

The Role of Single Parents in Enhancing Children's Learning Motivation: A Case Study at Islamic Elementary School

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A B S T R A C T

The family is the first environment that plays an important role in shaping children's learning motivation, including families with a single parent due to the death of a spouse. This condition requires a single parent to perform dual roles as both caregiver and breadwinner, making it important to examine how single parents contribute to enhancing children's learning motivation. This study aimed to describe the role of a single parent in improving the learning motivation of a second-grade student at MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung, the obstacles encountered, the child's responses, and the strategies employed. This research used a qualitative approach with a field research method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The primary data sources were Mrs. K as a single parent and her child, R, while secondary data were obtained from school documents and relevant literature. The findings revealed that Mrs. K acted as an emotional supporter and learning motivator by providing attention, affection, learning assistance, communication with teachers, and praise and rewards. Despite facing limited time, economic pressure, and physical and emotional fatigue, these efforts succeeded in improving R's discipline, enthusiasm, and academic achievement. Therefore, the role of a single parent can effectively support and enhance children's learning motivation.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an effort that is designed as a place to realize the learning process so that students can develop their potential so that they have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals and skills needed both for themselves and for others (Rahman et al., 2022). The first education was obtained by children in their closest environment, namely the family. Families generally consist of father, mother, and child. However, not all families have a complete structure. In some conditions, a family consists of only one parent, either father or mother, who lives with their children. This state is known as

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a single parent or single parent who bears the responsibility of childcare (Mastika et al., 2020). As experienced by a 2nd grade student with the initials R at MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung, he only has one mother in his life. At MI Islamiyah Tuugu Agung is a place where an R gets a lot of knowledge and knowledge.

Various factors that cause a person to become a single parent include the death of a partner, divorce, and living separately. This is an important issue because there are many problems related to the existence of single parents, especially in terms of achievement and motivation for children's learning. In addition, divisions in the family can cause inequality in child development due to the incomplete role of both parents. The incomplete parents make children experience gaps in responding to their development. Children who come from incomplete families have more negative self-concepts, are more extreme in expressing feelings, are timider and have more difficulty controlling their bodies than children who come from whole families. Especially a child who has a single parent background because of death. If a child is left to die by his father, then it is a mother who must give all the guidance to her child without stones from others. Like R who only gets love and guidance from his mother without the presence of a father in his life.

In this situation, a *single parent* has extra responsibility in taking care of children, especially a single parent mother will play the role of a housewife who cares, maintains and educates children as well as being a father as the backbone who works to earn economic income in order to meet the needs of the family. This is also experienced by Mrs. K as the single parent of R students at MI Islamiyah Tugua Agung. There are so many problems faced by children, especially in the achievement of children's achievements.

Article 59 of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection stipulates orphans/orphans, including abandoned children as a category that requires special protection (*Konsolidasi Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak_ UU RI No, n.d.*). This law explains that certain children need special protection from the state, namely an orphan, an orphan, an orphan, and an abandoned child. That is, children who have lost their parents or lack proper care and attention should receive more attention from the government and society. These children have the right to basic needs such as education, health, shelter, and protection from violence and discrimination. The state through various institutions is obliged to ensure that these children can grow and develop safely, healthily, and with dignity, even though they no longer have parents or families who are able to take good care of them.

Generally, children who have a *single parent* parenting style have poor motivation and interest in learning. This is because parents' attention to their child's development is not fully supervised (Nadira 2022). However, not all *single parents* lack attention or lack concern for their child's development, there are also single parents who actually try harder so that their child has high learning motivation and is not left behind by friends his age. Similar to what has been done by Mrs. K, she has more effort and great determination in increasing the motivation to learn children. It is known that Mrs. K is 50 years old and works as a farm laborer. Seeing this, the researcher is interested in researching further how a mother who is also the backbone of the family can motivate her child in learning so that R has good learning outcomes and

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achievements at school, as well as what are the inhibiting factors experienced by Mrs. K in increasing her child's learning motivation.

Each child receives and develops motivation obtained from various sources such as the family environment, play environment, school environment, and community environment (Fitriana & Mulyono, 2023). This motivation can affect a child in various activities such as playing, when interacting with others, and most importantly during the child's learning process.

In the study of learning motivation, there are two types of motivation that affect student learning behavior, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is an impulse that arises from within a child, such as the desire to acquire knowledge, curiosity, and satisfaction when successfully completing a learning task. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation comes from external factors, such as parental support, appreciation, praise, family environment, and school environment. The two types of motivation are interrelated in shaping students' learning enthusiasm. In children who come from single parent families, extrinsic motivation given by parents has an important role in fostering intrinsic motivation so that children still have good enthusiasm and learning achievement (Nadira, 2022).

The characteristics of students who have the motivation to excel include being diligent in learning, able to face difficulties, showing interest in various problems, tending to be independent in work, not easily bored with tasks, able to maintain opinions, and happy to find and solve problems. Nadira (2022) who is studying at Mi Islamiyah Tugu Agung and is in the 2nd grade, has great motivation to study and excels in his class. When the teacher gave him an assignment to do, he always completed it quickly. This shows that he has good motivation to learn. <https://bit.ly/3OA1G5E>

In system ecological theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner) explains that children's development is influenced by mutual interaction with their environment. The environment is divided into microsystems, ecosystems, and macrosystems (Mujahidah, 2015). Microsystems are the closest environments such as family, schools, peers, and residences that have a direct influence on children's behavior and development. In this context, children not only receive influence, but also influence their environment through daily interactions. Ecosystems include environments that do not interact directly with children, such as parents' work, school policies, and social conditions of the community, but still have a major impact on children's development through parenting, economic conditions, and learning opportunities. Meanwhile, macrosystems include cultural values, norms, and broader social systems that indirectly shape children's character. These three systems are interrelated and play a role in shaping children's personalities, emotions, and behaviors.

On the other hand, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory explains that learning motivation will develop optimally if the child's basic needs are met, ranging from physical needs, a sense of security, affection, appreciation, to self-actualization (Rahmi et al., 2022). Thus, learning motivation is not only influenced by the environment, but also by the fulfillment of children's basic needs, so both are important factors in supporting learning success. Therefore, the combination of understanding the social environment of students and

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the fulfillment of their basic needs in their families is important in increasing a child's motivation to learn.

Some previous studies have shown that single parents have an important role in shaping children's learning motivation. Research conducted by Nadira (2022) shows that the attention and parenting style of single parents have an effect on children's learning motivation, although there are various limitations in supervision and learning assistance. Another study by Mastika et al. (2021) explained that single parents are required to carry out a dual role as caregivers as well as breadwinners, thus affecting children's development and education. In addition, research by Fitriana & Mulyono (2023) revealed that the family environment is one of the factors that contribute to the formation of children's motivation to learn. However, these studies generally discuss the influence of parenting or the condition of single parent families in general on child development. Research that specifically examines the role of a single mother due to the death of a spouse in increasing the learning motivation of elementary school children through in-depth case studies is still relatively limited. Therefore, this research gap has a novelty (research gap) because it focuses on the role of single mothers in increasing the learning motivation of grade 2 students at MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung, including the form of roles performed, obstacles faced, children's responses, and strategies used in supporting children's learning success

In the observation made by the author at MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung, the author found that a child with the initials R who has a fairly high motivation to learn lives with a single mother, R is studying at Mi Islamiyah Tugu Agung and is in the 2nd grade. R has great motivation to learn and excels in his class. When the teacher gave him an assignment to do, he always completed it quickly. From the information statement provided by the homeroom teacher of class R, R has an orphan background. He only lives with his mother with the initials K and one brother. It is known that Mrs. K is 50 years old and works as a farm laborer. Seeing this, the researcher is interested in researching further how a mother who is also the backbone of the family can motivate her child in learning so that R has good learning outcomes and achievements at school, as well as what are the inhibiting factors experienced by Mrs. K in increasing her child's learning motivation.

Related to the background that has been presented, the author is interested in researching "The Role of *Single Parent* in Increasing Children's Learning Motivation: A Study on Grade 2 Students at Mi Islamiyah Tugu Agung". The purpose of this study is to describe the role of single parents in increasing children's learning motivation in grade 2 students at MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung, identify the obstacles faced by single parents in providing learning motivation, find out the child's response to the efforts given, and describe the strategies carried out by single parents so that children remain motivated and have good learning outcomes.

METHOD

This research is field research that will be carried out in February 2026 at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Islamiyah Tugu Agung. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type, because the researcher aims to describe in depth the phenomenon of the role of single



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mothers in increasing their children's learning motivation. Data collection techniques are carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation.

The research subjects consisted of three people, namely Mrs. K as a *single parent*, R as a 2nd grade student of MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung who came from a single-parent family, and Mrs. Lina Budiharti as a homeroom teacher of class R. The data sources used consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from K and R mothers, while secondary data were obtained from scientific journals related to research, student exercise books, report card results, student diaries, and documentation in the form of photos related to the state of *single parent families* in increasing children's learning motivation.

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out on a non-participant basis during the research process in February 2026 by directly observing R's learning activities in the classroom to see indicators of learning motivation such as activeness in asking and answering, discipline in doing assignments, attention when the teacher explained, and perseverance in learning. Observations are made more than once so that the data obtained is consistent and accurate (Nurrisa & Hermina, 2025). Furthermore, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, views, and perspectives of the interviewees related to the phenomenon being researched (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Interviews were conducted with Lina Budiharti's mother as a homeroom teacher, K's mother as a single parent, and R as a student. The questions asked are related to the form of the role of a *single parent*, the obstacles faced, the child's response to the motivation given, and the strategies used so that the child still has good learning outcomes.

The documentation technique is carried out by collecting various documents related to the role of *single parents* in increasing children's learning motivation. The documentation used includes student report cards, student learning exercise results, attendance lists, and photos of learning activities that function as supporting data to strengthen the results of observations and interviews. The validity test of the data was carried out through source triangulation and technical triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing the data of interview results between Mrs. K, student R, and homeroom teacher, Mrs. Lina Budiharti. Meanwhile, technical triangulation is carried out by matching the data from observations, interviews, and documentation so that the data obtained becomes more accurate and can be scientifically accounted for.

The last technique is Documentation which involves collecting data from documents, archives, or other written materials related to the role of *single parents* in increasing children's learning motivation. The documentation provides a source of supporting data that strengthens the results of observations and interviews that have been conducted by researchers. Documentation such as student report cards, study notes of student classroom exercises, and photos of student learning activities can help researchers obtain tangible evidence of the development of the student's motivation and learning outcomes.

The data analysis in this study uses the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation (*data display*), and conclusion drawn. Data reduction was carried out by selecting the results of observations, interviews, and documentation related to

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the role of single mothers in increasing children's learning motivation. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a systematic description so that it makes it easier for researchers to understand the results of the research. The last stage is the drawing of conclusions to obtain a complete and in-depth picture of the role of *single parents* in increasing children's learning motivation at MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Attention and Compassion as a Form of Learning Motivation Support

The role of parents is the part that parents carry out in every situation as well as how to behave to adjust to the circumstances in the family (Rauf et al., 2023). Parents have an obligation to meet their child's physical, emotional, social, and educational needs so that they can develop optimally. In single-parent families, the role becomes more complex because mothers not only function as caregivers but also as the head of the family as well as the main breadwinner (Balqis et al., 2023).

This condition was experienced by Mrs. K as the single parent of the 2nd grade R student of MI Islamiyah Tugu Agung. Even though she has to carry out a dual role, Mrs. K still tries to give attention and affection consistently to her child. Based on the results of the interview, Mrs. K revealed that she always accompanied her child to study, reminded her of the study schedule, and gave encouragement when R had difficulty understanding lessons.

Mrs. K revealed: "*Saya selalu mengingatkan R untuk belajar, mendampingi kalau ada pekerjaan rumah, dan memberi semangat supaya dia rajin sekolah serta bisa mempunyai masa depan yang lebih baik.*"

In addition, Mrs. K also tries to create a comfortable home atmosphere so that R feels cared for and gets enough emotional support. Support in the form of attention, affection, and positive words makes R feel valued and more confident in following the learning process. The results of the observation showed that R had good learning behavior. R looks active in learning, able to complete tasks given by the teacher quickly, and shows diligence in participating in learning activities in the classroom. This shows that the attention and affection given by Mrs. K has a positive impact on children's learning motivation.

Communication with Teachers in Monitoring Children's Development

Learning motivation is a condition that encourages a person to carry out learning activities to achieve certain goals (Haris Diandaru 2021). Learning motivation is influenced by internal and external factors. External factors include the family environment, the school environment, and interaction with teachers and peers (Irma Julita, Neviyarni Neviyarni, and Herman Nirwana 2025). As a single mother who has limited time, Mrs. K still tries to establish communication with teachers to find out R's academic development. Mrs. K always asks about schoolwork, learning development, and difficulties faced by children while participating in learning.

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According to K's mother: "Kalau ada waktu saya bertanya kepada guru bagaimana perkembangan R di sekolah, apakah ada tugas atau pelajaran yang sulit supaya saya bisa membantu di rumah."

This was also confirmed by the homeroom teacher of class R, namely Mrs. Lina Budiharti. He revealed that Mrs. K was quite concerned about the development of her child's education and always tried to find out R's condition at school.

Mrs. Lina Budiharti revealed: "Walaupun hanya diasuh oleh ibunya, R termasuk siswa yang rajin dan disiplin. Ibunya juga beberapa kali menanyakan perkembangan belajar R dan selalu mendukung kegiatan sekolah anaknya."

Based on the results of observations, good communication between Mrs. K and the teacher makes R's academic development can be monitored well. R is able to follow learning well, actively ask and answer teachers' questions, and show good learning readiness in class.

Rewards and Awards

In the family environment, parental attention, emotional support, and parenting greatly affect children's learning motivation. Parents are the first madrasah for their children (Tania et al. 2021). Therefore, giving awards and support is an important form of motivation for children. Based on the results of the interview, Mrs. K revealed that she always gives praise and simple appreciation when R gets good learning results or shows serious effort in learning.

Mrs. K stated: "Kalau R mendapat nilai bagus atau rajin belajar, saya selalu memuji dan memberi semangat supaya dia tambah rajin dan tidak mudah menyerah."

In addition to giving praise, Mrs. K also always gives advice on the importance of education and the future. Mrs. K tries to instill an attitude of discipline and responsibility in her son through example in daily life. The results of the observation showed that R had a high enthusiasm for learning. R always tries to complete tasks well and does not give up easily when facing difficulties. Based on the documentation of student learning outcomes, it is known that R's academic grades are classified as good and R managed to enter the top ten in his class. This shows a positive change in learning behavior, namely increased discipline, a sense of responsibility, and a spirit to excel.

Interpersonal Communication between Mother and Child

In addition to giving attention and appreciation, Mrs. K also built good interpersonal communication with her son. The interpersonal communication is carried out through simple conversations that are carried out every night before going to bed.

According to K's mother: "Saya selalu menyempatkan waktu mengobrol dengan R sebelum tidur. Saya menanyakan kegiatannya di sekolah dan mendengarkan cerita-ceritanya supaya dia merasa diperhatikan."

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Mrs. K revealed that the communication was carried out so that R would not feel like he had lost his affection even though he no longer had a father. Through good communication, Mrs. K wants R to always feel listened to and have the courage to express her feelings.

The observation results showed that R had a fairly good sense of confidence. R is not only active when learning is taking place, but also dares to appear in front of the class for small presentations. The emotional support provided by his mother makes R more confident and has a close relationship with his parents.

Obstacles Faced by Single Parents in Increasing Children's Learning Motivation

As a single parent, Mrs. K admitted that there were several obstacles in accompanying the child's learning process. The main obstacle faced is time constraints because they have to carry out the dual role of mother as well as breadwinner. As a farm worker, Mrs. K often spends time outside the house so that learning assistance cannot be done optimally every day. In addition to time constraints, economic pressure is also a considerable obstacle. Mrs. K must prioritize the basic needs of the family so that attention to the child's learning process is sometimes limited.

Mrs. K revealed: "*Kadang saya merasa capek karena harus bekerja dan mengurus rumah. Tetapi saya tetap berusaha supaya R tetap semangat belajar.*"

Another obstacle is physical and emotional exhaustion that arises due to the responsibilities that must be carried out alone. Lack of social support and limited knowledge on how to effectively accompany learning are also challenges. Even so, Mrs. K still tries to give attention and encouragement to R so that she does not lose her enthusiasm for learning.

Single Parent Strategies in Maintaining Children's Learning Motivation

To overcome these various obstacles, Mrs. K applies several strategies to support the child's learning process. This strategy is carried out by creating a regular study schedule, helping to prepare school supplies, creating a comfortable learning atmosphere, and always providing advice on the importance of education. In addition, Mrs. K also establishes good communication with teachers to monitor children's academic development and provide verbal and nonverbal motivation. This form of motivation is in the form of advice, praise, attention, and appreciation for every effort made by the child.

Based on the results of the interview, the homeroom teacher of class R, Mrs. Lina Budiharti revealed that: "*R termasuk siswa yang rajin, disiplin, dan pintar walaupun berasal dari keluarga yang tidak utuh. Dia selalu mengerjakan tugas dengan baik, aktif bertanya, aktif menjawab pertanyaan, dan sering berani tampil di depan kelas.*"

These findings are strengthened by observation results that show that R has a high enthusiasm for learning. R always tries to understand the subject matter seriously and does not give up easily when experiencing difficulties. Based on the documentation of learning outcomes, the R score is classified as good and even included in the top ten in its class. This

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shows that the strategy carried out by Mrs. K is able to help increase children's motivation to learn and academic achievement even in family conditions with single parents.

Discussions

The results of the study show that the attention and affection given by Mrs. K as a single parent plays an important role in increasing children's motivation to learn. This attention is manifested through learning assistance, encouragement, and fulfillment of children's emotional needs. These findings show that the family environment has a great influence on the development of a child's learning motivation. According to Diandaru (2021). Learning motivation is a condition that encourages a person to do learning activities to achieve certain goals. Learning motivation is influenced by internal factors and external factors, where family is one of the most influential external factors (Irma Julita, Neviyarni Neviyarni, and Herman Nirwana 2025).

The care and affection given by Mrs. K can be explained through the concepts of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is an impulse that comes from outside the individual, such as support, attention, praise, and appreciation from parents. In this study, the attention and affection given by Mrs. K became a form of extrinsic motivation for R. The encouragement then fostered intrinsic motivation in R which can be seen from her high enthusiasm for learning, sense of responsibility, discipline, and desire to excel. This can be seen from R's behavior that is active in the learning process, quickly completes assignments, and dares to ask and answer the teacher's questions. Thus, the extrinsic motivation provided by Mrs. K is able to encourage the formation of intrinsic motivation in R so that she has a high enthusiasm for learning.

The findings of this study are also in line with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory which states that human needs are arranged in stages ranging from physiological needs, a sense of security, affection, appreciation, to self-actualization (Rahmi et al., 2022). In this study, Mrs. K not only met the physical needs of the child, but also provided affection, attention, and appreciation so that R's emotional needs could be met. Fulfilling these needs makes R feel safe, appreciated, and confident so that he is able to develop his potential through learning activities. This can be seen from R's courage to appear in front of the class, be active in learning, and obtain good learning results. Thus, the fulfillment of the needs of affection and appreciation is a factor that supports the formation of learning motivation in children.

In addition, the results of this study can be explained through the theory of systems ecology from Urie Bronfenbrenner who explains that children's development is influenced by the mutual interaction between children and their environment (Mujahidah, 2015). In this theory, the family is included in the microsystem that has a direct influence on the development and behavior of children. Mrs. K as R's closest environment has an important role in shaping children's learning motivation and positive behavior. The form of attention, communication, and support provided by Mrs. K directly affects R's emotional and academic development. Thus, the results of this study strengthen Bronfenbrenner's view that the family is the closest environment and has the most influence on a child's development.

The results of the study also show that communication between mothers and teachers has an important role in supporting children's learning motivation. The communication is carried out to monitor academic development, find out the learning difficulties faced by children, and provide solutions to problems that arise during the learning process. These findings show that children's educational success is not only influenced by the family environment, but also by the good relationship between family and school.

These findings can also be explained through parenting theory which states that parental involvement in the child's educational process is an important factor in child development. Parents have the function of being educators, guides, motivators, and role models for their children (Tania et al., 2021). Even though Mrs. K has the status of a single parent, she still carries out these functions well through learning assistance, intensive communication with children, and cooperation with the school. This attitude shows that good quality of care can still be carried out even if the family is not in a complete condition.

In addition to attention and communication, giving praise and awards is also one of the strategies carried out by Mrs. K to increase children's motivation to learn. Praise and appreciation given when children achieve achievements or show good efforts make children feel valued and more confident. This condition encourages R to maintain and even improve his achievements. The results of the study showed that R had good discipline, was active in learning, and was able to enter the top ten in his class. This shows that giving awards has an influence on the emergence of positive learning behaviors in children.

In addition to the various efforts made, this study also found that there are obstacles faced by Mrs. K in increasing children's learning motivation. These obstacles are in the form of time constraints, economic pressure, and physical and emotional fatigue due to carrying out the dual role of mother as well as breadwinner. This condition shows that being a single parent is not easy because you have to carry out various responsibilities at the same time. However, these limitations did not make Mrs. K ignore her responsibility in educating her children. On the contrary, Mrs. K still tries to give attention and support to R so that she still has a good spirit of learning.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Nadira (2022) which states that parental attention has an influence on children's learning motivation. The study explains that a lack of parental attention can lead to low motivation for children's learning. However, the results of this study show that even though he is only raised by a mother, R still has good motivation to learn because he receives enough attention, affection, and support from his mother.

The findings of this study also support research conducted by Mastika et al. (2020) which explains that single parents have greater responsibilities because they have to carry out dual roles in the family. Despite facing various limitations, single parents still have a very important role in children's development and education. The results of this study show that Mrs. K is still able to carry out her role as a caregiver, educator, as well as a motivator for her child.

In addition, the results of this study are also in line with the research of Fitriana & Mulyono (2023) who stated that children's learning motivation is influenced by the family

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environment, school environment, and community environment. In this study, the family support provided by Mrs. K and a good relationship with the school were factors that strengthened R's motivation to learn.

Overall, the results of this study show that the status of a single parent is not a barrier for a mother to provide learning motivation to her child. Attention and affection, communication with teachers, giving awards, and good interpersonal communication have been proven to be able to form intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation in children. Despite facing various limitations and obstacles, Mrs. K is still able to carry out her role optimally so that R has discipline, a sense of responsibility, a spirit of learning, and good academic achievements. Thus, a child's success in learning is not only determined by the existence of both parents as a whole, but rather determined by the quality of parenting, attention, and support provided by parents to children.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the role of single parent carried out by Mrs. K is able to increase children's learning motivation through attention and affection, communication with teachers, giving awards, and good interpersonal communication with children. Despite facing obstacles in the form of time constraints, economic pressure, and physical and emotional fatigue due to dual roles, Mrs. K was still able to implement various strategies that supported the development of R's learning motivation so that it was shown by a disciplined attitude, active in learning, and obtained good academic achievements. These findings imply that the quality of parenting, emotional support, and parental involvement in a child's education have a more important influence than the completeness of the family structure. Therefore, it is recommended to single parents to continue to provide attention, support, and establish good communication with children and the school in supporting the child's learning process. In addition, schools are expected to increase cooperation with parents, especially single-parent families, through intensive communication and continuous mentoring, while for future researchers, it is recommended to develop research with a wider subject and scope in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the role of single parents in increasing children's learning motivation.

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