations shows how well the tools work and if they are reliable. By doing all this, tools that captured the objectives and fit well with the study's participants were accurately established.

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3.8.1.1 Validity Test Results

According to university research processes, the research proposal was submitted to a panel of experts to assess content authenticity and supervisors, who are qualified professionals in the field of study, offered support. These specialists carefully examined the research tool, examining each question to determine whether it was in line with the goals of the study and whether it was able to capture all of the crucial elements of the targeted construct. Their input

was invaluable in refining the instrument and ensuring that it accurately represented the scope and breadth of the research domain. The research tool was reviewed by a subject-matter expert in order to assess face validity. This specialist, who had extensive knowledge of the field of study, assessed the tool to see if it successfully measured the desired parameter. Any inconsistencies or ambiguities in the format, language and order of the questions were found with the aid of their subjective evaluation. By making the necessary adjustments in response to the expert's feedback, the instrument's validity in precisely evaluating the intended constructs was guaranteed, enhancing its coherence, relevance, and clarity. The study instrument was improved and confirmed through this painstaking procedure, setting the groundwork for solid and trustworthy data collection.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which a specific test, method or instrument yields results that are comparable under varied conditions, presuming no other changes (Azuma, 2016). It is the extent to which a measurement is free from error. Reliability, in this case, was examined using internal consistency, a metric that assesses the degree to which items on the instrument uniformly reflect the same underlying construct (Mbula, 2016).

In this study, reliability was evaluated through internal consistency. According to Collins (2007), Cronbach's alpha is a way of assessing reliability by comparing the amount of shared variance or covariance among the items making up an instrument to the amount of overall variance. The theory states that if the instrument is reliable, there should be a sizable degree of covariance between the items concerning the variance. It indicates how closely associated a group of related items are with one another. A reliability value of 0.70 or greater was considered suitable for this investigation as it suggests that the items are closely related and reliably measure the same construct (Kothari, 2004). A low alpha of below 0.70 may suggest weak relationships between items, indicating a need to revise the instrument.

3.8.2.1 Reliability Test Results

The study conducted the reliability statistics of the quantitative data based on the independent variables: level of depression and stress, depression, stress and coping strategies, as well as the dependent variable, academic performance. The results were presented in Table 3.3.

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Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics for Quantitative data

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Level of depression and stress	0.738	6
Depression	0.855	6
Stress	0.728	5
Coping Strategies	0.811	6
Academic Performance	0.821	6
Overall reliability	**0.791**	

Note: Reliability statistics for Quantitative data. Source (Author).

Table 3.3 showed that of all the specific variables that entailed quantitative data, none had a Cronbach's Alpha of less than 0.7. With the first independent variable, depression had the highest r=0.855; followed by the dependent variable, academic performance at r=0.821, coping strategies had Cronbach's Alpha, r=0.811, level of depression and stress had Cronbach's Alpha, r=0.738, while the least of Cronbach's Alpha was for stress at r=0.728. The statistics were sufficient to be used to infer consistency (Barbera et al. 2020). The authors recommend Cronbach's Alpha of r=0.70 to infer the suitability of the data being used in terms of internal consistency.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The study obtained a letter of approval from the postgraduate department, along with ethical clearance from the St. Paul University Ethical Review Committee (SPUERC), which was forwarded to NACOSTI to obtain the necessary research permit. These documents played a key role in getting authorization to gather data from the targeted schools in Nakuru West. The study actively sought authorisation from the Ministry of Education and the Sub-County Education officer in Nakuru West, as well as the principals from the schools from which the data was collected.

The researcher paid attention to the rules and regulations of the school about data gathering. In order to set up interviews for particular days, the researcher collaborated with the appropriate guidance and counseling teachers in the individual schools. Prior to data

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collection, the respondents were informed of the study's purpose and asked for their consent. The respondents were then given the questionnaires by the researcher. They were given time to answer the same, and the scholar was present to answer any questions on the same. The research timeline for collecting completed questionnaires was agreed upon with the study research participants.

3.10 Data Analysis Methods

According to Bryman and Bell (2002), data analysis is the process of examining, evaluating and summarizing data to derive relevant information and draw trustworthy conclusions. Before being processed and analyzed further, the data gathered from the surveys were cleansed and modified. This meant that missing data were handled using methods such as filling in gaps or leaving them out based on set rules. Also, any outliers were identified and managed using common statistical methods such as the Z-score or interquartile range (IQR). After cleaning, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used to analyze the Likert scales in the closed-ended questionnaire items after they had been transformed to numerical codes and scored on a scale of 1 to 5 according to the degree of the construct being measured. Each Likert scale question usually measured a certain/specific idea, like agreement or satisfaction, and the responses were in order. However, for analysis, these were treated as interval data, assuming an equal distance between the scale points. Composite scores were also calculated, representing an overall measure of several items related to one idea. To check how consistent these composite scores were, Cronbach's alpha was used, making sure that the items accurately measure the intended idea.

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to assess the data. Means and standard deviations were used in descriptive analysis to characterize the population's fundamental traits. These statistics were applied to both individual items and the composite scores that reflected the overall constructs. To analyse inferential statistics, null and alternative hypotheses were formulated, as well as appropriate statistical tests such as t-tests and ANOVA. The assumptions underlying these tests, such as normality and homogeneity of variance, were verified using appropriate tests such as Shapiro-Wilk for normality and Levene's test for variance equality. The F-test in regression analysis was primarily used to assess the overall significance of the regression model. Specifically, it determined whether there was a

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statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable and the entire set of independent variables included in the model. It helped to determine if the model, as a whole, was a good fit for the data or if it was likely that the observed relationships were due to random chance (Sureiman & Mangera, 2020).

Utilizing SPSS, assumptions were checked, tests were conducted and p-values and effect sizes were interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions. Qualitative data responses obtained from open-ended questions were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression modeling were employed to interpret the quantitative data (Mishra et al., 2019; Dong et al., 2023). This involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns. Cross-checking, whereby participants get an opportunity to review the analysis to confirm that their views are accurately represented, was used to ensure the validity and dependability of the results. To give a thorough summary of the research findings, both quantitative and qualitative data were included in the final report.

A content analysis was employed to examine the information gleaned from the interviews. This method isolates themes or patterns in the interviewees' responses. Several steps were taken in the analysis, including: familiarization: to get acquainted with the data, read through the interview responses. Coding: this stage entails locating significant textual passages and giving them codes. Categorization: the codes are categorized according to how similar their meanings are. The categories are further divided into themes that encapsulate the key concepts that surfaced from the data. Interpretation: this entails extrapolating conclusions and inferences from the themes found.

The primary goal of the content analysis process was to identify any recurring themes or categories that might be biased toward particular ones. These were coded based on the study's goals or its preconceived conceptions. Coding entailed picking distinct textual passages that, in some way, illustrated the same theoretical or descriptive concept. The codes developed as per the study's goals were aligned with the quotes' key words.

To integrate the qualitative and quantitative data, a triangulation approach was used where themes identified in qualitative narratives were compared and analyzed alongside statistical

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trends from the quantitative findings (Barpanda & Athira, 2022). This integration enhanced the depth and validity of the research outcomes.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The moral precepts that guide a research investigation from the outset to the conclusion and dissemination of the findings are known as ethics. The study obtained ethical clearance from the St. Paul University Ethical Review Committee (SPUERC) and also the necessary authority from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The clearance from SPUERC ensured that the research adhered to ethical guidelines and standards and protected the welfare of the students. To protect the respondents, the study adhered to the "no harm" guideline. Before the collection of data, the researcher presented the respondents with consent forms for them to fill. Adult participants gave their informed consent, while minors needed approval from their parents or guardians.

The consent forms were expected to assure the respondents that their personal information would be confidential, and explained that the study would be voluntary and that the reason for the research was purely for academic purposes. The researcher ensured that taking part in the study did not put students under unnecessary stress or pressure, understanding that they are minors and needed extra care. Measures were put in place to reduce any possible risks linked to the research. This included managing sensitive information carefully and offering help if any student felt upset or uncomfortable during the study.

Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. For purposes of confidentiality, the participants did not put their identities on the data collection apparatus. Since the study involved high school students, the researcher also needed permission from the MOE as well as the administration of the schools involved. This guaranteed that the study was carried out in compliance with pertinent laws and policies controlling research involving children.

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CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research outcomes are discussed, covering areas such as the response rate of the questionnaire, assessments of reliability and validity, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis aimed at detecting the general trend in the data collected, while inferential statistics were undertaken to forecast the correlations between variables.

4.2 Response Rate

Table 4.1: Response rate

Respondents	Research Instrument	Targeted	Achieved	Percentage Achieved
Students	Questionnaires	110	101	92
Interview Schedule	KIIs	32	26	81
Average				86.5

Note: Response rate. Source (Author).

As shown in Table 4.1 above, out of the 110 students targeted in the study, 101 participated and the questionnaires they filled were found to be correct and thus suitable for further analysis. This translated to a response rate of 92%. For the key informant interviews, the target was 32 students, out of which 26 participated, translating to 81%. There were 7 interview participants from Moi Secondary and Nakuru West Secondary schools, and 6 from Crater View Secondary and Uhuru Secondary. According to Monique and Kaiser (2022) research employing empirical data, especially those with relatively homogeneous study populations and carefully stated aims, attained saturation within a limited range of interviews (9–17). The overall average response of 86.5% was considered adequate to respond to the concerns of this study. In general, a response rate of 70% and above is considered excellent in surveys (Sataloff & Vontela, 2021).

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4.3 Respondents Demographic Information

4.3.1 Students Form Level

The study sought to determine the distribution of the students according to their Form (Grade) level.

Table 4.2: Students Form Level

Form Student is in	Frequency	Percent
Form 3	56	55.4
Form 4	45	44.6
Total	101	100.0

The form level distribution shows that the majority of the students are in Form 3 (55.4%), with the remaining 44.6% being in Form 4. Thus, there was not much discrepancy in the numbers for Form 3 and Form 4, indicating there was a fair distribution of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County.

4.3.2 Age Distribution of Students

Table 4.3: Age Distribution of Students

Age	Frequency	Percent
15 years	1	1.0
16 years	19	18.8
17 years	45	44.6
18 years	33	32.7
19 years	3	3.0
Total	101	100.0

The ages of the students in the study ranged from 15 to 19 years. The majority of the students were 17 years old (44.6%), followed by 18 years (32.7%). The smallest group consisted of 15-

year-olds, representing just 1% of the total sample. Overall, the distribution was concentrated in the 16-18 age range, comprising 96.1% of the participants, with only a small percentage of 15-year-olds and 19-year-olds. Thus, the students were predominantly 17 and 18 years. The results agreed with those of Khatete (2018) and Erlass Prokeatif Indonesia (2020), who found that the majority of the Form 3 and 4 students in Kenya are 17 and 18 years old.

4.3.3 Gender of the Students

Table 4.4: Gender of the Students

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	43	42.6
Female	58	57.4
Total	101	100.0

Results on Gender Distribution showed that there was a higher number of female students (58%) compared to male students (42.6%). This distribution indicated that the sample was somehow skewed towards females.

4.3.4 Engagement of the students in other activities

Table 4.5: Engagement of the students in other activities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	42.6
No	58	57.4
Total	101	100.0

The students were asked about their engagement in other activities apart from schoolwork. 57.4% of the students reported that they did not engage in any activities apart from school work, while 42.6% participated in additional activities. This indicated that more students

prioritized schoolwork over other activities, though a significant portion was involved in extracurricular activities. A University of California (2023) study found that engaging in extracurricular activities was positively associated with improved academic satisfaction, a stronger sense of belonging, greater Grade Point Average (GPA) and greater retention in the first year.

However, the study found that for seniors, the GPA falls if they spend more than 10 hours a week on entertainment, spiritual/religious, and physical activities, and it falls even further than that of individuals who do not engage in extracurricular activities. Stanek and Ones (2023) found that depression has a negative effect on cognitive ability, memory and motivation. Additionally, it can also influence motivation, affecting an individual's drive and engagement in various activities. Further, cross-tabulation of Gender identity and Engagement in other activities was done to understand the phenomenon better.

Table 4.6: Cross tabulation of Gender identity and Engagement in other activities

Gender/Engagement in other activities		Engagement in other activities apart from school work		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender identity	Male	27	16	43
	Female	16	42	58
Total		43	58	101

Cross tabulation of Gender identity and students' engagement in other activities apart from school work showed that among male students, 62.8% (27 out of 43) were involved in activities beyond school work, while 37.2% (16 out of 43) were not. For female students, a larger proportion (72.4%) indicated that they were not involved in any other activities, with 42 out of 58 females reporting no engagement in activities beyond school work. This suggests that male students tend to engage in more activities outside of schoolwork than female students. A study by Metsapelto and Pulkkinen (2012) in Trinidad found that teenagers were

quite busy and they often engaged in three different activities. While more women engaged in artistic and religious pursuits, more men were active in organized sports and clubs. Even after adjusting for academic performance, participation in artistic and athletic endeavours predicted favourable perceived life chance accomplishment. Compared to females, artistic endeavours were particularly helpful in forecasting future opinions.

4.3.6 Period lived in Nakuru West Sub-County

Table 4.7: Period lived in Nakuru West Sub-County

Period lived in Nakuru West Sub-County	Frequency	Percent
6 months to 2 years	5	5.0
Over 2 years	96	95.0
Total	101	100.0

The findings on how long the respondents had lived in Nakuru West showed that a vast majority of the students (95%) had lived in Nakuru West for more than 2 years, indicating that most students were long-term residents of the area. Only 5% of the students had lived in the area for a period of 6 months to 2 years. Nzina, et al. (2024) found that the impact of home-school distance on students' involvement in public day secondary schools was demonstrated using bivariate regression analysis. The study found that students' involvement in these schools was negatively impacted by the distance between their homes and schools. Since the majority of the students had lived within the area for more than two years, they were thus competent to provide information regarding the objectives of the study, that is, on the psychological effects of single parenthood on the academic performance of high school students in Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics Results

Using metrics such as the mean and standard deviation, descriptive statistics help summarize and understand data by offering important insights into its distribution and variability. Although it can be distorted by outliers and may not always precisely reflect the distribution, the mean, also known as the average, is a core value that characterizes data collection. In

contrast, the standard deviation measures how much a data point deviates from the mean; greater values indicate a broader spread, while smaller values indicate that the data is more concentrated around the mean. These metrics are critical for comprehending consistency, assessing reliability, and interpreting data. To give a thorough perspective of the data set, the mean and standard deviation of each variable were calculated for this study.

4.4.1 Effect of Level of Depression and Stress on the Academic Performance of High School Students from Single-Parent Households

The first objective of the study was to assess the effect of the level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students in Nakuru West, Nakuru County. The results were presented in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: DASS-21 Analysis: Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scores

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	25%	50% (Median)	75%	Maximum
Depression	1.29	1.07	0	0	1	2	3
Anxiety	1.00	1.13	0	0	1	2	3
Stress	1.21	1.13	0	0	1	2	3
Overall mean	1.17	1.11					

Depression Analysis involved evaluation of Dass Items 3, 5, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 21 from the DASS 21 questionnaire. The results showed that Depression had a Mean Score of 1.29, suggesting mild depressive symptoms on average. Further results showed that 25% of participants had a score of 0, indicating there were no depressive symptoms. The Median score of 1 suggested that most participants experienced mild depression. Some participants reached the maximum score (3), indicating severe depression in certain cases.

Anxiety Analysis involved the DASS items 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 19, and 20. The results showed that Anxiety had a Mean Score of 1.00, which suggested mild anxiety on average. The Median score of 1 indicated that most participants experienced mild anxiety. DASS-20 had the highest mean (1.51), indicating that the students had frequent anxious thoughts. 25% of participants reported no anxiety symptoms.

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Stress Analysis constituted the DASS items 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, and 18. The findings showed that Stress had a Mean Score of 1.21, which suggested mild stress on average. DASS 14 had the highest mean (1.57), indicating that the students had frequent stress-related issues. 50% of the participants scored 1 or lower, meaning most reported mild stress symptoms. Also, 25% of the participants reported no stress symptoms.

The median score for depression was 1, and the mean score was 1.29, indicating that the majority of the students had mild symptoms of depression. This suggested that although depression existed in the population, most students did not experience it to a severe degree. Interestingly, 25% of the individuals received a score of 0, indicating that a sizable section of the population did not exhibit depressive symptoms. The fact that some students achieved the highest possible score of three, however, indicated that a tiny percentage of students suffered from serious depression, which calls for focused interventions.

The majority of pupils had mild stress symptoms, according to the data, with a mean score of 1.21 and a median of 1. The fact that 50% of the participants had a score of 1 or lower highlights the fact that students' stress levels were typically low to moderate. Nonetheless, the highest mean on DASS item 14 (1.57), which indicated that some forms of stress, especially those associated with tension and trouble relaxing, were more common. Resilience among this subgroup was demonstrated by the noteworthy fact that 25% of students reported no stress symptoms.

In regard to the interview guide, respondents were asked to describe how the feeling of sadness had affected their ability to focus on school work and perform academically.

One of the respondent said *'I normally feel very low and lose motivation to do my assignment or study for exam when I'm stressed. I find it hard to concentrate in class and even simple tasks feel overwhelming. This leads to poor performance because I cannot give my best"*

Another respondent was asked, "Being a student from a single-parent family, does it influence your school attendance, participation and overall performance?"

He said *"At times, I have to take on additional obligations at home, such as assisting with chores or caring for my younger siblings, which adds to my stress. But over time I have been*

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able to manage my stress though talking to my peers about it and therefore I'm not so much affected academically."

In conclusion, the students' average levels of stress and depression were determined to be mild; however, several reported moderate to severe symptoms. This implied that even though most students managed to adapt fairly well, there was still a susceptible fraction that might need intervention and psychological help.

4.4.2 Effect of Depression on the Academic Performance of High School Students from Single-Parent Households

The second objective was to investigate the effect of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County.
Results are indicated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Descriptive Results of Depression Variable

Effect of depression	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	M	SD
I often feel the need to withdraw from school social interaction and group work activities.	13(12.9%)	14(13.9%)	19(18.8%)	21(20.8%)	34(33.7%)	2.51	1.411
I find myself becoming more aggressive in my interaction with others.	14(13.9%)	24(23.8%)	18(17.8%)	28(27.7%)	17(16.8%)	2.90	1.323
Sometime I experience thought of self-harm /suicide and especially when school are ongoing	11(10.9%)	19(18.8%)	14(13.9%)	19(18.8%)	38(37.6%)	2.47	1.432
I often experience deep sadness and anger that is hard to shake off.	21(20.8%)	22(21.8%)	23(22.8%)	19(18.8%)	16(15.8%)	3.13	1.369
Frequently I lack motivation to complete academic assignments	17(16.8%)	24(23.8%)	19(18.8%)	23(22.8%)	18(17.8%)	2.99	1.367
Compared to my peers my	24(23.8%)	27(26.7%)	13(12.9%)	16(15.8%)	21(20.8%)	3.17	1.484

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anger issues are high.		
Overall Mean	2.86	1.398

The results for the statements are as follows;

I often feel the need to withdraw from school social interaction and group work activities.

The findings showed that 33.7% (34 students) strongly disagreed, showing that a significant proportion did not experience withdrawal, and 20.8% (21 students) disagreed, further supporting this trend. 18.8% (19 students) remained neutral. 12.9% (13 students) strongly agreed, and 13.9% (14 students) agreed, indicating that about 26.8% felt the need to withdraw. The mean = 2.51 (below neutral) suggested that most students did not frequently feel the need to withdraw. The standard deviation = 1.411 showed that there was a high variability in the responses. The result agreed with that of Baker (2017), who found that students from single-parent households lack emotional support as single parents often face significant financial burdens and emotional stress, which can contribute to higher rates of depression and affect them in academic performance, social interactions and overall well-being.

I find myself becoming more aggressive in my interaction with others.

The findings showed that 27.7% (28 students) disagreed with the statement, indicating that a large proportion did not experience increased aggression, 16.8% (17 students) strongly disagreed, 17.8% (18 students) were neutral, 23.8% (24 students) agreed, and 13.9% (14 students) strongly agreed, indicating that 37.7% acknowledged increased aggression.. The mean = 2.90 showed that some students felt more aggressive, but the majority remained neutral or disagreed. The standard deviation = 1.323 indicated moderate variability in the responses.

Sometimes I experience thoughts of self-harm/suicide, especially when school is ongoing.

The findings indicated that 37.6% (38 students) strongly disagreed, 18.8% (19 students) disagreed, 13.9% (14 students) remained neutral, 18.8% (19 students) agreed, and 10.9% (11 students) strongly agreed. The mean for this response = 2.47 (below neutral) indicated that the

majority disagreed, but **29.7% experienced these thoughts, which is a concern. The standard deviation = 1.432 showed that there was a high variation in the responses.

I often experience deep sadness and anger that is hard to shake off.

Findings for this response were 21.8% (22 students) agreed, and 20.8% (21 students) strongly agreed, 42.6% struggled with deep sadness and anger, 22.8% (23 students) were neutral.. Further results indicated that 18.8% (19 students) disagreed, and 15.8% (16 students) strongly disagreed. Mean = 3.13 (above neutral) indicated that more students experienced sadness and anger compared to those who did not experience such feelings. Standard Deviation = 1.369, hence the responses were quite spread out. The results agreed with those of Demszky et al. (2020) who found that adolescents from single parenthood may experience a range of emotions, such as sadness, anger or resentment, related to family dynamics.

Frequently, I lack motivation to complete academic assignments.

Results for this statement indicated that 23.8% (24 students) agreed, and 16.8% (17 students) strongly agreed, 40.6% experienced a lack of motivation, while 18.8% (19 students) were neutral. Another 22.8% (23 students) disagreed, and 17.8% (18 students) strongly disagreed. The mean was 2.99 (close to neutral), meaning that a significant portion struggled with motivation, but the responses were balanced. Standard Deviation = 1.367 showed that there was a moderate variation in responses. According to Stanek and Ones (2023), depression can significantly affect memory, leading to impairments in cognitive function. Additionally, it can also influence motivation, affecting an individual's drive and engagement in various activities.

Compared to my peers, my anger issues are high.

The results for this response indicated that 26.7% (27 students) agreed and 23.8% (24 students) strongly agreed, hence 50.5% felt that they had higher anger issues. 12.9% (13 students) remained neutral, while 15.8% (16 students) disagreed, and 20.8% (21 students) strongly disagreed. The mean = 3.17 (above neutral) indicated that more students believed that they had anger issues compared to those who do not have anger issues. The standard deviation = 1.484, meaning there was a high variation in the responses, indicating differing personal experiences. Demszky et al. (2020) expounded that adolescents from single

parenthood may experience a range of emotions, such as sadness, anger or resentment, related to family dynamics.

With reference to the interview guide, respondents were asked to how sadness affected their ability to concentrate on school work.

One of the respondent indicated that: *"When depressed, he lose interest in nearly everything, even school and struggle to pay attention in class and complete tasks on time.*

Another respondent, a school counsellor, reported that the number of students from single-parent households who experience a range of emotions, such as anger and sadness, compared to students from two-parent households.

In conclusion, findings showed that depression has a significant effect on the academic performance of students from single-parent households. Students reported decreased concentration, lack of desire to do class work and lower grades. Emotional fatigue from depression causes student to withdraw from class engagement and group projects, further impairing their performance. This is consistent with psychological research showing that depression has a negative influence on cognitive processes such as attention, memory and problem-solving, all of which are necessary for learning. As a result, students from single-parent households who are depressed may be more likely to underachieve academically than their peers.

4.4.3 Effect of Stress on the Academic Performance of High School Students from Single-Parent Households

The third objective of the study was to look into the effect of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County. The results are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Descriptive Results of Stress Variable

Effect of stress	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Std. Dev
I find it challenging to concentrate on my studies due to family	26(25.7%)	23(22.8%)	12(11.9%)	19(18.8%)	21(20.8%)	3.14	1.510

responsibilities.							
I often feel overwhelmed in balancing my academic responsibilities and family obligation.	15(14.9%)	31(30.7%)	19(18.8%)	19(18.8%)	17(16.8%)	3.08	1.332
I often feel anxious by emotional effect of family dynamics on my academic performance.	13(12.9%)	28(27.7%)	23(22.8%)	17(16.8%)	20(19.8%)	2.97	1.330
I often feel anxious by emotional effect of family dynamics on my academic performance.	12(11.9%)	21(20.8%)	24(23.8%)	16(15.8%)	28(27.7%)	2.73	1.378
I tend to become irritable when facing academic and family pressure	18(17.8%)	28(27.7%)	22(21.8%)	16(15.8%)	17(16.8%)	3.14	1.349
I tend to become withdrawn when facing academic and family pressure	22(21.8%)	28(27.7%)	13(12.9%)	16(15.8%)	22(21.8%)	3.12	1.478
Overall Mean						3.09	1.400

The frequencies and basic statistical measures (mean and standard deviation) were provided for each statement regarding the stress variable as follows;

I find it challenging to concentrate on my studies due to family responsibilities.

The response distribution was Strongly Agree (SA): 26 (25.7%), Agree (A): 23 (22.8%), Neutral (N): 12 (11.9%), Disagree (D): 19 (18.8%), and Strongly Disagree (SD): 21 (20.8%). Thus, this statement showed a relatively balanced distribution of responses, with a slight lean toward agreement (47.3% combined for "Strongly Agree" and "Agree"). The mean value of 3.14 indicated a general tendency toward a neutral to somewhat agree response, suggesting that family responsibilities impact concentration for a portion of the population.

The relatively high standard deviation (1.510) reflected a significant variation in how participants felt about this statement. The respondents' varied experiences with the impact of family obligations on academic focus are indicated by the fact that some strongly agreed and

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others strongly disagreed. According to Kabat-Zinn (2023), single parents often experience higher levels of stress due to the increased responsibilities of raising children alone. This stress can be transmitted to the teenagers, making it more challenging for them to concentrate on their studies and perform well academically. The result also agreed with those of Cherry (2010) and Meng and Zhang (2023), who found that teenagers who are depressed may find it difficult to concentrate, complete their schoolwork and perform well on examinations.

I often feel overwhelmed in balancing my academic responsibilities and family obligations.

The response distribution for this statement was Strongly Agree (SA): 15 (14.9%), Agree (A): 31 (30.7%), Neutral (N): 19 (18.8%), Disagree (D): 19 (18.8%), and Strongly Disagree (SD): 17 (16.8%). This means that a larger portion of the respondents (45.6% for "Strongly Agree" and "Agree") felt that they were overwhelmed by balancing academic and family responsibilities. The mean of 3.08 indicated that participants tend to feel moderately overwhelmed. The standard deviation (1.332) was slightly lower than in the previous statement, indicating less variation in responses. Still, there were notable differences in how people experience this stress. The findings concurred with those of Kouyoumjian (2018), who found that students from single-parent families are usually overwhelmed due to activities at home and school because they mostly help their parents with house chores, businesses and at times take care of their siblings. Chronic stress can also lead to a lack of motivation, reduced interest in learning and decreased engagement with academics, resulting in lower academic performance.

I often feel anxious due to the emotional effect of family dynamics on my academic performance.

Response Distribution for this statement was Strongly Agree (SA): 13 (12.9%), Agree (A): 28 (27.7%), Neutral (N): 23 (22.8%), Disagree (D): 17 (16.8%), and Strongly Disagree (SD): 20 (19.8%). More than 40% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that family dynamics caused them anxiety, affecting their academic performance. The mean of 2.97 was closer to "Neutral," suggesting that while anxiety from family dynamics was present for some, it was not a dominant factor for everyone. The standard deviation (1.330) was similar to the previous

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statement, suggesting moderate variability in responses. The results agreed with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (2005), which explains how family dynamics impact students as a result of various interrelated settings, each of which has a distinctive effect on academic achievement. For instance, the immediate family environment (microsystem) may contribute to stress and depression, which directly impact academic performance.

I tend to become irritable when facing academic and family pressure.

The responses for this statement were Strongly Agree (SA): 18 (17.8%), Agree (A): 28 (27.7%), Neutral (N): 22 (21.8%), Disagree (D): 16 (15.8%), Strongly Disagree (SD): 17 (16.8%), This means that over 46% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they became irritable under the pressure of academic and family obligations. The mean of 3.14 was similar to the first statement, indicating a tendency towards moderate agreement with many people being affected by stress in terms of irritability. The standard deviation of 1.349 showed a relatively similar spread of responses to other questions, indicating variation in how people respond to pressure. According to Kataoka (2017), the stress levels faced by youngsters experiencing dual roles, academic pressures, such as feeling left out or unprepared, make them easily irritated because of pent-up emotions with no one to share with. Emotional stress of single parenting can affect children as they may feel a sense of loss, confusion or emotional distress related to family dynamics.

I tend to become withdrawn when facing academic and family pressure.

The response distribution for this statement was Strongly Agree (SA): 22 (21.8%), Agree (A): 28 (27.7%), Neutral (N): 13 (12.9%), Disagree (D): 16 (15.8%), and Strongly Disagree (SD): 22 (21.8%). Thus, 49.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they tended to become withdrawn under pressure. The mean of 3.12 suggested a tendency towards neutral to agree, showing that withdrawal was a common response for many. The high standard deviation (1.478) indicated greater variability in how individuals coped with pressure, with some becoming withdrawn while others did not. According to (Hoque, 2016), stress leads to a shift in behaviour and perspective with indicators such as withdrawal or avoidance of social interactions, emotional responses like anxiety, cognitive issues like difficulty concentrating and physical symptoms like headaches or fatigue.

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Descriptive statistics indicated that the average score for depression was 3.09, with a standard deviation of 1.400. This suggested a strong consensus among respondents on the importance of stress to students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County.

With respect to the interview, one of the respondents was asked, "how does stress from living in a single-parent household influence your ability to concentrate in class or accomplish schoolwork? Another respondent was asked *"how does stress from living in a single-parent household influence your ability to concentrate in class or accomplish schoolwork in preparation for exams?*

She responded -*"When examinations arrive, I become really apprehensive. Because of the stress I experience at home, I sometimes feel as if I have not prepared adequately. Even when I have studied, I panic and forget what I have read, lowering my grades."*

Class teacher responded and said: "*a number of student from single parenthood fail in exam because of lack of preparedness as compared to student from both parents families*"

Finally the student discussed how stress causes anxiety, which impedes exam preparation and recollection. The psychological burden lowers self-esteem and academic performance. This demonstrates that stress not only reduces effective study time but also has an effect on psychological readiness and exam performance.

4.4.4 Effect of Coping Strategies on the Academic Performance of High School Students from Single-Parent Households

The forth objective of the study aimed at investigating the effect of coping strategies on the academic performance of high school students from single parent households in Nakuru west, Nakuru County. The results are presented in the table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Results of Coping Strategies Variable

Coping strategies	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	M	Std. Dev
I practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, to manage my	37(36.6%)	22(21.8%)	17(16.8%)	11(10.9%)	14(13.9%)	3.56	1.431

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stress.							
I make a plan to address the problems I face rather than avoiding them.	29(28.7%)	31(30.7%)	12(11.9%)	12(11.9%)	17(16.8%)	3.43	1.445
I create a schedule to manage my time effectively when I have a lot of tasks.	27(26.7%)	36(35.6%)	22(21.8%)	7(6.9%)	9(8.9%)	3.64	1.205
I talk to friends or family members when I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed.	24(23.8%)	27(26.7%)	14(13.9%)	15(14.9%)	21(20.8%)	3.18	1.479
I do things like work out or listen to music that help me de-stress and feel better.	47(46.5%)	30(29.7%)	12(11.9%)	5(5.0%)	7(.9%)	4.04	1.191
I reach out to school counselors or support services when I am struggling academically or emotionally.	19(18.8%)	16(15.8%)	17(16.8%)	20(19.8%)	29(28.7%)	2.76	1.491
Overall Mean						3.44	1.374

The frequencies and basic statistical measures (mean and standard deviation) were provided for each statement regarding the coping strategies variable as follows;

I practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, to manage my stress.

The findings for this statement were SA (Strongly Agree): 37 responses (36.6%), A (Agree): 22 responses (21.8%), N (Neutral): 17 responses (16.8%), D (Disagree): 11 responses (10.9%), SD (Strongly Disagree): 14 responses (13.9%). The mean was 3.56 with a standard deviation of 1.431.

I make a plan to address the problems I face rather than avoiding them.

The results for this statement indicated that 29 respondents (28.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, 31 (30.7%) agreed, 12 (11.9%) were neutral, 12 (11.9%) disagreed, and 17 (16.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.43 with a standard deviation of 1.445, meaning the respondents agreed with the statement, although with a high degree of variability.

I create a schedule to manage my time effectively when I have a lot of tasks.

The findings were 27 (26.7%) strongly agreed and 36 (35.6%) agreed, indicating that more than half the students created a schedule to manage their time effectively when they had a lot of tasks. Other responses were 22 (21.8%) neutral, 7 (6.9%) disagreed, and 9 (8.9%) strongly

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disagreed. The mean was 3.64 with a standard deviation of 1.205, meaning that the respondents highly agreed with the statement, although with low variability.

I talk to friends or family members when I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

Twenty-four (23.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 27 (26.7%) agreed, indicating that about half of the students talked to friends or family members when they felt stressed or overwhelmed. Further, 14 (13.9%) respondents were neutral, 15 (14.9%) disagreed, and 21 (20.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The mean was 3.18 with a standard deviation of 1.479, meaning the respondents moderately agreed with the statement, although with high variability.

I do things like work out or listen to music that help me de-stress and feel better.

The findings for the statement were 47 (46.5%) strongly agreed and 30 (29.7%) agreed, showing that three-quarters of the students were engaged in other activities, such as working out or listening to music, as a means of de-stressing and thus felt better. Other results were 12 (11.9%) neutral, 5 (5.0%) disagreed and 7 (6.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 1.191, meaning that overall, the respondents highly agreed with the statement with a low level of variability.

I reach out to school counselors or support services when I am struggling academically or emotionally.

The findings for the statement were 19 (18.8%) strongly agreed and 16 (15.8%) agreed, showing that a third of the students reached out to school counsellors or support services whenever they were struggling academically or emotionally. The other findings were 17 (16.8%) neutral, 20 (19.8%) disagreed, and 29 (28.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.491, indicating that the respondents slightly agreed with the statement, but with a high level of variability.

The overall mean for the coping strategies variable was 3.44 with a standard deviation of 1.374, meaning that the respondents agreed with the statements on coping strategies with a moderate degree of variability.

In regard to interview, respondents were asked '*What coping strategies they normally employ when they feel overwhelmed by academic work and family responsibilities.'*

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One of the respondent said *"when I'm stressed, I usually talk to my closest friends or a teacher I trust. It allows me to share what I'm going through rather than keeping it inside. I occasionally create a timetable to balance education and household tasks."*

The respondent were asked "how often they visit school counselor for psychological support"

A school counselor responded *"most of students who come for psychological support are from single parenthood as compared to student who comes from a family of both parents".*

According to the response, coping skills not only assist students in managing stress, but also improve motivation, focus and academic performance. Students from single-parent households who employ these tactics can reduce the negative psychological stresses in their environment, resulting in higher academic accomplishment.

4.4.5 Academic Performance of High School Students from Single-Parent Households

Table 4.12: Descriptive Results of Academic Performance Variable

Academic performance	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	M	Std. Dev
I find it difficult to concentrate on my schoolwork due to stress related to my family situation.	33(32.7%)	22(21.8%)	13(12.9%)	11(10.9%)	22(21.8%)	3.33	1.556
My academic performance has been negatively affected by feelings of depression.	30(29.7%)	24(23.8%)	12(11.9%)	19(18.8%)	16(15.8%)	3.33	1.470
I feel that my grades have suffered because of a lack of support at home.	24(23.8%)	20(19.8%)	19(18.8%)	18(17.8%)	20(19.8%)	3.10	1.459
I struggle with managing my school assignments and deadlines because of family-related stress.	19(18.8%)	32(31.7%)	11(10.9%)	1312.9(%)	26(25.7%)	3.05	1.499
My single-parent	20(19.8%)	19(18.8%)	18(17.81%)	14(13.9%)	30(29.7%)	2.85	1.519

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household has made it harder for me to stay motivated in my studies.							
I often feel overwhelmed by the demands of school and my family responsibilities.	25(24.8%)	35(34.7%)	10(9.9%)	11(10.9%)	20(19.8%)	3.34	1.465
Overall Mean						3.17	1.495

Source: Research Data (2024)

Results regarding the academic performance variable were as follows;

I find it difficult to concentrate on my schoolwork due to stress related to my family situation.

Findings for this statement indicated that responses were 33 (32.7%) strongly agreed and 22 (21.8%) agreed, indicating that over half of the respondents found it difficult to concentrate on schoolwork due to stress related to family situations. Other results were 3 (12.9%) neutral, 11 (10.9%) disagreed and 22 (21.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.33 with a standard deviation of 1.556, meaning the respondents agreed with the statement with a high level of variability. These findings concurred with those of Cherry (2010) and Meng and Zhang (2023), who found that teenagers who are depressed may find it difficult to concentrate, complete their schoolwork and perform well on examinations, which lowers their academic performance.

My academic performance has been negatively affected by feelings of depression.

For this statement, the results were 30 (29.7%) strongly agreed and 24 (23.8%) agreed, indicating that over half of the students felt that their academic performance had been negatively affected by feelings of depression. Other results were 12 (11.9%) neutral, 19 (18.8%) disagreed, and 16 (15.8%) strongly disagreed, showing that a third did not feel that their academic performance had been negatively affected by feelings of depression. The mean was 3.33 with a standard deviation of 1.491, meaning the respondents agreed with the statement with a high level of variability. This agrees with the findings by Ng'eno and Mwoma (2018) and Karari et al. (2022) that students from single-parent households are more

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likely to experience psychological challenges such as heightened stress, anxiety and feelings of neglect, which can negatively impact their academic outcomes.

I feel that my grades have suffered because of a lack of support at home.

For this statement, the results were 24 (23.8%) strongly agreed and 20 (19.8%) agreed, indicating that slightly less than half of the students felt that their grades had suffered because of a lack of support at home. Further results were 19 (18.8%) neutral, 18 (17.8%) disagreed, and 20 (19.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.10 with a standard deviation of 1.459, meaning the respondents slightly agreed with the statement, with a high level of variability. This agrees with Sethuli (2023), who found that a lack of sufficient parental support and guidance can result in lower academic achievement, as students may not receive the necessary help with homework and studying. The psychological stress associated with single parenthood, such as anxiety and feelings of neglect, further compounds these educational challenges.

I struggle with managing my school assignments and deadlines because of family-related stress.

Findings for this statement indicate that responses were 19 (18.8%) strongly agreed, 32 31.7%) agreed, 11 (10.9%) neutral, 13 (12.9%) disagreed, and 26 (25.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.05 with a standard deviation of 1.499, meaning the respondents slightly agreed with the statement, with a high level of variability.

My single-parent household has made it harder for me to stay motivated in my studies.

Regarding this statement, the results were 20 (19.8%) strongly agreed, 19 (18.8%) agreed, 18 (17.8%) neutral, 14 (13.9%) disagreed, and 30 (29.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 2.85 with a standard deviation of 1.519, meaning the respondents slightly agreed with the statement, with a high level of variability.

I often feel overwhelmed by the demands of school and my family responsibilities.

Findings for this statement indicated that responses were 25 (24.8%) strongly agreed, 35 (34.7%) agreed, 10 (9.9%) neutral, 11 (10.9%) disagreed, and 20 (19.8%) strongly disagreed.

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The mean was 3.34 with a standard deviation of 1.465, meaning the respondents moderately agreed with the statement, with a high level of variability.

The overall mean for academic performance was 3.17 with a standard deviation of 1.495, meaning the respondents moderately agreed with the statements with a high level of variability. Thus, the students from single-parent households in Nakuru West Sub-County generally experience challenges in their academics. This is further corroborated by interviews with the respective class teachers from the four schools that participated in the study. According to the class teachers, students from single-parent households experience challenges and perform poorly compared to their colleagues from two-parent households.

4.5 Psychological Effects of Single Parenthood on Academic Performance

Using metrics such as the mean and standard deviation, descriptive statistics help in summarizing and understanding data by offering important insights into its distribution and variability. Although it can be distorted by outliers and may not always precisely reflect the distribution, the mean, also known as the average, is a core value that characterizes data collection. In contrast, the standard deviation measures how much a data point deviates from the mean; greater values indicate a broader spread, while smaller values indicate that the data is more concentrated around the mean. These metrics are critical for comprehending consistency, assessing reliability and interpreting data. To give a thorough perspective of the data set, the mean and standard deviation of each variable were calculated for this study.

4.5.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

The primary objective of this analysis was to assess the relationships among the psychological variables and academic performance. The assessment of correlation was conducted using the Pearson correlation coefficient, a widely used method to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient, denoted as "r," ranges from -1 to +1, where -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. The correlation results are as shown in Table 4.14 below.

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Table 4.13: Correlation Results

		Depression	Stress	Coping Strategies	Level of Depression and Stress	Academic
Depression	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	101				
Stress	Pearson Correlation	.623**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	101	101			
Coping Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.114	.041	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.258	.684			
	N	101	101	101		
Level of Depression and Stress	Pearson Correlation	.562	.471**	-.064**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.524		
	N	101	101	101	101	
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	-.452**	-.562**	.072	-.514	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.474	.000	
	N	101	101	101	101	101

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

The correlation results indicated the following relationships between variables. The relationship between depression and academic performance had a Pearson Correlation of -0.452 (p= 0.000). This showed a moderate negative correlation between depression and academic performance, with the relationship being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). A negative correlation suggested that as depression increases, academic performance tends to become worse, though the strength of this relationship was moderate.

The relationship between stress and academic performance had a Pearson Correlation of 0.562 (p= 0.000). Thus, there was a stronger positive correlation between stress and academic performance compared to depression. The relationship was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that increased stress was associated with better academic performance.

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The relationship between coping strategies and academic performance had a Pearson Correlation of 0.072 (p= 0.474). This correlation was weak and not statistically significant (p = 0.474 > 0.05). It suggested that coping strategies did not have a significant relationship with academic performance in this dataset. According to Li & Li (2024), adolescents who actively sought social support and participated in constructive activities, like extracurricular programs, reported better emotional outcomes and improved academic performance.

The relationship between level of depression and stress, and academic performance had a Pearson Correlation of -0.514 (p= 0.000). Thus, there was a stronger negative correlation between stress and academic performance compared to the one between depression and academic performance. The relationship was statistically significant (p < 0.05), indicating that increased stress was associated with lower academic performance.

4.5.2 Tolerance and Variable Inflation Factor

In multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity was diagnosed using the Variable Inflation Factor (VIF). The reciprocal of VIF, tolerance, represents the percentage of variance in a predictor variable that cannot be accounted for by other predictor variables. The VIF quantifies the degree to which multi-collinearity in the correlation between predictors influences the variance of the predicted regression coefficients. The stability of the regression coefficients may be impacted, and the standard errors may be inflated if a predictor has a high VIF, which denotes strong Collinearity with other predictors. Generally, a VIF above 5 or a tolerance below 0.2 indicates potential multicollinearity. Table 4.15 displays the outcome.

Table 4.14: Tolerance and VIF Statistics

	Tolerance	VIF
Level of Depression and Stress	.646	1.594
Depression	.506	1.978
Stress	.590	1.694
Coping Strategies	.963	1.038

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The Tolerance and VIF statistics depicted in Table 4.15 above were over 0.2 and less than 5, respectively, indicating that all the variables did not have strong Collinearity with other predictors; hence, depicting that regression analysis could continue as multi-collinearity was not a serious problem. This bolstered the validity of the results and the stability of the regression coefficients.

4.5.3 Regression Results

4.5.3.1 Model Summary

The model summary offers vital information about the connections between variables, evaluating the relevance and degree of correlations, and Table 14 provides a summary of the estimated findings, which were obtained using ordinary least squares.

Table 4.15: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.634[a]	.402	.377	.83060

a. Predictors: (Constant), Coping Strategies, Stress, Depression, Level of Depression and Stress

The regression results provided a deeper understanding of the predictors of academic performance: The model explained about 37.7% of the variance in academic performance (R^2 = 0.377), which means that the predictors (level of depression and stress, depression, stress, and coping strategies) were moderately useful in predicting academic performance.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done and presented in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.463	4	11.116	16.112	.000[b]

Residual	66.231	96	.690
Total	110.694	100	

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

The F value obtained from the ANOVA output was 16.112 (p= 0.000). This was higher than the F table value df (4, 96) = 2.899. The F-statistic was thus highly significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the model as a whole significantly predicted academic performance. In other words, at least one of the predictors (level of depression and stress, depression, stress, and coping strategies) contributed meaningfully to predicting academic performance.

Coefficients for the regression model were as shown in Table 4.23 below.

Table 4.17: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.238	.457		11.462	.000
Level of Depression and Stress	-.604	.184	-.323	-3.290	.001
Depression	-.017	.137	-.014	-.123	.902
Stress	-.422	.109	-.399	-3.879	.000
Coping Strategies	.099	.106	.075	.931	.354

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

The intercept was 5.238, which suggested that when all predictors (level of depression and stress, depression, stress, and coping strategies) were zero, academic performance was predicted to be 5.238. The p-value = 0.000 indicated that this constant was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The coefficient for level of depression and stress was -0.323, with a p-value of 0.001, indicating that the level of depression and stress was a significant predictor of academic performance in this model. The level of depression and stress significantly impacted the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County.

The coefficient for depression was -0.14, but its p-value was 0.902, which was above the significance level of 0.05. This means that depression had a negative influence on academic performance, but this effect was not significantly important in predicting academic performance in this model.

The coefficient for stress was -0.399, and its p-value was 0.000, which was highly statistically significant. This suggested that stress was a strong predictor of academic performance. A one-unit increase in stress was associated with a 0.399 decrease in academic performance.

The coefficient for coping strategies was 0.075, with a p-value of 0.354, indicating that coping was not a significant predictor of academic performance in this model. Coping strategies thus had a marginal influence on academic performance that was not significant.

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Carrying out bivariate regression using each of the independent variables and the dependent variables enabled testing of the hypotheses and confirmed the relative strength of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 4.18: Coefficients from the Bivariate Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.017	.218		18.424	.000
Level of Depression and Stress	-.960	.161	-.514	-5.957	.000

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R = .514, R^2 = .264, F = 35.486, p= 0.000					
(Constant)	4.428	.330		13.433	.000
Depression	-.557	.110	-.452	-5.042	.000
R = .452, R^2 = .204, F = 25.417, p= 0.000					
(Constant)	4.628	.279		16.588	.000
Stress	-.595	.088	-.562	-6.764	.000
R = .562 , R^2 = .316, F = 45.758, p= 0.000					
(Constant)	3.161	.466		6.780	.000
Coping Strategies	.095	.132	.072	.719	.474
R = .072, R^2 = .005, F = .516, p= 0.474					

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

HO_1: *Level of depression and stress has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.*

The model coefficient showed that the level of depression and stress was an important predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County (β = -.514, $p < 0.05$). The t value = -5.957 was also significant. Thus, the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that the level of depression and stress had a significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

The findings showed a substantial inverse relationship, indicating that worse academic performance was strongly predicted by higher levels of stress and depression. These results were in line with Liang et al. (2019), who found that the children from single-parent households frequently faced increased psychological difficulties, such as anxiety and

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depression, which impaired their ability to concentrate and succeed academically. The current study's conclusion that cumulative psychological distress impairs academic performance is further supported by Mwoma's (2021) findings that Kenyan students from single-parent households performed worse on stress and depression measures than their peers from intact families.

HO_2: *Depression has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.*

The model coefficient showed that depression was an important predictor of academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County ($\beta = -.452$, $p < 0.05$). The t value = -5.042 was also significant. Thus, the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that depression had a significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

According to the regression results, depression had a significant detrimental impact on motivation, focus and eventually academic performance. This was consistent with Chen's (2017) findings that lower academic performance was directly associated with depressive symptoms in Chinese students from single-parent households. Salami and Alawode (2000) reported similar results in Nigeria, where they discovered that children of single parents seemed more likely to experience depression, which hindered their academic performance. Therefore, the current study demonstrated that depression is a barrier to education as well as a psychological health issue.

HO_3: *Stress has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya?*

The model coefficient also showed that stress was an important predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County ($\beta = -.562$, $p < 0.05$). The t value = -6.764 was also significant. Thus, the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that stress had a significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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The findings demonstrated that performance was significantly predicted negatively by stress. This supported the findings of Kabat-Zinn (2023), who claimed that long-term stress damages cognitive abilities like memory and problem-solving, both of which are critical for academic success. Similarly, stress in teenagers, particularly when connected to family obligations in single-parent households can lead to poor academic focus and results (Banerjee, 2022; Kataoka, 2017). Therefore, the results of this study corroborated with the body of research showing that stress severely impairs academic performance by lowering motivation and attention.

HO_4: *Coping strategies has no significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.*

The model coefficient showed that coping strategies were not an important predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County ($\beta = .072$, $p = 0.474 > 0.05$). The t value = .719 was also not significant. Thus, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that coping strategies did not have a significant influence on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Coping mechanisms were found to have no discernible direct impact on academic achievement, in contrast to the other variables. This finding runs contrary to research by Butler et al. (2022) and Villosillo-Balbuena (2022), which showed that adaptive coping mechanisms like problem-solving and reaching out for social support were linked to improved academic achievement in teenagers. Contextual variations in Nakuru West could be the cause of the discrepancy, as coping strategies may be less effective due to restricted access to peer support groups, structured counseling services or extracurricular activities. The results, however, were consistent with those of Ntoiti et al. (2024), who discovered that among Kenyan students, coping did not always act as a mediator in the relationship between psychological distress and academic outcomes.

When combined, the hypotheses' findings largely supported the body of research showing that stress and depression had a significant detrimental impact on students' academic performance in single-parent households. The lack of a discernible impact of coping strategies, however,

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points to a discrepancy between the effectiveness of strategies for coping and their availability, necessitating context-specific interventions.

4.7 Results of the Study and Interpretation

Although some individuals reported higher levels, the results showed that students generally had low degrees of stress and despair. For instance, 25% of respondents reported no symptoms, while others achieved the higher scores (2), indicating higher depression. The mean depression score was 1.29. Similar patterns were seen in stress scores which indicated that although most people had mild to moderate stress, a small percentage had higher level of stress. This shows that while a significant percentage of students from single-parent households face psychological issues that could affect their academic and general well-being, the majority of them experience psychological distress.

The results of the investigation showed a strong correlation between poor academic performance and higher depression levels. When compared to their counterparts who had mild or no depression, students who reported depressive symptoms typically scored below average. This suggested that depression impairs motivation, focus and classroom engagement, which lowers academic achievement. Absences may also be caused by persistent depression symptoms.

According to the study, academic performance was adversely affected by stress. Moderately stressed students outperformed their severely stressed colleagues. Excessive stress affects memory and attentiveness, although mild stress can serve as a motivator (eustress). The findings supported the idea that mismanaged stress impairs learning outcomes.

A variety of coping mechanisms were described by the students. The most prevalent ones were avoiding situations, participating in extracurricular activities, praying and practicing religion, and asking for social support from peers and teachers. It shows that the majority of the students rely on positive coping mechanisms.

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4.7.1 Comparing the result with other studies

These findings are consistent with research conducted in Kenya by Wambua (2019) and Kimani (2020), which indicated that adolescents from single-parent households experience more psychological discomfort than their two-parent counterparts. Due to financial difficulties, a decrease in parental engagement and emotional instability, single parenthood is also associated with higher levels of stress and depression in teenagers, according to international research (Amato, 2005).

These results were consistent with research by Nyaga (2017) and Ongete, et. al. (2020), who found there was a negative relationship between academic achievement and depression in secondary school pupils in Kenya. Adolescent depression is also a predictor of bad grades, dropout risks and limited future possibilities according to international research (Fröjd et al., 2008).

This is in line with a study conducted in Muranga County by Waceke, et al. (2025), which discovered that stress from exams and family members affected pupils' performance. International research also confirms that long-term stress impairs cognitive performance and academic engagement (Pascoe et al., 2020).

These results were consistent with those of Njoroge (2019), who found that sports, religion, and peer support are all coping strategies used by Kenyan students. Compas et al. (2017) discovered that while avoidance and substance abuse degrade outcomes, problem-focused coping predicts better adjustment on a global scale.

4.7.2 Implication of the study

The results emphasised the necessity of peer support networks, stress management courses and counselling services, as well as other school-based mental health initiatives. To lessen pupils' susceptibility, policymakers should take into account psychosocial support that is specifically designed for single-parent households. Promoting academic performance requires addressing depression through early detection, treatment and parental support. Additionally, educators must receive training on how to recognize signs of depression and direct children to the right resources for support.

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Programs for stress management, such as mindfulness, time management instruction, relaxation methods and psychosocial support groups, ought to be incorporated into schools. In order to lessen the strain of domestic and academic obligations, parents and educators need to establish supportive environments.

Schools should encourage spiritual guidance, counseling clubs and mentorship programs to build constructive coping skills. Additionally, community-based solutions enable single parents to offer their kids emotional support. Suggested interventions according to the interviewees included strengthening counseling programs. Schools should expand counseling services and mental health support. Providing Financial Support is also a responsibility of Schools and stakeholders, who should ensure that students have adequate food, clothing and security. Schools should also promote teacher-student mentorship, home visits and parental engagement. Thus, the students need a mix of psychological, financial and social support to improve their well-being.

The most critical areas are guidance & counseling, financial assistance and emotional support. The study recommended the development of parental involvement strategies whereby even single-parent homes can be engaged more in students' education. Peer support systems were indicated through encouraging mentorship and peer bonding to reduce emotional struggles. These results support the findings from the survey, indicating that the intervention methods, such as financial support programs, stronger counselling services via school-based guidance programs, peer counselling, and parental involvement, can work to enhance the academic performance of the students from single-parent families.

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4.8 Discussion of Empirical Results

The study's findings were consistent with other empirical investigations that looked at the connections between the various aspects of psychological effects of single parenthood on academic performance of high school students, specifically, depression, stress, coping strategies and the level of depression and stress.

4.8.1 Level of Depression and Stress and Academic Performance

The study established a significant positive relationship between the level of depression and stress and the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. Descriptive statistics indicated that the average score for the level of depression and stress was 3.14, with a standard deviation of 1.495. This suggests a moderate consensus among respondents on the importance of the level of depression and stress to students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County.

The R-squared value of 0.264 revealed that approximately 26.4% of the variability in academic performance can be explained by the level of depression and stress that the students experience. This was further supported by the ANOVA results ($F(3.92) = 35.486$, $p < 0.01$), which confirmed that the level of depression and stress was a significant predictor of academic performance. The regression coefficient of -0.514 ($t = -5.957$, $p = .000$) indicated a strong negative impact of the level of depression and stress on academic performance.

DASS 21 analysis indicated that Depression had a Mean Score of 1.29, suggesting mild depressive symptoms on average. Further results showed that 25% of the participants had a score of 0, indicating no depressive symptoms. The Median score of 1 suggested that most participants experienced mild depression. Some participants reached the maximum score (3), indicating severe depression in certain cases. Anxiety had a Mean Score of 1.00, which suggested mild anxiety on average. The Median score of 1 indicated that most participants experienced mild anxiety. DASS 20 had the highest mean (1.51), indicating that the students had frequent anxious thoughts. 25% of the participants did not report anxiety symptoms. Stress had a Mean Score of 1.21, which suggested mild stress on average. DASS 14 had the highest mean (1.57), indicating that the students had frequent stress-related issues. 50% of participants scored 1 or lower, meaning most reported mild stress symptoms. Also, 25% of the participants did not report any stress symptoms.

The correlation results showed that stress had the strongest correlation with academic performance, followed by level of depression and stress, and depression, while coping strategies do not show a meaningful relationship with academic performance.

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Overall, the model obtained from the multivariate analysis as a whole was statistically significant, but only stress and the combined level of depression and stress significantly predicted academic performance. Depression and coping strategies did not contribute meaningfully to the prediction of academic performance in this model. The level of depression and stress, with their negative and strong coefficients, were the most influential predictors.

The study's findings aligned with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory across several levels: The study highlighted how family dynamics, especially in single-parent households, directly impacted students' emotional well-being and academic outcomes. The absence of one parent increased stress and depression, subsequently reducing academic outcomes.

The interaction between school and home was evident in the study's identification of how both academic pressures and family responsibilities increased emotional distress. This aligned with Bronfenbrenner's idea that a child's experiences are shaped by how these environments interact. For instance, students from single-parent households reported heightened anxiety and withdrawal, reflecting how conflict between the school and home environment undermines their academic engagement. According to the study, single parents' overburdened responsibilities can prevent them from providing adequate emotional and academic support, which aligns with how indirect systems affect the child's development.

The findings aligned with the macro system level by showing how societal expectations and stigmatization of single-parent households contribute to emotional challenges for students. For example, students from these households experienced more significant emotional distress due to the absence of dual-parent support. This broader cultural context reinforced the academic struggles reported in the study. The study's longitudinal results, such as the persistent negative effects of chronic stress on academic performance, aligned with Bronfenbrenner's notion of the chrono system. The cumulative impact of ongoing stress and depression (especially with chronic exposure) shapes long-term academic outcomes.

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4.8.2 Depression and Academic Performance

The study established a significant positive relationship between depression and the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. Descriptive statistics indicated that the average score for depression was 2.86, with a standard deviation of 1.398. This suggested a moderate consensus among respondents on the importance of depression to students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. According to the results, depression symptoms were reflected through social withdrawal, aggression, sadness, motivation and anger issues. The results agreed with those of Liang et al. (2019) and Mwoma (2021), who found that students from single-parent households report significantly higher levels of stress and depressive symptoms compared to those from intact families. Self-harm/suicidal thoughts were present in 29.7% of students, which is concerning. The results also showed that lack of motivation (40.6%) and deep sadness/anger (42.6%) impacted academic performance, while anger issues were prevalent (50.5%), which may affect relationships and classroom behaviour.

The R-squared value of 0.204 for depression revealed that approximately 20.4% of the variability in academic performance can be attributed to depression. The model coefficient, ß = -.452 (t = -5.042, p =.000). This was further supported by the ANOVA results (F (3.92) = 25.417, $p < 0.05$), which confirmed the overall significance of the model. The results agreed with those of Liu (2021), who found that students living in single-parent households experienced higher levels of depression, which had a detrimental effect on their academic achievement. The research highlighted that depression impaired students' cognitive functions and motivation, leading to lower academic achievement. The results also marginally agreed with those of Shaikh (2024), who found that a 1 % significance level indicated that increases in depression accounted for 37.8% of changes in students' performance. Furthermore, the regression analysis showed that at a 1% significance level, a unit change in depression had a negative effect on the students' cumulative Grade Point Average of 0.426 per subject.

The study indicated that students from single-parent households exhibited higher levels of depression and stress, which directly affected their academic performance. According to Social Learning Theory, the absence of a parental model for coping mechanisms may impair emotional regulation. For example, the study shows that 40.6% of students reported a lack of

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motivation due to stress and depression. This reflects the consequences of not having a consistent model for adaptive emotional regulation at home.

4.8.3 Stress and Academic Performance

The study established a significant positive relationship between stress and the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. Descriptive statistics indicated that the average score for stress was 3.09, with a standard deviation of 1.400. This suggested a strong consensus among respondents on the importance of stress to students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. From the results, there was consistent evidence that academic and family pressures significantly impact mental and emotional well-being, with tendencies towards anxiety, irritability and withdrawal. The statements about irritability and withdrawal indicated that many respondents were affected by academic and family pressures, with over 40% indicating that they tend to become irritable or withdrawn. Seeing the single parents' emotional challenges and coping mechanisms, or lack thereof, may be the cause of these behavioural tendencies.

The impact of family dynamics on anxiety was also notable, with 40% feeling emotionally affected, though this was not a universal experience. The standard deviations indicated that individuals had diverse reactions to these pressures, and some were more affected than others. The most common trends: Irritability and withdrawal were relatively common responses, with significant portions of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with these statements.

The results agreed with those of Chavda and Nisarga (2023), who found that the absence or loss of one parent and conflicts between separated and divorced parents not only affected the child's mental health but also the child's physical health, overall growth and future relationships. Single parents are often overburdened with the responsibilities of 2 parents, face social stigma and lack social support; as a result, they have difficulty spending time with their children. Hence, children of single parents have poor academic performance, decreased social interactions, and emotional and behavioural problems.

The R-squared value for stress of 0.316 revealed that approximately 31.6% of the variability in academic performance can be explained by stress. The regression coefficient of -0.562 (t = --6.764, p =.000) underscored a robust positive impact of depression on academic

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performance. This was further supported by the ANOVA results ($F(3.92) = 35.486$, $p < 0.05$), which confirmed the overall significance of the model. According to research by Elaine (2018), stress may be responsible for as much as 40% of the variation in student grades across different classrooms and institutions. These emotional challenges can be distracting and may affect a student's focus and performance in school (Sorensen, 2016).

According to Banerjee (2022), poor exam outcomes and scores are associated with high levels of cortisol, a hormone released in response to stress, which has been linked to impaired cognitive flexibility, working memory, and decision-making abilities —all of which are essential for academic performance. The students are overwhelmed due to activities both at home and school because they mostly help their parents with house chores, businesses and at times take care of their siblings. Chronic stress can also lead to a lack of motivation, reduced interest in learning and decreased engagement with academics, resulting in lower academic performance (Kouyoumjian, 2018).

4.8.4 Coping Strategies and Academic Performance

The study did not establish a significant positive relationship between coping strategies and the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. The overall mean for the coping strategies variable was 3.44 with a std. dev. of 1.374, meaning the respondents agreed with the statements on coping strategies with a moderate degree of variability. The most frequent strategy for coping with stress is practicing relaxation techniques (e.g., deep breathing), followed by engagement activities such as working out or listening to music. The findings thus indicated that students commonly used emotion-focused coping (e.g., music and exercise) rather than seeking external help.

This could be explained by the reinforcement that they receive from their environment, where independent coping behaviours may be modeled and encouraged due to limited parental support. According to Bandura's theory, repeated exposure to these behaviours strengthens their use, even if they are not the most effective strategies for improving academic performance. The least commonly used strategy seems to be reaching out to school counselors or support services.

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The participants appeared to use a variety of coping mechanisms, with a tendency towards positive strategies (such as relaxation techniques and planning) and fewer indicating a reliance on seeking external help. According to Zade-Mohammadi & Aslani (2021), seeking social support is one of the emotion-focused coping strategies. The results also agreed with those of Zammuner (2019), who found that students from single-parent households commonly employed problem-focused strategies, such as seeking help from teachers or peers, as well as emotion-focused strategies, such as engaging in hobbies and relaxation techniques.

The R-squared value of 0.005 revealed that approximately 0.5% of the variability in academic performance can be explained by coping strategies that the students adopted. This was further supported by the ANOVA results ($F(3.92) = 0.516$, $p > 0.01$), which confirmed that coping strategies were not significant for academic performance. The regression coefficient of 0.072 ($t = .719$, $p = 0.474$) indicated a negligible impact of coping strategies on academic performance. The results agreed with those of Zammuner (2019), who found that effective coping strategies were associated with better adjustment and academic outcomes. As such, the students from single-parent households commonly employed problem-focused strategies like seeking help from teachers or peers, as well as emotion-focused strategies such as engaging in hobbies and relaxation techniques.

The study indicated that students from single-parent households exhibited higher levels of depression and stress, which directly affected their academic performance. According to Social Learning Theory, the absence of a parental model for coping mechanisms may impair emotional regulation. For example, the study showed that 40.6% of the students reported a lack of motivation due to stress and depression. This reflected the consequences of not having a consistent model for adaptive emotional regulation at home.

4.8.5 Triangulated Discussion of the Findings

A triangulated examination centered on quantitative survey data, interviews of qualitative nature, and existing literature is presented in this section. The inclusion of these results improved the validity and comprehensiveness of knowledge about the effects of single parenthood on high school students' academic achievement in Nakuru West Sub-County.

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Students from single-parent households reported mild to moderate psychological distress, according to descriptive analysis. The respondents' significant presence of mental health issues was suggested by the mean scores on the DASS-21 scale, which showed depression (mean = 1.29), stress (mean = 1.21), and anxiety (mean = 1.00). This was supported by regression results, which indicated that academic performance was significantly and negatively impacted by stress ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = -0.399$) and the combined level of depression and stress ($p = 0.001$, $\beta = -0.323$). Depression's moderately negative correlation ($r = -0.452$) suggested its impact even though depression by itself was not of statistical significance ($p = 0.902$). According to these results, students' cognitive abilities and academic performance were hampered by emotional difficulties associated with single parenthood, such as anxiety, depression and lack of motivation. According to Cherry (2010), Kabat-Zinn (2023), and Stanek and Ones (2023), depression and stress can impair students' focus, academic engagement, and test-taking performance.

Nuanced insights were obtained through interviews with staff and teachers at four different schools. A significant number of key informants (80.8%) attested to the psychological effects that single-parent households have on their children, which hinder their ability to learn. The most common problems were loneliness (26.9%), emotional instability (34.6%), peer pressure (38.5%), and lack of motivation (42.3%).

The significance of responses pertaining to academic stress, lack of family stability, harsh judgment and feelings of being unloved was notably validated by the Chi-square tests. These qualitative findings highlighted the complex emotional toll on students and are consistent with the statistical data. Teachers had also noticed that students from single-parent households were less engaged in their studies because they frequently felt overburdened, depressed and unsupported. In addition, 57.7% of the interviewees suggested counseling and guidance in addition to emotional and basic needs support. These useful recommendations offered a path forward for resolving the issues raised by the quantitative data.

The results supported Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which holds that primary caregivers teach behaviours like coping and academic attitudes. Children in single-parent households may imitate their caregivers' emotional distress and ineffective coping mechanisms. The results were further contextualized by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

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(2005). Behaviour and academic achievement in the school environment are significantly influenced by the microsystem, which is the home. According to survey results and interviews, social interaction and academic focus suffered when there was instability at home. Supporting research shows how socioeconomic stress, depression and emotional detachment in single-parent households lead to subpar academic results (Baker, 2017; Demszky et al., 2020; Kouyoumjian, 2018). Students frequently lack the routines, emotional support and supervision necessary for academic success.

Despite having a moderate mean score of 3.44, coping strategies' statistical insignificance with respect to academic achievement ($r = 0.072$, $p = 0.474$) indicated that individual coping was not enough. Despite the prevalence of time management, music and exercise, few students reported contacting counselors (mean = 2.76), indicating a lack of professional support. These findings were consistent with Li and Li (2024), who discovered that in order to have a positive impact on academic outcomes, structured interventions like counseling and mentorship programs need to be added to adolescent coping. Even the most innovative personal strategies lose their effectiveness in the absence of strong support networks.

4.8.5.1 Implications of Triangulation Findings

All of the data pointed to the same conclusion: students who came from single-parent households experienced significant psychological effects that impaired their academic performance. This conclusion was supported by the statistical significance of stress and depression, as well as qualitative confirmation from educators, and theoretical and empirical support in the literature. The ramifications include: stronger guidance and counselling programs; parent involvement tactics, even for single-parent households; peer support and mentoring programs; and the provision of basic necessities and financial assistance, particularly for students at risk, should be schools' top priorities. It is crucial to have interventions that are specifically designed to address academic and emotional well-being as students from single-parent households will continue to have limited academic potential in the absence of these.

Academic performance was directly impacted by psychological factors related to single parenthood, specifically stress and emotional strain, as confirmed by the triangulation of

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quantitative, qualitative and literature-based findings. External support systems were essential for long-term academic success while students tried to manage. To enhance student outcomes in single-parent settings, educational institutions, families, and legislators should work together to implement comprehensive, context-sensitive interventions.

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CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the psychological effects of single parenthood on high school students' academic achievement in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya. The empirical findings of the study, interpretations of the research findings, and suggestions based on the observed results were all thoroughly described in this chapter. It explores the important findings from data analysis and makes inferences to clarify the connections between the independent and dependent variables. Additionally, practical suggestions are provided to help students from single-parent families manage depression and stress. In order to improve knowledge in the subject and guide future scholarly initiatives, the chapter also suggests possible avenues for future research, addressing the shortcomings and restrictions within the study's purview.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study's general objective was to evaluate the psychological effects of single parenthood on high school students' academic achievement in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the effect of depression among high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya; to evaluate the effect of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya; to establish the coping strategies employed by high school students from single-parent households in handling depression and stress in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya; and to evaluate the impact of the level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.

5.2.1 Effects of the level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The first objective aimed to assess the influence of the level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. The DASS 21 results depicted in Table 4.8 showed that depression had a mean score of 1.29, suggesting mild depressive symptoms on average. Further, the results showed

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that 25% of the participants had a score of 0, indicating that they did not have depressive symptoms. The median score of 1 suggested that most participants experienced mild depression. Some participants reached the maximum score (3), indicating severe depression in certain cases. Anxiety had a mean score of 1.00, which suggested mild anxiety on average. The median score of 1 indicated that most participants experienced mild anxiety. DASS 20 had the highest mean (1.51), indicating the students had frequent anxious thoughts. 25% of the participants did not report anxiety symptoms. Stress had a mean score of 1.21, which suggested mild stress on average. DASS 14 had the highest mean (1.57), indicating that the students had frequent stress-related issues. 50% of the participants scored 1 or lower, meaning that most of them reported mild stress symptoms.

The study found a significant negative relationship between depression and stress levels and academic performance in single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. As shown in Table 4.24, the R-squared value of 0.264 showed that approximately 26.4% of the variability in academic performance could be explained by these factors. The ANOVA results confirmed that depression and stress were significant predictors of academic performance. The level of depression and stress was a significant predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County ($\beta = -.514$, $t = -5.957$, $p < 0.05$). The study also found that most participants experienced mild depressive symptoms, anxiety and stress-related issues.

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5.2.2 Effects of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The second objective aimed to assess the influence of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. The students indicated that they felt the need to withdraw from school social interaction and group work activities, found that they became more aggressive in interacting with others, sometimes experienced thoughts of self-harm /suicide, and especially when school were ongoing, often experienced deep sadness and anger that was hard to shake off. They also lacked motivation to complete academic assignments, and at times their anger issues were higher compared to their peers. The overall mean for the statements on depression was 2.86 with a standard deviation of 1.398 (Table 4.11), indicating that the respondents marginally agreed with the same. The study found a significant positive relationship between depression

and academic performance in students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. Depression accounted for approximately 20.4% of the variability in academic performance. As shown in Table 4.24, depression was a significant predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County (β = -.452, t -5.042, p <0.05). Thus, the results indicate that depression significantly impacts social withdrawal, aggression, sadness, motivation and anger issues. Students from single-parent families reported higher levels of stress and depressive symptoms compared to those from intact families. Self-harm/suicidal thoughts were present in a third of the students. Thus, lack of motivation and deep sadness/anger impact academic performance, while anger issues affect relationships and classroom behaviour.

5.2.3 Effects of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The third objective aimed to examine the influence of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. The study found a significant negative relationship between stress and academic performance in students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. The respondents agreed with the statements; 'I find it challenging to concentrate on my studies due to family responsibilities, I often feel overwhelmed in balancing my academic responsibilities and family obligation, I often feel anxious by emotional effect of family dynamics on my academic performance, I tend to become irritable when facing academic and family pressure, and I tend to become withdrawn when facing academic and family pressure.'

The overall mean for the statements on stress was 3.09 with a standard deviation of 1.400 (Table 4.13), indicating a strong consensus on the importance of stress. Academic and family pressures significantly impacted mental and emotional well-being, with tendencies toward anxiety, irritability and withdrawal. Single parents often face social stigma and lack social support, leading to poor academic performance, decreased social interactions and emotional and behavioural problems. Stress may account for up to 40% of the variation in student grades across different classrooms and institutions. As shown in Table 4.24, stress was a significant predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County (β = -.562, t -6.764, p <0.05). Chronic stress can lead to poor exam outcomes and scores, impaired cognitive flexibility, working memory and decision-making

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abilities. Overwhelmed students may also experience a lack of motivation, reduced interest in learning and decreased engagement with academics, resulting in lower academic performance.

5.2.4 Effects of coping strategies on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The third objective sought to assess the influence of coping strategies on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. The respondents agreed with the statements on coping strategies; 'I practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, to manage my stress, I make a plan to address the problems I face rather than avoiding them, I create a schedule to manage my time effectively when I have a lot of tasks, I talk to friends or family members when I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed, I do things like work out or listen to music that help me de-stress and feel better, and I reach out to school counselors or support services when I am struggling academically or emotionally.'

The overall mean for the coping strategies statements was 3.44 with a standard deviation of 1.374 (Table 4.15). The study found no significant positive relationship between coping strategies and the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. As shown in Table 4.24, coping strategies were not found to be a significant predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County ($\beta = .072$, t 0.719, $p = 0.474 > 0.05$).

The most common coping strategies were relaxation techniques, working out and listening to music. The least common was seeking help from school counselors or support services. Students from single-parent households commonly used problem-focused strategies like seeking help from teachers or peers, as well as emotion-focused strategies like hobbies and relaxation techniques. The results supported the idea that effective coping strategies were associated with better adjustment and academic outcomes.

5.3 Conclusions

This section outlines the recommendations from the study based on the objectives.

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5.3.1 Influence of level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The first objective aimed to assess the influence of the level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. According to the DASS-21 results, the study concluded that the students had mild symptoms of both depression and stress. The study concluded that there was a significant negative relationship between depression and stress levels and academic performance in single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. As shown in Table 4.24, the R-squared value of 0.264 showed that approximately 26.4% of the variability in academic performance could be explained by these factors. The ANOVA results confirmed that depression and stress were significant predictors of academic performance. The level of depression and stress was a significant predictor of the academic performance of students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. The study concluded that most participants experienced mild depressive symptoms, anxiety and stress-related issues.

5.3.2 Influence of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The study found a significant negative relationship between depression and academic performance among students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub County. The study concluded that symptoms of depression, such as social withdrawal, lack of motivation, sadness and aggression, led to poorer academic results. Approximately 20.4% of the variation in students' academic performance could be linked to their levels of depression. Many students faced challenges in social interactions, with a notable number struggling with participation in school activities. Issues like anger and self-harm were also present, with a considerable percentage of the students expressing these feelings. Moreover, nearly 40.6% reported difficulties with motivation, which could impact their studies.

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5.3.3 Influence of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The study concluded that the negative impact of stress on academic performance, as many students agreed that family-related stress makes concentration difficult, affected their schoolwork. About 30% of the students reported that their academic performance suffered due to feelings of depression linked to family stress. Lack of support at home further contributed to these academic challenges. Around 31.7% of the students reported/ explained that family stress interfered with managing school assignments. While some students believed their family situation did not affect their motivation, a significant number still felt it did. The findings indicated that stress affects cognitive functions like memory and decision-making.

5.3.4 Influence of coping strategies on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

Additionally, the study concluded that coping strategies, while slightly impacting academic performance, were not significantly effective. Students mainly used relaxation techniques and physical activities, but seldom sought professional help. Overall, higher levels of depression and stress correlated with lower academic performance in this group, suggesting that mental health challenges were common among these students. The study concluded that the most common coping strategies were relaxation techniques, working out and listening to music. The least common strategies were seeking help from school counselors or support services. Students from single-parent households commonly used problem-focused strategies like seeking help from teachers or peers, as well as emotion-focused strategies like hobbies and relaxation techniques. In addition, the study concluded that effective coping strategies were associated with better adjustment and academic outcomes.

5.4 Recommendations from the Study

This section presents the recommendations of the study based on the objectives.

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5.4.1 Influence of level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The first objective aimed to assess the influence of the level of depression and stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families in Nakuru West Sub-County. Most of the participants were found to experience mild depressive symptoms, anxiety, and stress-related issues. The study thus recommends that mechanisms be implemented to reduce the level of depression and stress that the high school students from single-parent families exhibit. These include putting into practice interventions aimed at fostering healthy lifestyle choices, enhancing family support, expanding opportunities for mental health services, and building strong support networks in the community and at school. supportive peer groups, interacting with wider family and community networks, and giving parents resources to lessen stress and improve their support skills are some specific tactics.

5.4.2 Influence of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

The study recommended the implementation of mental health support programs in schools and communities in Nakuru West Sub-County to combat depression, especially for students from single-parent families. Schools should have trained counselors to assist students showing symptoms of depression, along with systems for early identification and intervention, such as regular mental health screenings and surveys. It is crucial to involve parents and the community in addressing depression by educating them on the signs so they can provide necessary support.

5.4.3 Influence of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

For stress management, the study suggested the creation of community programs that include workshops on relaxation techniques and mindfulness, particularly for students from challenging backgrounds. Academic flexibility should be considered for students battling high stress, with options like flexible deadlines and alternative assessments to accommodate their

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mental health needs. Training teachers to identify stress in students and providing them with strategies to alleviate it can help in reintegrating affected students into the classroom.

5.4.4 Influence of coping strategies on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families

There should be integrated mental health services that offer combined counseling for both depression and stress, supported by increased access to trained professionals. Periodic mental health screenings and awareness campaigns are essential for reducing stigma and encouraging students to seek help. Single parents need resources to support their children's mental well-being effectively. Moreover, the study recommended teaching of effective coping strategies, establishing peer support networks, creating resilience-building programs and encouraging participation in extracurricular activities to help students manage stress and improve their mental health.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

Given that coping strategies showed no significant impact on academic performance, further research could explore which strategies are most effective for students in single-parent families. Future studies can also explore the effectiveness of specific interventions in reducing depression and stress and how these interventions can improve academic performance over time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent,

My name is Jecinta Nyambura Waweru a St. Paul's University student pursuing Masters in Counseling Psychology. I am conducting a research study to complete the prerequisites for the course.

The key component of this study the research questionnaire, focuses on the **Psychological effects of Single Parenthood on Academic Performance of High School Students in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.**

I politely want your help in responding to this survey. Kindly note that any information you submit will remain anonymous and confidential. Kindly read carefully and answer all questions honestly.

Thank you and God bless.

Jecinta Nyambura Waweru

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Appendix II: Questionnaire

Please complete the questionnaire following the given instructions.

Please check the box [✓] next to the right response. Don't indicate your name.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

NO	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How old are you?	
2	Gender identity	Male Female
3	Do you engage in other activities apart from school work?	Yes No
4	Which School are you from	
5	How long have you lived in Nakuru west?	0-6 months 6 months to 2 years Over two years
6	Which form are you in?	Form 3 Form 4

SECTION B:

Level of depression and stress among high school students from single-parent households

Please read each statement and circle 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicate how much the statement apply to you.

0-Do not apply to me at all (never)

1-Apply to me to some degree (sometimes)

2-Apply to me (often)

3-Apply to me most of the time (almost always)

1	I had trouble winding down.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**

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2	I knew that my mouth was dry.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
3	Nothing good seemed to be happening to me at all.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
4	I had trouble breathing (such as breathing too quickly or feeling out of breath when not exerting myself).	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
5	It was challenging for me to muster the will to take action.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
6	I had a tendency to overreact to circumstances	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
7	I trembled, for example in my hands.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
8	I sensed that I was generating a lot of anxiety.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
9	I was concerned about circumstances where I would lose my control and look ridiculous.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
10	I thought I had nothing to anticipate.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
11	I noticed that I was becoming agitated.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
12	It was hard for me to take it easy.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
13	I felt unhappy and hopeless.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
14	Anything that prevented me from continuing what I was doing was unsatisfactory to me.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
15	I thought I was on the verge of panic.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
16	I struggled to become excited about anything.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
17	I didn't think I was a valuable person.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
18	I thought I was a little touchy.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
19	I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
20	I had no justification for feeling afraid.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
21	I thought life had no purpose.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**

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Effect of depression on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households

Please use the following scale to indicate how depression affects high school students from single-parent households in terms of their academic performance:

Scale: (1-strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= Agree, 5= strongly agree *(Tick as appropriate*)

	Depression					
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1	I often feel the need to withdraw from school social interaction and group work activities.					
2	I find myself becoming more aggressive in my interaction with others.					
3	Sometime I experience thought of self-harm /suicide and especially when school are ongoing					
4	I often experience deep sadness and anger that is hard to shake off.					
5	Frequently I lack motivation to complete academic assignments					
6	Compared to my peers my anger issues are high.					

Effect of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent households

Please rate the effects of stress on the academic performance of high school students from single-parent families using the following scale.

Scale: (**1**-strongly disagree**, 2**= disagree**, 3**= neutral, **4**= Agree, **5**= strongly agree *(Tick as appropriate*)

	Stress					
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1	I find it challenging to concentrate on my studies due to family responsibilities.					
2	I often feel overwhelmed in balancing my academic responsibilities and family obligation.					
3	I often feel anxious by emotional effect of family dynamics on my academic performance.					
4	I tend to become irritable when facing academic and family pressure					

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5	I tend to become withdrawn when facing academic and family pressure					

Coping strategies employed by high school students from single-parent households in handling depression and stress

Please indicate how much you agree with these statements on coping strategies used by high school students from Single-parent households in handling depression and stress. Scale: (**1**-strongly disagree**,** 2= disagree**, 3**= neutral, **4**= Agree, **5**= strongly agree *(Tick as appropriate*)

	Coping strategies					
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1	I practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, to manage my stress.					
2	I make a plan to address the problems I face rather than avoiding them.					
3	I create a schedule to manage my time effectively when I have a lot of tasks.					
4	I talk to friends or family members when I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed.					
5	I do things like work out or listen to music that help me de-stress and feel better.					
6	I reach out to school counselors or support services when I am struggling academically or emotionally.					

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Academic performance

Please indicate to what extent you agreed with these statements on Academic performance of students from single-parent households Scale: (**1**-strongly disagree**, 2**= disagree**, 3**= neutral, **4**= Agree, **5**= strongly agree

(Tick as appropriate)

	Academic performance					
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1	I find it difficult to concentrate on my schoolwork due to stress related to my family situation.					
2	My academic performance has been negatively affected by feelings of depression.					
3	I feel that my grades have suffered because of a lack of support at home.					
4	I struggle with managing my school assignments and deadlines because of family-related stress.					
5	My single-parent household has made it harder for me to stay motivated in my studies.					
6	I often feel overwhelmed by the demands of school and my family responsibilities.					

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Appendix III: Key Informant Interview for High School Students from Nakuru West

Dear Respondent,

My name is Jecinta Nyambura Waweru a St. Paul's University student pursuing Masters in counseling psychology. To complete the course requirements, I am conducting a research investigation. The research questionnaire, which is the key component of this study, focusses on the **Psychological effects of Single Parenthood on Academic Performance of High School Students in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya.**

I respectfully ask for your assistance in answering this questionnaire. Please be aware that any information you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous.

1. Do you think high school students from single parenthood experience psychological effect that affects academic performance in a negative way? Yes [ ] or No [ ]
2. According to your own observation do high school student from single parenthood express their negative emotions as of those from both parents? Yes [ ] or No [ ]
3. What are some of the psychological effect that you experience as a high school student family?

   ……

   ……

   In your own words do you think you have special needs as a high school student?

   ……

   ……
4. Do high school students from single parenthood express abnormal emotional outburst?

   Yes [ ] or No [ ]
5. Are there ways that high school students from single parenthood can be helped?

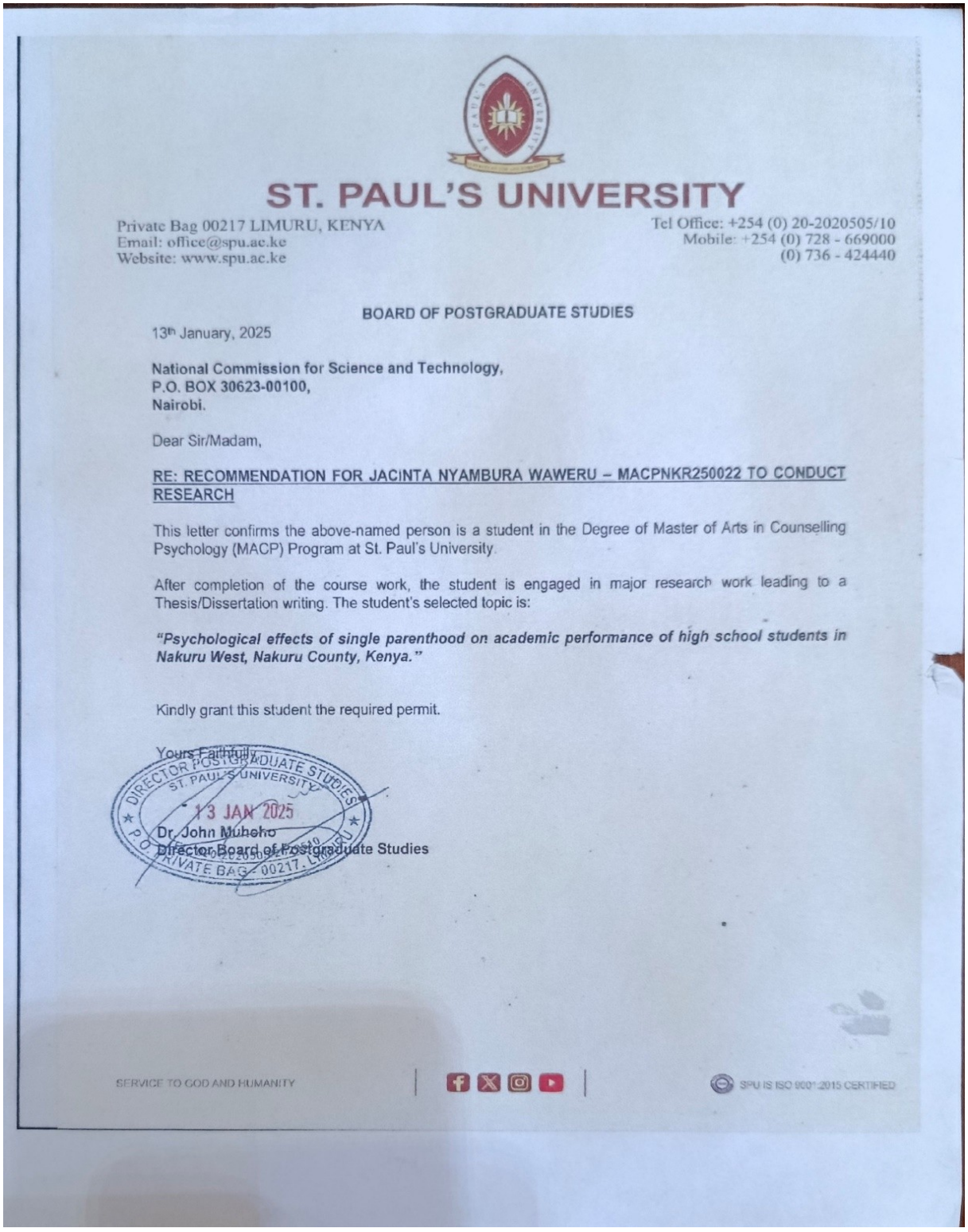
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Appendix IV: Introduction Lettter to NACOSTI



ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728 - 669000
(0) 736 - 424440

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

13th January, 2025

National Commission for Science and Technology,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR JACINTA NYAMBURA WAWERU – MACPNKR250022 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Degree of Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology (MACP) Program at St. Paul's University.

After completion of the course work, the student is engaged in major research work leading to a Thesis/Dissertation writing. The student's selected topic is:

"Psychological effects of single parenthood on academic performance of high school students in Nakuru West, Nakuru County, Kenya."

Kindly grant this student the required permit.

Yours Faithfully,

DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY P.O. PRIVATE BAG - 00217 LIMURU

13 JAN 2025

Dr. John Muhoho
Director Board of Postgraduate Studies

SERVICE TO GOD AND HUMANITY

SPU IS ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED

Appendix V: NACOSTI Research License

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **949471**

Date of Issue: **29/January/2025**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. Jecinta Nyambura Waweru of St. Paul`s University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru on the topic: PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAKURU WEST, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 29/January/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/415576**

949471

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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St. Paul's University Repository

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

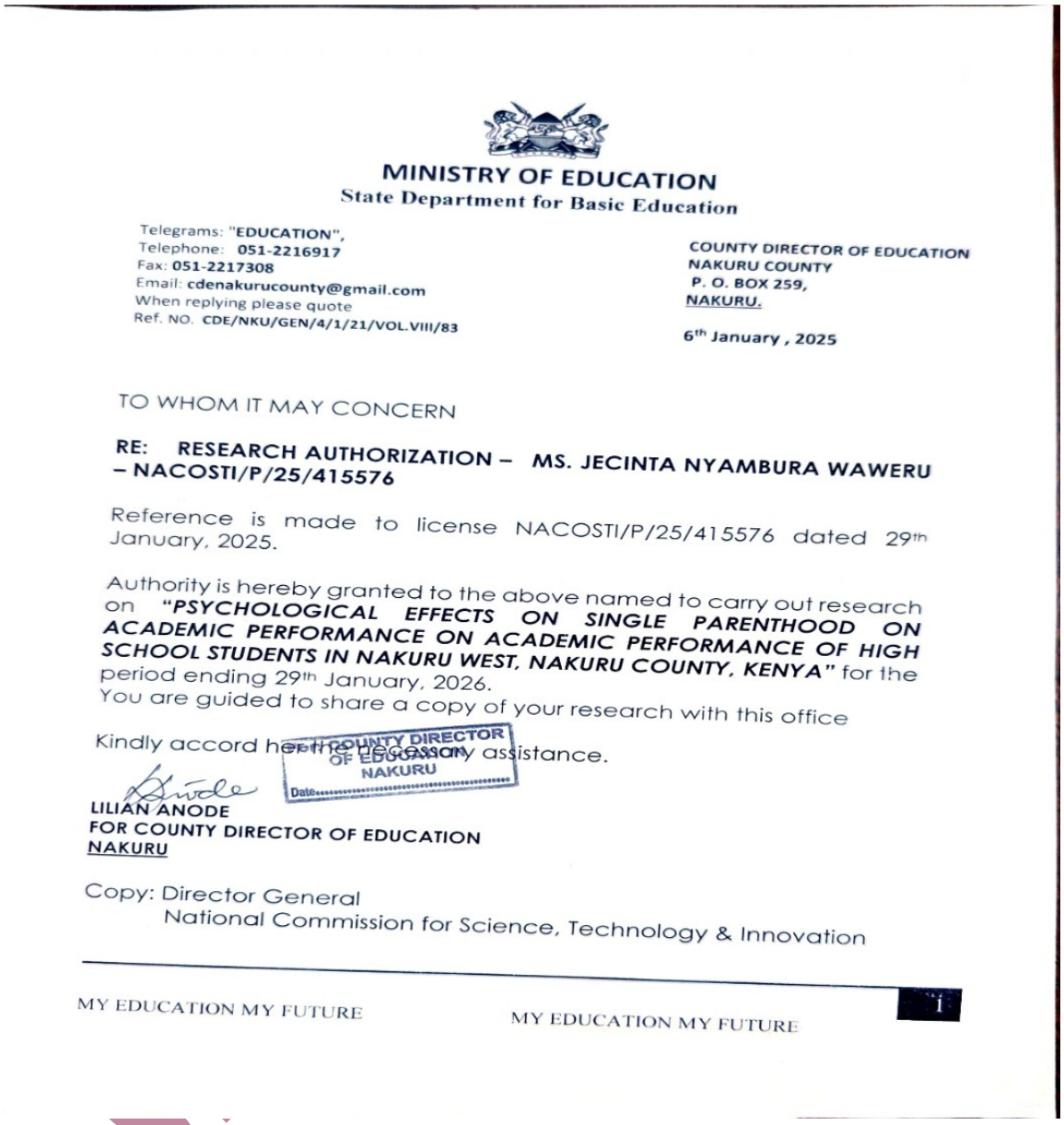
The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was the established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality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

CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of International treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way;
   i. Endanger national security
   ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
   iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN).
   iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
   v. Adversely affect the environment
   vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
   vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
   viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. The license any rights thereunder are non-transferable
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.
11. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.
12. Research, findings and information regarding research systems shall be stored or disseminated, utilized or applied in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
13. The Licensee shall disclose to the Commission, the relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, and the relevant national agencies any inventions and discoveries that are of National strategic importance.
14. The Commission shall have powers to acquire from any person the right in, or to, any scientific innovation, invention or patent of strategic importance to the country.
15. Relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee shall monitor and evaluate the research periodically, and make a report of its findings to the Commission for necessary action.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation(NACOSTI),
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,
P. O. Box 30623 - 00100 Nairobi, KENYA
Telephone: 020 4007000, 0713788787, 0735404245
E-mail: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke

APPENDIX VI: County Director of Education Research Authorization Letter



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department for Basic Education

Telegrams: "EDUCATION",
Telephone: 051-2216917
Fax: 051-2217308
Email: cdenakurucounty@gmail.com
When replying please quote
Ref. NO. CDE/NKU/GEN/4/1/21/VOL.VIII/83

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NAKURU COUNTY
P. O. BOX 259,
NAKURU.

6th January , 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – MS. JECINTA NYAMBURA WAWERU – NACOSTI/P/25/415576

Reference is made to license NACOSTI/P/25/415576 dated 29th January, 2025.

Authority is hereby granted to the above named to carry out research on ***"PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAKURU WEST, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA"*** for the period ending 29th January, 2026.
You are guided to share a copy of your research with this office

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION NAKURU
Date.....

LILIAN ANODE
FOR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NAKURU

Copy: Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

MY EDUCATION MY FUTURE MY EDUCATION MY FUTURE i

APPENDIX VII: Sub-County Director of Education Research Authorization Letter

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Email: nakuruwestedu@gmail.com

When replying please quote

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

6TH FEBRUARY , 2025

SCDE/NKUWEST/G/I/2/64

Ms Jecinta Nyambura Waweru
NACOSTI/P/25/415576
St. Paul University

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your request to conduct research on "**Psychological effects on single parenthood on academic performance of high school Students in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru Town West Sub County, Kenya",** through County Director of Education letter vide dated Ref No. CDE/NKU/GEN/4/1/21 VOL VIII/83, Authority is hereby granted to visit Public schools and interact with the school communities for a period ending 29th January , 2026.

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

The programme should not interfere with normal school programme and ensure that it is conducted professionally.

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

CHRISTOPHER OGUTU
FOR SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NAKURU WEST