

**Is life in a single-parent family destructive for the children?
An empirical-comparative study based on the evaluations of educators-
parents or the students of single-parent and nuclear families**

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The wider alterations in the social context during the last twenty years have brought about changes in established institutions such as the institution of family, leading to the rapid increase of the alternative forms of private life. The phenomenon of the children's nurturing by one parent pre-existed as an alternative form of private living, but recently it has known a rapid increase. One-parent families arise either after separation/divorce or after the death of one parent or due to maternity outside marriage.

The central goal of the research is the comparative study between students of single-parent and nuclear families as far as their psycho-social adaptation is concerned, so as to reach conclusions as to the question of whether single-parent families function as an aggravating factor a) for the emotional health of the child on a personal level, b) for the child's social adaptation in school and the wider community, and c) for the child's school performance.

In order to explore the behaviour of the child in the school and family environment, Achenbach's catalogue of child behaviour was chosen, as it constitutes a contemporary means of data collection and it is weighted in the Greek population (1995) by the Association for the Mental Health of Children and Teenagers. Specifically, the school performance of students from single-parent and nuclear families in the context of the school and the family is examined, as well as their behaviour based on the axes: emotional problems (withdrawal-isolation, physical discomfort, anxiety-depression, social problems), cognitive problems (problems of thought and attention), interpersonal problems (deviant and aggressive behaviour). Accordingly, the effect of factors concerning the social status, the age and the gender of the child is also examined. Achenbach's catalogue of child behaviour is also addressed to and completed by the teachers and the parents of the children.

The sample of the research was 62 students, boys and girls, aged 6-12, who studied in public schools of Attica from a total population of 261 students. Thirty one (31) students composed the first group (students of nuclear families) and an equal number of students (31) composed the second group, that is, the group of students coming from single-parent families.

The major exploratory questions that were raised in the research are whether:

1. The evaluations of the teachers are differentiated in any of the axes of behaviour from Achenbach's catalogue according to whether the students come from single-parent or nuclear families.
2. There are any differentiations concerning the evaluations of teachers about the school performance, the social status, the age and the gender of students coming from single-parent families in relation to those coming from nuclear families.
3. The evaluations of the parents are differentiated in any of the axes of Achenbach's catalogue according to whether the students come from single-parent or nuclear families.
4. There are any differentiations concerning the evaluations of the parents about the school performance, the social status, the age and the gender of students coming from single-parent families in relation to those coming from nuclear families.

The results of the present research are a combination of the evaluations of teachers and parents and the association between them, as well as the results of other research held globally.