

Single parenthood: literature review

Literature



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This paper will look at the different research that has already been conducted on single parenthood. Possible research topics could be how single-parent families differ in their structure or financially, in contrast to households with two parents. Articles may also discuss the impact of single-parent households on children, in terms of psychological impact, academic results, social and financial standings using statistics found in their research.

By looking at articles done through American and Canadian research, it can be determined what research is missing, what the articles lack and possible suggestions to improve the substance of the materials listed. Economic Viewpoint In each article, different points were made about the financial hardships that children from single-parent households may experience and how it was much more likely they would experience them in comparison to children raised in a household with two parents.

Lisa Calderwood, from London University's Institute of Education, says, "Living apart from natural fathers can be associated with poverty and negative outcomes for children." (Calderwood, 2010). Though not all single-parents are mothers, but Tim Casey, a senior staff attorney at Legal Momentum, (the U. S. ' oldest organization advocating on behalf of the legal rights of women and girls.)" Employment isn't keeping U. S. single parents — more than 80 percent of whom are single mothers — out of poverty. " (Casey, 2012).

Here it states that not only are the majority of single parents single mothers, but that the income provided to these mothers is generally still not enough to keep them above the poverty line even though, " single mothers in the U.

S. are employed more hours and yet have much higher poverty rates than their peers in other high-income countries. "(Casey, 2012). Single

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Paul Amato, a Professor of Sociology and Demography at The Pennsylvania State University, makes a good point saying due to lack of funds, " It is difficult for poor single parents to afford the books, home computers, and private lessons that make it easier for their children to succeed in school. "(Amato, 2005). This is a direct linkage with the academic success of children from single-parent families, which will be discussed later in the essay. Amato makes several good points, also saying, " they cannot afford clothes, shoes, cell phones, and other consumer goods that give their children status among their peers. (2005)

Again this is in direct correlation with self-esteem issues that are more common in children raised by single parents. " Consistent with these observations, many studies have shown that economic resources explain some of the differences in well-being between children with single parents and those with continuously married parents. "(Amato, 2005). Amato makes the observation that many differences between children raised in single-parent households versus children raised with both parents can be explained by the financial difference brought on by a single income.

An article stating that " Children raised by single mothers are twice as likely to misbehave as those born into traditional two-parent families" , (Paton, 2010), also says that " studies have found children raised by lone mothers are likely to have less economic security"(Calderwood, 2010)which the

article implies influences the behaviour of the child raised in said type of household here: “ parental qualifications and household income had a major effect on children’s behaviour at a young age, which could have “ damaging long-term consequences. After looking at the findings from the different sources, it can be said that it is a fact that single-parent households are worse off financially than households with both parents.

This is not only for the parents taking care of their children, but for the academic and social development of the children as stated by Amato (2005). Single Parenthood: Literature Review⁴ Academic Viewpoint Academically, the studies provide information which states that children from single-parent families do worse academically than those raised by both parents. They are twice as likely to drop out of high school, 2.5 times as likely to become teen mothers, and 1.4 times as likely to be idle. ” (McLanahan , 2001).

Here, Sara McLanahan states that studies have shown that children raised by single parents are more likely to drop out of high school, more likely to become teen parents and more likely to be out of school and without a job. As mentioned earlier by Paul Amato (2005), children raised by single parents cannot afford many things that could greatly benefit them in school such as “ books, home computers, and private lessons. ” (Amato, 2005).

Paul Amato also states “ In a meta-analysis of sixty-three studies of non-resident fathers and their children, Joan Gilbreth and I found that children had higher academic achievement when non-resident fathers were closely involved in their lives. ” (Gilbreth & Amato, 2005). In her article, Sara McLanahan says thatfamilydisruption is not the same in all families and risk

offailurein school varies among different American nationalities: “ Family disruption increases the risk of school failure by 24 percentage points among Hispanics, 17 percentage points among whites, and 13 percentage points among blacks. (McLanahan, 2001).

This is a pattern that is also consistent when it comes to dropping out. “ Behavioural problems were less likely among children living in families with higher levels of parental qualifications. ” (Calderwood, 2010) Here, Lisa Calderwood discusses behavioural problems among children raised in single-parent families, especially when it comes to academics and found that these types of issues were more frequent in children raised by a lone parent.

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In a chart from the National Study of Adolescent Health(1995), statistics can still show how there is a visible difference in the patterns of children raised by a lone parent, versus children raised by two. Nineteen percent of children raised by two parents had repeated a grade, compared to 30 percent of those raised by a single parent had repeated a grade, (1995). The chart shows this, as well as other categories such as, violence, delinquency, suspended, attended therapy, had smoked in the past month, attempted suicide and had thoughts of suicide.

In each of the categories, the percentage of children who had done these things from a single-parent household, was consistently higher than the percentages of those raised by both parents. (National Study of Adolescent Health , 1995). Emotional Nina Parry-Langdon , the author of a report done by the Department for Health and The Scottish Government, finds that “

Children from broken homes are almost five times more likely to develop emotional problems than those living with both parents. "(Parry-Langdon, 2008).

She specifies further to say that, " Children and young people in households of 'reconstituted' families, particularly where there were step-children, were more likely to develop conduct disorder as were those in families which had two parents at Time 1 and one parent at Time 2. " (2008). It is important to realize that not all children that are raised by single parents, have never been raised by two parents. Here Nina points out that distress in children raised in blended families, is similar to that of children who have been through a parent's divorce. After interviewing 5, 364 children aged between five and 16 in 2004 and again last year, the researchers found that 3 percent had developed problems over that time. "(Parry-Langdon, 2008).

Again, this article makes a point to mention how quickly being Single Parenthood: Literature Review⁶ raised in a single-parent family can take its toll, in this case, in as little as three years' time before conducting their second round of interviewing. From Paul Amato's article, he states that " Interviews with children reveal that losing contact with fathers is one of the most painful outcomes of divorce. " (Amato, 2005).

This shows that children are obviously impacted by the loss of contact, which can be compared to grief. Also in his article, Amato says that children from single-parent households have more exposure to stress, through many circumstances such as dealing with the financial burden, the inter-parental conflicts and in many cases having to move homes after the separation of

parents. (2005) Tying in directly with stress Amato reveals, “[a study] based on a large sample of twins, found that growing up in a single-parent family predicted depression in adulthood even with genetic resemblance controlled statistically.” (Amato, 2005).

This can partly be credited due to the high exposure to stress, stated above. He concludes by saying, “evidence strongly suggests that growing up without two biological parents in the home increases children's risk of a variety of cognitive, emotional, and social problems.” (Amato, 2005). In conclusion, after viewing these articles, there is much evidence to support the thesis that children from single parent households suffer in comparison to households in which both parents reside with their children. Further topics that should be considered are geographical patterns, as it seemed most of the research was focused at the United States.

Another suggestion for the articles would be to gather more personal information from children of single-parent households, rather than cold statistics. The statistics make it easy to dismiss the reason behind the negative results, as opposed to hearing from children who are being raised by single parents to hear how they feel and why they feel they are suffering in certain aspects. Single Parenthood: Literature Review⁸ The articles did a good job at looking at the different categories including, financial, academic, and emotional issues that stem from single parenting.

Out of the articles, Paul Amato (2005) and Sara McLanahan (2001).

Research available from reputable sources on the topic of single parenthood

is limited and its importance as an issue in North American society is diminished as 'normal', despite its serious impact shown in said articles.

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