

Role Performance and Challenges of Male Single-Parent Families in the Central Region of Ghana

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Abstract

This study investigated the role performance and challenges of male single-parents in the Central Region of Ghana using a descriptive and evaluative survey approach. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select 300 male single-parents for the study. Pretested questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect the data. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) (Version 16.0) software was used to analyse the data. The major findings of the study were that the performance of instrumental and expressive roles had affected aspects of lives of the respondents. The major challenges faced by the respondents included time constraints, fatigue and loneliness. It is recommended that the local government, central government and non-governmental organizations should undertake human resource development programmes in the Central Region to equip male single-parents with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for the performance of both expressive and instrumental roles in the home. Family life professionals should also expand their programmes to cater for the interests and struggles of male single-parents.

Keywords: Expressive roles, Families, Ghana, Instrumental roles, Male single-parent, Structural-functionalism theory

INTRODUCTION

A family is the basic social institution to which every individual belongs (Ardayfio-Schandorf & Kwafo-Akoto, 1990). It is the family that perpetuates society and the society benefits from the individual members of the family and the family as a whole. In the family, individual members as subsystems in various positions, play significant roles using resources available for the mutual benefit of the group. When individual members play their roles effectively, the family as a unit becomes self-directed and self-driven in interacting with various environments for achieving the quality of life (Blau, Ferber & Winkler, 2006). According to Rice (1999), the family carries out many important functions in a society. It is the basic economic unit of production and consumption. It socialises the young, while it serves as the source of political power. Families enforce norms and laws, transmits cultural heritage and serves as the first line of social security. They provide the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing and care and protect the young from harm by outsiders.

A family, as explained by Rice (1999), is any group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship, in which the adults cooperate financially for their mutual support and care of the children; the people are committed to one another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship; and the members see their identity as importantly attached to the group with an identity of its own. There are different types of families and they also come in all patterns and sizes. Even though families have different patterns they function basically as a unit to meet goals and desires of members. Conventional families have been nuclear and extended families. Owing to recent trends and changing attitudes, a wider variety of family forms have become common in society. People are increasingly likely to encounter - and become part of - other types of families as well.

Brown (1995) cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995) has posited that, within the traditional household structure, there was a clear division of economic and social roles and responsibilities as to who was supposed to do what. That is, the division of labour was clearly defined in a system based on age and sex roles. With increasing social change, brought about by modernization, industrialization and commercialization, several changes have taken place within the structure of the household at different levels, in its composition and in its social and economic organization. With regard to the household structure, it is now evident that a new type of single-headed household has emerged and formed both from necessity and by choice. The change in the structure of the household has brought about with it a change in the pattern of dividing the work and sharing responsibilities within it. The prevalence of single-parent families represents one of the most significant social changes.

Single-parent families may occur as a result of divorce or separation, unwedded parents or death of one of the spouses (Amissah, 2014). In single-parent families, only one of the parents has to take custody of the children, with the accompanying responsibilities. Segall, Dasen, Bery and Poortinga (1999) have asserted that single-parents tend to be more socially isolated than married parents. They work more hours and receive less emotional and parental support. They tend to have less stable social networks and experience more potentially stressful life changes. However, even though experts agree that a happy two-parent home is the ideal, many studies have shown that children are better off in a happy single-parent home than in an unhappy two-parent home.

In many societies, the man's primary family role is that of economic provider. The traditional father's minimal participation in the day-to-day care of children has been well documented (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Levant, Slattery & Loiselle, 1987). In the Ghanaian socio-cultural context, responsibilities of the male and female, as parents, are enshrined in traditional gender roles. Boateng (1995) cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995) noted that usually, while the man is responsible for the instrumental roles such as provision of money for food, clothing, shelter, security, discipline and major physical infrastructure that provide comfort and pleasure for the home, the woman plays expressive roles such as affection, moral support, cooking, performing household chores, and caring for the daily needs of the household. Although this general pattern has been historically true, these roles are undergoing some degree of change today, particularly as more women enter the labour force.

The dynamics of everyday living presents challenges to single-parent families and their members. The challenges require adequate supply of resources that are accessible and the application of managerial skills to be able to meet them. International development programmes have targeted several aspects of life and development, and have made great

impact on the quality of family life, work output. An examination of the categories of people who have benefited from interventions and human resource development programmes reveals that male single-parents are clearly ignored. Culturally, the gender roles of males do not include the activities that are performed as expressive roles by women. It is puzzling to imagine what coping strategies are adopted by male single-parents in managing the household without a woman to play the expressive roles. Little attention has been drawn to the issue of male single-parents and how they perform their parental as well as home management roles and challenges they face.

The general objective of this paper is to examine role performance and challenges of male single-parent families in the Central Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain which roles are perceived as instrumental and expressive roles at home;
2. Determine how the performance of both instrumental and expressive roles affect the various aspects of life of male single-parents;
3. Examine the challenges faced by male single-parents in combining the instrumental and expressive roles; and
4. Identify the effects of the challenges involved in role performance on the male single-parents.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: the next section focuses on the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework by reviewing related literature. Section three describes the study context and methodology while the fourth section presents findings and discussion. The last section deals with conclusion and recommendations.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to put the paper into context and to explore what other researchers have done, this section reviews literature on theories on the family and the conceptual framework for studying single-parent families.

Theories on the family

Structural-functionalism and family system theories are reviewed. Parsons (1966) attempted to develop a “grand theory” of society that explains all social behaviour universally throughout history, and in all contexts, with a single model called structural-functionalism. This theory considers values to be the core of culture because values give meaning to what people do, direct people’s lives, and bind people together. These “cultural traits” function for the operation of society. In the theory, five contrasting pairs of value orientations, in their various combinations, account for the nature of role relationships in any society, and typify the structure of any society. These pairs called Pattern Variables are:

- a. Affectivity - Affective neutrality;
- b. Self-orientation - Collectivity-orientation;
- c. Particularism - Universalism;
- d. Ascription - Achievement; and
- e. Functional diffuseness - Functional specificity.

Parsons (1966) regards the first half of each pair as the “expressive types” of characteristics and the second half of the pattern as the “instrumental types” of characteristics. Expressive aspects refer to the integrative and tension aspects. These are roles, and actions concerned with taking care of the common task, how to integrate the group, and how to manage and resolve internal tensions and conflicts. This may take many different forms but often is associated with the family, and more specifically with the female role in the family.

The instrumental characteristics refer to the goal attainment and adaptation aspects. These are the characteristics, people, roles, and actions associated with ideas, problem solving and getting the task done. These tasks are often associated with male roles, public activities, the economy, or politics. These can also be used to refer to the type of society. Social action and interaction in early forms of society are more likely to be characterized by expressive characteristics. In contrast, in modern societies, with a more complex division of labour and differentiation of statuses and roles, much of social action and interaction are characterized by instrumental characteristics.

Structural-functionalism, therefore, looks at behavioural patterns and interchanges between the family and other systems in the society and between the family and its subsystems. It also looks at the family's responsibility in socialization, transmitting values and norms of the society to the individual. It focuses on how the nuclear family provides and motivates, supports and encourages the individual to assume tasks. It also examines the structure, including who belongs to the family, and examines the contributions of the various subsystems in the family, roles in the family in relation to the society. Structural-functionalism further looks at family roles and role differentiation. The father is supposed to work and provide for the family, the mother is supposed to care and perform household duties and the children are to contribute to the performance of chores.

Structural-functionalism looks at "role prescription" and "role performance" for the nuclear family. The former represents the societal expectations of the individual; the latter is what is actually done by family members. However, it has been argued that, looking at the roles of fathers and mothers, it has been observed that they do not play these roles in isolation. At times, the fathers play expressive roles and the mothers also play instrumental roles in actual performance (Weil, 1971).

Critics of structural-functionalism say that the theory fails to achieve clear and adequate communication. Slater (1961) argues even if one accepts the proposition that expressive and instrumental behaviours cannot be expressed simultaneously by the same person, this does not logically preclude their expression by the actor in different circumstances. It is plausible to maintain that males are primarily responsible for the instrumental or subsistence-oriented activities in the family, that females are concerned principally with socio-emotional maintenance, and that these roles interacted in a complementary fashion. Crano and Aronoff (1978) observe that the most complete form of the role of complementarity hypothesis concerns the degree to which complementarity exists between instrumental and expressive commitments.

Although there are weaknesses, particularly terminological confusion, there are also advantages for studying family-life this way. Within this framework, the family is the basic social unit that is held responsible for meeting individual human needs, such as the reproductive, educational, and economic needs, which are also essential for societal survival.

The family systems theory places emphasis on the relationships among interacting units. According to Amissah (2014), systems are composed of an integrated hierarchy and interdependent parts. People in a family constitute a family system while the environment in which the people live, work, attend school, shop and operate daily constitute additional sub-

systems. The community, state and nation are still other sub-systems. Each sub-system interacts and influences other sub-systems. Systems are directed toward a common purpose.

A system is a set of objects with relationships between the objects and between their attributes. Objects refer to the parts, components, or elements of the system while attributes refer to the properties or characteristics of the elements of the system. According to Broderick and Smith (1979), the systems theory emphasizes the interdependence of family members. The relationships between individuals in a family are derived from the roles, rules, routines and responsibilities of each person to others and the form and function of the organisational structure of the family unit. A change in any one of the components of the organisation causes changes in other components.

Systems have wholeness and structure; boundaries which interface with other systems in an environment; and functions to perform. A major characteristic of a system's wholeness is based on the concept that the components of a system behave as a unit rather than as separate entities. Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) note that the family has certain characteristics that make it function as a system. The family as a system also has wholeness and structure, composed of persons who interact and function together. The family not only has a structure of recognizable parts that function independently but also operates as a whole, such as father, mother and children, and each has individual and essential roles to play.

Systems are both connected to and separated from other sub-systems by boundaries which indicate what is inside and outside the system. The intensity of interaction is greater within the boundary than the intensity of interchanges across the boundary. Similarly, a family has got a boundary which is identified by knowing who belongs "inside" it and who is "outside". Generally, the degree of interaction is greater and the responsibilities toward each member are greater inside the boundary than outside it.

Systems have functions that they are expected to perform. The contribution a component makes is vital to the life of the system as a whole. In the same way, a family has functions to perform. Family functions are many and varied and may include: provision of food, clothing and shelter as basic needs for physical maintenance and health of each member. Other functions are procreation, socialisation and nurturance. A systems approach to family management provides an understanding of interrelationships and conditions which influence action in the family.

Deacon and Firebaugh (1988) note that family system life management has three components: input, throughput and output as shown in Figure 1. Input refers to all information and energy matter plugged into the family system in various forms as demands to affect processes in the throughput. The demands are the goals, values, standards, events, attitudes, needs and wants which push people into action in order to attain goals required.

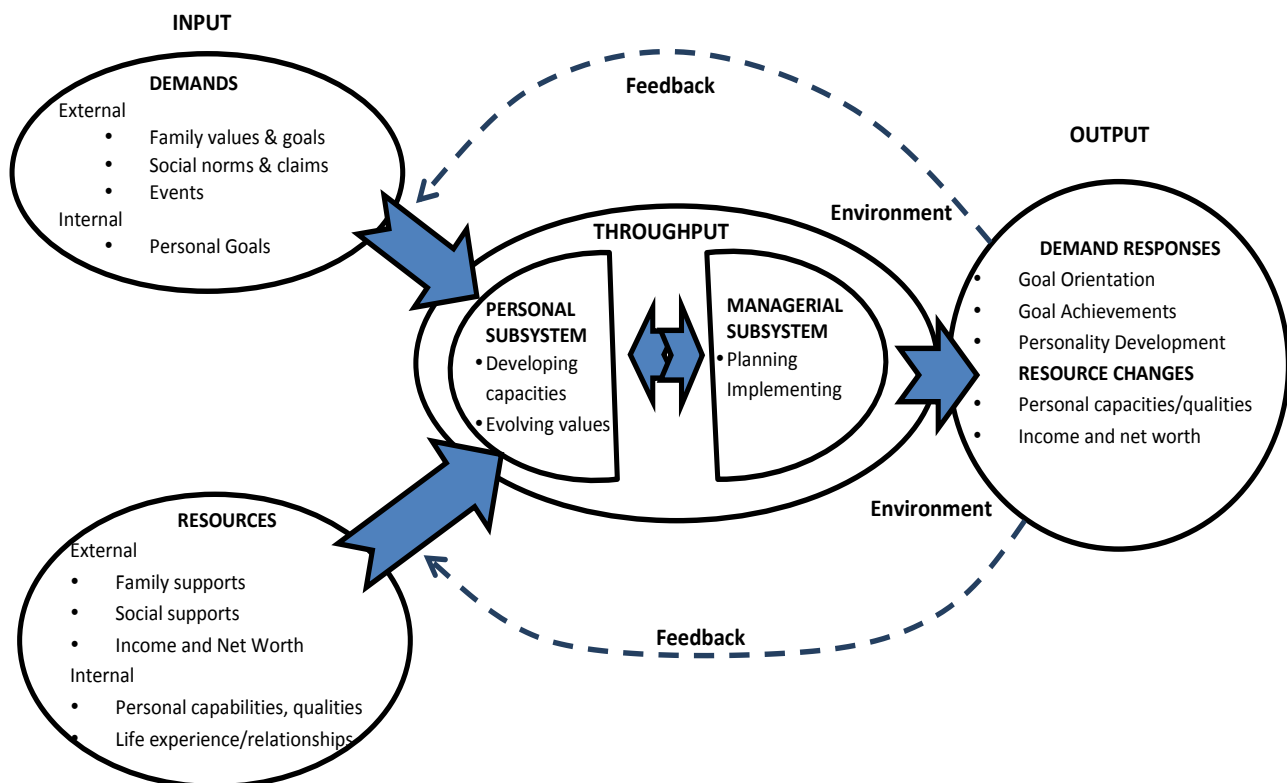


Figure 1: Framework for family system life management

Source: Deacon and Firebaugh (1988: 22)

The throughput is the transformation of matter or energy from input to output in the managerial system. It involves decisions and communication for planning and implementation of actions (instrumental and expressive roles) to convert resources into attained goals. Output is the end result of managerial activity. Thus, the expanded resources, the met demands and satisfaction gained leave the family system and enter the environment as quality of life. Information about output may re-enter the system as inputs in feedback. Feedback is the system's capacity to monitor its own progress toward a change or set goal, to correct and elaborate its response, and even to change its goals. The family interrelates continually with its environment, which is the external setting within which a system functions.

Conceptual framework for investigating role performance of single-parent families

This paper adapted structural-functionalism and family systems theory and came out with four components as input, throughput, output and outcome, presented as a conceptual framework (Figure 2) to investigate the role performance of single-parent in the Central Region. The structural-functionalism presents five contrasting pairs of value orientation, which, in their various combinations, account for the nature of role relationships in (the structure of) any society. The family as a social system adapts itself to various environments which may be restrictive or enhancing in its goal attainment as it integrates and organises resources to meet the needs of the family. Family members perform instrumental and expressive roles in the home to achieve the desired goals to maintain family equilibrium and survival.

The day-to-day concerns of the single-parent family such as feeding the family; carrying out daily activities by playing instrumental and expressive roles; providing members with clothing and shelter; the ability of the members to get along with each other; and adjusting to new

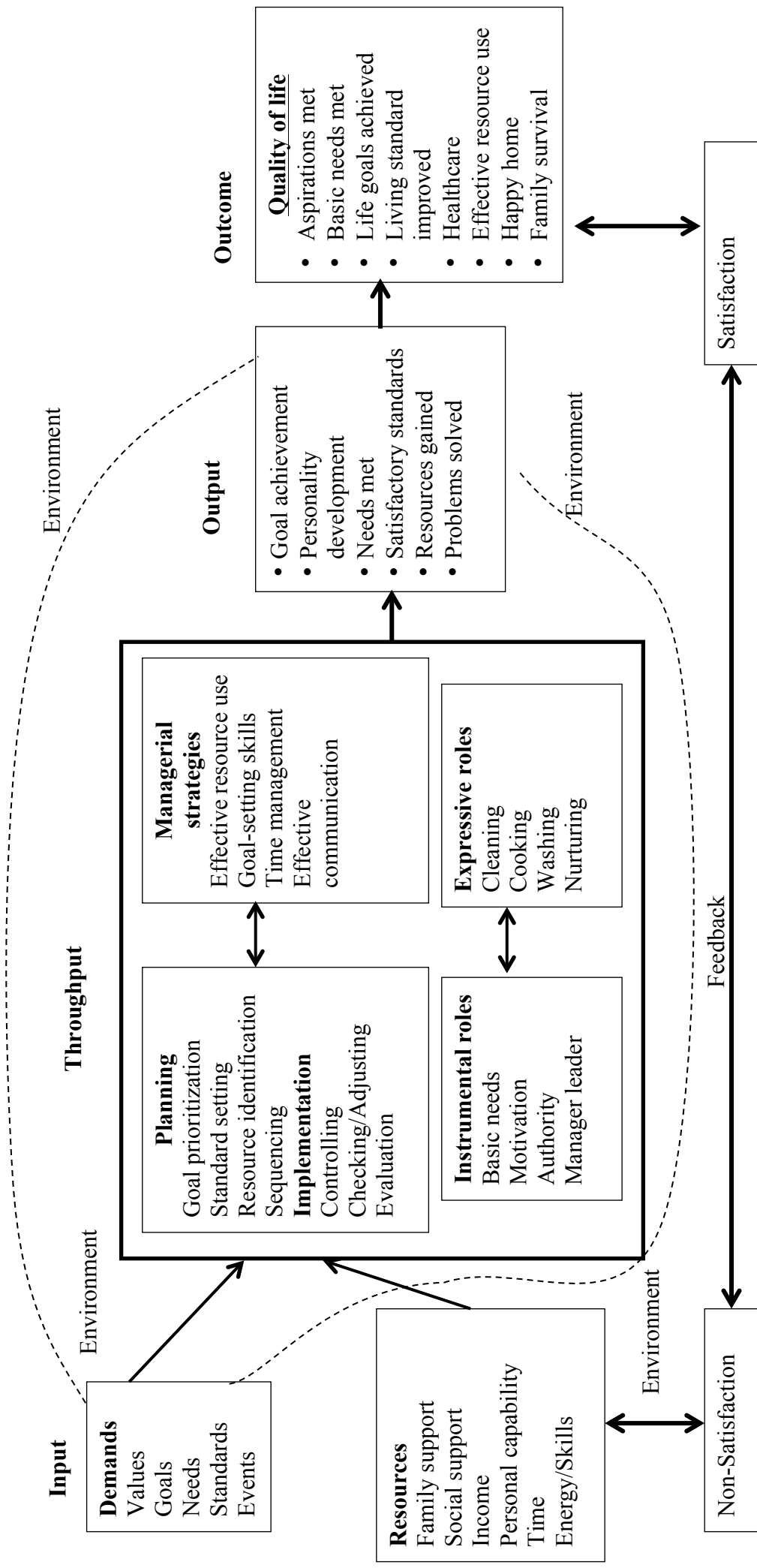


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for investigating role performance of single-parent families

Source: Adapted from Parsons (1966) and Deacon and Firebaugh (1988)

situations (like living in a single-parent home) are all management situations. The single-parent family always has certain demands to meet. These demands are stimuli received from the system's environment as input factors. To meet its demands, the family plans, implements, monitors, and evaluates various programmes and activities. The programmes and activities require the use of certain resources, such as family support, social support, income, personal capabilities, time and energy.

The throughput involves planning and implementation of actions to convert resources into achievable goals. In planning, there are strategies that could be followed for goal achievement including goal prioritization, standard setting, and resources identification. Implementation, which is the actual performance of activities, involves the playing of certain instrumental and expressive roles by relevant family members in order to achieve management outputs. However, there is no role differentiation in the single-parent household. Single-parents combine and perform both the instrumental and expressive roles at home, which may bring challenges to single-parents. However, managerial strategies such as effective use of resources, goal-setting skills, time management and effective communication, could be used to control, check and evaluate the results achieved (i.e. output).

Output is the result of throughput when inputs are satisfactorily provided and utilised. It is the finished product, expressed as goal achievement, personality development, needs met, satisfactory standards, resources gained or created and problems solved. The output flows to the internal environment of the system as the outcome of managerial activities. Outcome creates satisfaction for family members. It tells how far the family is reaching its goals, standards and the level of satisfaction. The level of satisfaction accumulates to form the quality of life of the family.

The quality of life is expressed by indicators such as aspirations met, basic needs met, life goals achieved, living standards improved, improved healthcare, effective use of resources, happy home, and family survival. There is always some form of feedback from family members as to whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the resources they use, the roles they play and the extent to which family demands have been met. Feedback is the evaluative information about the managerial activity that is returned to the system as input which influences future action.

STUDY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Central Region of Ghana. The region contains 21 local government (LG) areas made up of one Metropolis, six Municipals and 14 Districts, The Central Region shares boundaries with four regions - Western Region to the west, Ashanti Region to the north, Greater Accra Region to the south-east and Eastern Region to the east. To the south is the Gulf of Guinea (Figure 3). The predominant ethnic group is the Akans. The economy of the region is dominated by agro - businesses, services and small-scale industries. It is estimated that 66 percent of the people are engaged in agriculture, (farming and fishing) and trading in the informal sector. The formal sector consists of mostly teachers, bankers and other government workers (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

This study employed the descriptive and evaluative survey designs, using male single-parents in the Central Region. The descriptive design made it possible to obtain information on the existing situation of the role performance and challenges in the performance of both instrumental and expressive roles by male single-parents. Bell (2010) posits that an evaluative

research is the systematic assessment of an operation and/or the outcomes of a programme or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy. The evaluative design was used in this study to evaluate how male single-parents adopted managerial strategies to meet challenges they faced. The study population consisted of all male single-parents in the Central Region of Ghana. The Ghana Statistical Service (2012) has data on the distribution of male single-parent households by status for the Central Region. All male single-parents in the entire region could have been used for the study. However, for time and other resource constraints, male single-parents in some of the districts were chosen to represent the population under investigation. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to get a sample which was representative of the population. Firstly, the districts were clustered into two namely: coastal and inland. Secondly, proportionate stratified sampling was employed to select six districts. To achieve this, a sampling frame of names of the LG areas in the region was prepared. Names of the coastal and inland districts were written and folded separately for each stratum. Placed in separate bowls, three papers were picked from the coastal and the inland bowls respectively, provided and all together, six LG areas used for the study. These were: (i) Cape Coast; (ii) Efutu; and (iii) Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese representing coastal areas while (i) Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam; (ii) Agona; and (iii) Assin represented inland areas.

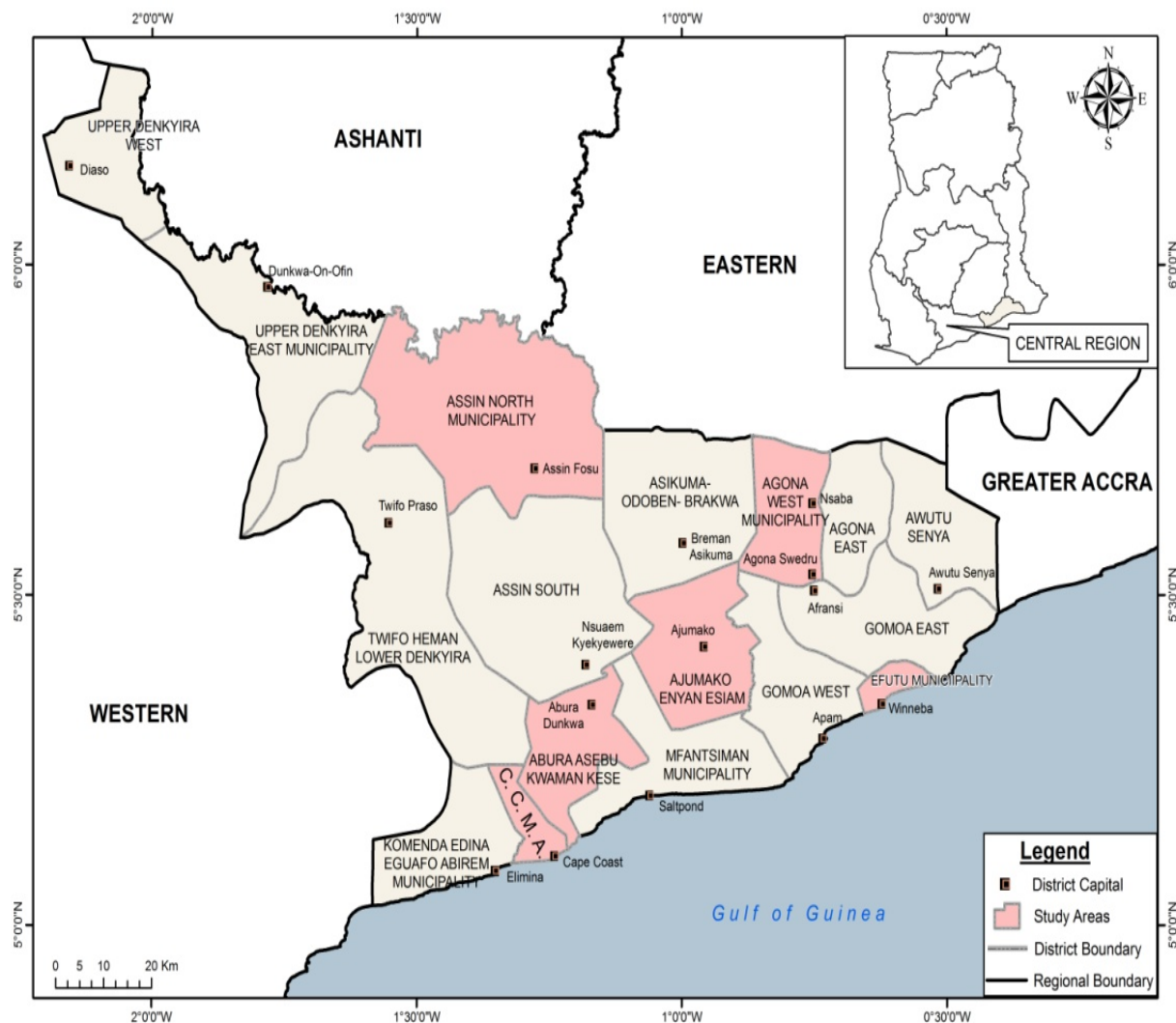


Figure 3: Map of Central Region in Ghana

Source: Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC (2014).

At the last stage, the political administrative capitals within the LG areas were purposively selected. One other urban community was randomly selected from each LG area using a sampling frame of names of urban communities obtained from the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Names of public schools were obtained from the Assemblies to serve as a sampling frame. Two public basic schools were randomly selected in each community, using the lottery method.

The study used Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining the sample size (with 95 percent certainty) for a given population. By the table, for a total accessible population between 1400 and 1499, a sample size of 302 is appropriate. The selected districts in the region have a total population of 1450 male single heads of households. The actual sample size used for the study was 300. The sample size for each district was, therefore, calculated as a proportion of the total sample size (300), based on its population as provided by the Ghana Statistical Service (2003). The number of individuals selected was based on its population.

The difficulty in identifying male single-parents was overcome by identifying pupils living with male single-parents in the basic schools in the selected communities. Teachers in the schools assisted to interview the pupils, and identified those who lived with their fathers alone. In the classrooms, pupils were asked to show by hand if they lived with their fathers only. This was done in all classrooms until the required sample was obtained. In cases where the required sample was not obtained in the classroom, other respondents were referred by an informal net-work, established to identify respondents. The male single-parents were then contacted to participate in the study.

The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire for literate respondents and interview schedule for illiterate respondents. Both the questionnaire and interview schedule comprised of the same items. Both open-ended and close-ended items were used. The questions were grouped under sections corresponding to the specific objective of the study. In the administration of the questionnaire, personal visits were made to the household of the selected families for both the distribution and collection for the literate respondents. Interviews were conducted in the vernacular and recorded in English in the interview sections at agreed date and time at the convenience of the respondents. Respondents were assured of anonymity and maximum confidentiality in order to uphold ethical considerations. The literate respondents were given one week to complete the questionnaires. The month of March 2014 was used for the field work, which was supported by two field assistants.

The completed questionnaires were edited for consistency. To ensure the quality of the data, cross-validation was done by comparing responses with each other to ensure accuracy and completeness. The close ended questions were coded and analysed. Responses to open-ended items were analysed through the categorization of emergent concepts and comparison of these concepts in order to identify common themes. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) (Version 16) software was used to process and analyse the data. Frequency distribution tables were used to present data on the roles performed, challenges and effects of the challenges faced by the respondents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section reports on the background characteristics of the respondents, perceived instrumental and expressive roles, effects of the performance of both instrumental and

expressive roles at home on aspects of life and challenges male single-parents face in combining both instrumental and expressive roles at home.

Background characteristics of respondents

The background characteristics of the respondents covered were: age, educational level, occupation, monthly income, number of dependents and the years respondents had been single-parents. The ages of respondents ranged from 31 years to 70 years with the mean age of 45 years and standard deviation of 8.3. The educational levels of the respondents were categorized into: no formal education, basic, senior high school, post-secondary and tertiary education. The occupations captured in this study included teaching, trading, artisanship, farming, driving, administrative work, office work, banking and nursing.

Perceived instrumental and expressive roles at home

The respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of roles they perceived as instrumental and expressive roles at home. Their responses are presented in Table 1. The results show that there were 16 instrumental roles in the home identified by the respondents. These ranged from breadwinner, household head to administrator and social networking. There were marked similarities in the roles perceived as instrumental roles at home. The topmost roles that the respondents perceived as instrumental roles at home were breadwinner (99.3%), household head (93.0%), supervisor (91.7%), decision-maker (91.7%) and leader (91.3%). Other high ranking roles included disciplinarian (89.7%), financial controller (89.7%), advisor (89.3%), helping children to learn (84.3%), planner (83.7%), and establishing standards for achieving goals (83.0%).

Table 1: Perceived instrumental and expressive roles at home

Instrumental roles	Percent	Expressive roles	Percent
1. Breadwinner	99.3	1. Child care	98.3
2. Household head	93.0	2. Cooking	97.3
3. Supervisor	91.7	3. Washing	95.3
4. Decision maker	91.7	4. Cleaning the house	93.3
5. Leader	91.3	5. Sweeping compound	92.7
6. Disciplinarian	89.7	6. Socialization of children	90.7
7. Financial controller	89.7	7. Nurturing	90.3
8. Advisor	89.3	8. Comforter	89.7
9. Helping children to learn	84.3	9. Washing dishes	89.3
10. Planner	83.7	10. House keeping	88.7
11. Setting standards for achieving goals	83.0	11. Marketing	86.3
12. Controller	82.3	12. Time manager	85.0
13. Manager	82.0	13. Entertaining	79.3
14. Identifying / assessing resources	82.0	14. Establishing a social network in the family	79.3
15. Administrator	80.0	15. Ironing	68.7
16. Social networking	75.3		

n = 300 respondents, multiple responses

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Within the traditional household structure, there is a clear division of economic and social roles and responsibilities as to who is supposed to do what. The division of labour was clearly defined in a system based on age and sex roles. The results of the study agree with those of Boateng (1995) cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995) that, usually, the man is responsible for the instrumental roles such as provision of money for food, clothing, shelter, security, discipline, control and major physical infrastructure that provides comfort and pleasure for the home. In many societies, the man's primary family role is that of economic provider. The traditional father's minimal participation in the day-to-day care of children has been well documented.

Fifteen expressive roles were identified by the respondents in the home (Table 1). These included caring for children (98.3%), cooking (97.3%), washing (95.3%), cleaning of the house (93.3%), sweeping the compound (92.7%), socialization of children (90.7%), nurturing (90.3%), comforter (89.7%), washing dishes (89.3%), housekeeping (88.7%), marketing (86.3%), time manager (85.0%), and ironing (68.7%). The lowest ranked women's role in the home was ironing. According to Boateng (1995) cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995), expressive roles include housekeeping, cleaning of the house, caring for the emotional well-being of the family, providing nurturing and comfort. The majority of the respondents affirmed to all the roles outlined as women's roles.

The finding agrees with the assertions of Coverman and Sheley (1986) and Levant, Slattery and Loiselle (1987) that women assume responsibility for the day-to-day care and supervision of children, by playing expressive roles. The findings support the structural-functionalism theory which identified two major roles (instrumental and expressive) in the family set-up in terms of the role parents play (Parsons, 1966; Crano & Aronoff, 1978).

Roles respondents performed at home

The respondents indicated 12 main roles they actually performed at home as male single-parents as shown in Table 2. The roles included: cooking (91.7%), gardening (91.7%), caring for small children (87.3%), supervising children's school work (87.0%), washing (82.7%), sending children to and from school (79.0%), cleaning the house (75.0%) and getting the children ready for school (75%). There was no role differentiation in the male single-parent households as these parents performed both the instrumental and expressive roles.

This is in line with Saase's (1994) assertion that, in male single-parent households, only the male parent has custody of the children and bears the burden of performing multiple roles. The male parent accomplished many of the same tasks alone that two-parent families would perform together. Amisshah (2014) reported that single-parents often face the challenges of child rearing, maintaining a home, establishing a supportive social life and working full-time with little assistance from other adults. Because of these many responsibilities, single parents often feel overwhelmed, especially during the first two years as single parents.

Parenthood is less challenging under the best of conditions but with one parent, the challenges (economic, emotional, mental, social and physical) are enormous for one-parent household, especially where the other members are young. In the latter case, most of the family responsibilities rest on the person's shoulders. Cleaning the house, cooking meals, keeping up the yard, paying the bills, keeping an eye on the children, and several others, are responsibilities of the single parent.

Table 2: Actual roles respondents performed at home

Actual roles	Percent
1. Cooking	91.7
2. Gardening	91.7
3. Caring for small children	87.3
4. Supervising children's school work	87.0
5. Washing	82.0
6. Sending children to and from school	79.0
7. Cleaning the house	75.0
8. Getting children ready for school	75.0
9. Ironing	72.3
10. Washing dishes	71.3
11. Sweeping compound	71.0
12. Marketing	34.0

n = 300 respondents, multiple responses

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Effects of performance of both instrumental and expressive roles on aspects of life

The major aspects of the parent life affected by the performance of instrumental and expressive roles concurrently by the male single-parent families are presented in Table 3. The most affected aspects of life were: relationship with children (79.7%); career (60.7%); finances (59.3%); social life (58.0%); leisure (57.3%); and meeting basic needs (50.7%). These aspects of life are fundamental to family survival as observed by Rice (1999). The performance of both roles has also affected housework and self-improvement by 46.0 and 38.7 percent of the respondents respectively.

The performance of the roles could adversely affect the relationship with children of 79.7 percent of the respondents. Wilson (1988) observed that single-parents' attitudes affect their children as they observe and imitate behaviours and attitudes of their parents. About 60.7 percent of the respondents have their career adversely affected as their work outputs are often criticised. This means that employment can have an impact on male single-parents and their concept of self-worth. Segal et al. (1999) have contended that parenthood should be compatible with career goals. Some careers require extensive time away from home, and a male single-parent might not be able to give a child the time and attention needed.

Table 3: Effects of performance of instrumental and expressive roles on aspects of life of respondents

Aspect of life	Percent
1. Relationship with children	79.7
2. Career	60.7
3. Finances	59.3
4. Social life	58.0
5. Leisure	57.3
6. Meeting basic needs	50.7
7. Housework	46.0
8. Self-improvement	38.7

n = 300 respondents, multiple responses

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

Dizard and Gadlin (1990) observed that single-parents often face the challenges of child rearing, maintaining a home, establishing a supportive social life and working full-time with little assistance from other adults. These parents may experience a dilemma of managing career and caring for their children. This is more of a problem for men who place high values upon being a breadwinner, and when their perceptions of self-worth are based on this. Wilson (1988) argued that many single fathers viewed their work as an important source of self-affirmation and self-fulfilment. For those who are unable to find supportive work and environments that are sensitive to their needs as male single-parents, the likelihood of a negative impact on their perceptions of self-worth is increased.

The performance of both instrumental and expressive roles has adversely affected the financial aspect of life of 59.3 percent of the respondents because they spent almost all their monies so they could not save much. Doherty (1991) observes that paying the bills is a major concern for most single-parents. Segal et al. (1999) indicate that most single-parents may have the most difficulty of "making ends meet", especially those who have few job skills or no work history. They, however, contended that, though male single-parents may usually not suffer poverty to the same extent as do female single-parents. Low and unstable finances can lead to family instability.

About 58 percent of the respondents had their social life adversely affected as they did not get time to enjoy leisure with their peers. This is consistent with Wilson's (1988) assertion that single fathers often talk of feeling socially isolated and cut off from peers. Friendship patterns and leisure activities change for many male single-parents and have isolating consequences. Wilson (1988) argues that a supportive social network can improve single-parents' self-image. When single-parents feel good about themselves, they do better at home and at work, which, in turn, ultimately benefits the children. Rice (1999) observes that dating, friendship and other forms of social contact can help male single-parents meet their personal needs.

The study revealed that 57.3 percent of the respondents had their leisure adversely affected. Many mental health professionals advise single-parents to set aside some personal time for recreation and solitude without children. Most single-parents are constantly tending to the needs of others, putting their personal needs on hold. Such selflessness is admirable but can be unhealthy for single-parents and their children. Nearly everyone needs a break from routine stresses of everyday life. Single-parents, who take "time out" for themselves, even just a few minutes a day, are able to approach their roles and responsibilities with renewed energy (Wilson, 1988).

Different parents at different places provide different things for children. However, all children everywhere need some basic things without which they cannot grow and develop fully. Basic needs are fundamental for the survival of family members and these include food, clothing, education, health care, security, shelter, clean and safety environment, love and affection. Society expects all parents to provide these basic needs for their children. The family also provides the physical closeness and enduring interaction needed to develop intimacy and the sense of being emotionally close to people. About 50.7 percent of the respondents reported that despite their role performance at home they had the ability to provide basic needs. However, 49.3 percent reported of their inability to provide basic needs because they were not in gainful employment.

Multiple role performance had adversely affected the housework of 46 percent of the respondents. These respondents reported that were generally less organized when performing household activities meant for two parents and therefore, complained about a chaotic lifestyle. The result confirms Stacey's (1990) finding that the commonest practical problems faced by single parents include adjusting to job requirements, balancing time between home and work, finding personal time, helping the children with homework, monitoring each child's activity, preparing meals and scheduling bedtime routines.

Self-improvement includes measures male single-parents take to improve themselves in terms of education and training. The results of the study show that self-improvement had affected 38.7 percent of the respondents' opportunities for education and training. Some of the respondents indicated that they had to postpone further studies because their children were young while others reported that they had divided attention and could not focus on their studies. These results agree with Hanson's (1986) assertion that, sometimes, unplanned babies or single-parenthood may cause their fathers to drop out of school in order to earn a living to support the children. These men may be able to return to their education later, but this usually means a double burden of work and study.

Challenges male single-parents face in combining roles at home

In today's society, single fathers have their share of daily struggles and long-term disadvantages (Navarro, 2008). There are many challenges male single-parents go through while bringing up children to achieve a good quality of life. Some even fail to achieve the type of quality of life they expected. The challenges faced by the respondents in combining the instrumental and expressive roles in the home are presented in Table 4. The results show that the respondents were challenged with varying degrees such as: time constraints (73.7%); fatigue (72.7%); loneliness (68.7%); constant stress (60.7%); late meals for the family (59.3%); financial constraints (54.0%); no leisure (52.0%); lateness to work (51.0%), and neglect of some aspects of housework (49.0%).

Amissah (2014) argues that the double work load makes male single-parents tired most of the time, with some experiencing constant stress. These parents scarcely find time to discuss family matters of mutual concern. The situation affects the relationships with their children since they may not be able to give them enough attention and fatherly love. If the children are of pre-school age, male single-parents are faced with the same dilemma as are female single-parents who must work out of finding adequate child care support and services. Even if the man can afford a house-help and child care, he experiences a profound change in the daily maintenance and care and that of his children. Housework also suffers when there is no house-help. Some family meals may be late or they even have to depend on food prepared outside. Cleaning of the house and its environment may not be properly done. Sasse (1994) notes that, performance of dual roles as a home maker and a worker at the same time can be very stressful because there is great demand on the male single-parent's energy and time. Marital separation often gives rise to feelings of anger, loss, loneliness, failure and lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Table 4: Challenges and effects of male-single-parents

j) Challenges	Percent	Effects of Challenges	Percent
1. Time constraints	73.7	1. Indebtedness	32.3
2. Fatigue	72.7	2. Poor work output	27.0
3. Loneliness	68.7	3. Poor nutrition	24.3
4. Constant stress	60.7	4. Anxiety	24.0
5. Late meals for the family	59.3	5. Indiscipline and truancy among children	24.0
6. Financial constraints	54.0	6. Fear	22.3
7. No leisure	52.0	7. Social isolation	21.7
8. Lateness to work	51.0	8. Poor health	20.0
9. Aspects of housework are neglected	49.0	9. Child delinquency	17.3
10. Inability to supervise school work	40.0		
11. Inability to cater for school needs	31.3		
12. Children are often late to school	29.3		
13. Poor childcare and support	29.0		
14. Poor performance at workplace	23.0		

n = 300 respondents

Source: Fieldwork (2014)

The nine negative effects of the challenges faced by the sampled male single-parents were: indebtedness (32.3%); poor work output (27.0%); poor nutrition (24.3%); anxiety (24.0%); indiscipline and truancy among children (24.0%); fear (22.3%); social isolation (21.7%), poor health (20.0%); and child delinquency (17.3%) as shown in Table 4. The results suggest that more than two-thirds of the respondents reported that they did not experienced negative effects of the challenges on themselves and their children. These respondents reported that rather they employed different coping strategies and appropriate managerial strategies in the performance of their roles to avoid the negative effects of the challenges. They might also benefit from support and intervention programmes to make the process of single-parenting easier, less stressful, more efficient, and more effective to attain the well-being of families.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has identified instrumental and expressive roles that are performed in the home. The instrumental roles ranged from breadwinner, household head, leader, disciplinarian to

administrator and social networking while the expressive roles included caring for children, cooking, washing, cleaning the house socialization of children and nurturing. The study has revealed that there was no role differentiation in the male single-parent households as they combined and performed both the instrumental and expressive roles. The major challenges facing by the male single-parents included time constraints, fatigue, loneliness and stress. The performance of both instrumental and expressive roles was reported to have adversely affected the fundamental aspects of the lives of the respondents in terms of parental relationship with children, career development, finances, social life, leisure, and meeting basic needs. However, these challenges generally had negative effects on about one-third of the respondents in areas of anxiety, fear, social isolation, poor health and child delinquency.

It is recommended that the local government, central government and non-governmental organizations should undertake human resource development programmes in the Central Region to equip male single-parents with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for the performance of both expressive and instrumental roles in the home. Family life professionals should also expand their programmes to cater for the interests and struggles of male single-parents.

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