

Influence of Broken Homes on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the influence of broken homes on secondary school students' academic performance. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research employed descriptive survey research design. One hundred students were randomly sampled from four secondary schools out of seventeen secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. Using a stratified sampling method, 25 students were selected from the four schools to make up the sample size. The instrument used for the collection of data was influence of Broken Home on secondary school students assessment test (IBHSSSAT). The test contained 24 items designed to generate data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using t-test. The result revealed that there was a significant difference between academic performances of the students from broken homes and their intact homes. Consequent upon the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made: school owners should employ counselors to provide necessary assistance to students from broken homes as well as the parents.

Keywords: broken homes, secondary school, academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

A home is defined as the house, flat or apartment that an individual lives in with his/her family (Hornby and Parnwell, 2010). Family is defined as any two people who are related to each other. This includes genetic connection, adoption, marriage or by mutual agreement. The nuclear family comprised of married couple with their biological or adopted child/children living together in one household. This type of nuclear family is referred to by social scientists as an "intact family (home)", signifying that the family has been through a divorce or separation by death of a

member (Conkline, 2006). Broken homes are defined as one in which one of the partners loses his/her spouse by death separation, divorce, desertion or single parenting (Conkline, 2006). Deborah (2002) sees broken homes as a situation where two spouses separate leaving the children to the hazard of the society. Broken home is a home torn apart (Momoh, 2011).

Broken homes occur when husband and wife separate from each other through either natural causes (death) or by human cause (divorce), leaving the care and responsibility of the children to one parent. Divorce could be temporal or permanent. It is temporal when there is still hope of coming together after the relevant laws must have been put in place. This is to ensure that issues that created the temporal separation are settled. But if the divorce is permanent, it means there is no hope of coming together. Divorce has to do with either one of the partners quitting or saying “bye bye” to his/her spouse as a result of infidelity, pride, superstition, religion, disagreement, in-laws interferences, alcoholism, and disrespect for one another or bullying (violence). According to Johnson (2006), twenty-nine percent (29%) of women who had ever been married or had lived with a man in common law relationship, had experienced at least one episode of violence/bullying by a husband; such relationship are more likely to end in disaster, rather than peaceful atmosphere (Daily, 2004).

Death is natural cause of why homes tear apart. It is unpredicted phenomenon that has gone beyond any body's control. It can occur as a result of war, illness, accident, and through natural disaster such as flooding, earthquake, and plane crash or bomb blast. Single parent families are result of divorce (Wadworth, 2002). Unfortunately, the growth in the number of children born into broken homes is increasing by the day especially in Nigeria (Nwachukwu, 1998). Over the years, the investigation of the factor that influence academic performance of student have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counselors, psychologists, researcher and school administration in Nigeria (Wiseman 2003). This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country and unbaked graduates being produced from our universities (Imogie, 2002). Poor family structure (broken home) due to either natural cause or divorce is one of the factors responsible for the poor academic performance of student in secondary schools (Wiseman, 2003).

Broken home has more impact on the academic performance of student in schools in urban area than in remote villages. This is because those students from broken homes in the cities are affected by change of school due to inadequate financial resources or poverty, poor study habit and low self concept. Parents from broken homes are usually found in low status jobs because they enter work place early with few skills and little or no experience. They begin parenting in poverty and likely to remain in poverty which has an impact on academic

performance of their children (Dowd, 1997). Fatherlessness constrains students to poverty; students whose homes are headed by father are six times better than students whose homes are without parental care (Murphy, 2002). Students from broken homes in remote villages have nothing to challenge them. The existence of extended family will not allow them to feel the impact of poverty as those in the cities. They have much to occupy them like farming and petty trading and so on. The environment (location) in which the students come from can greatly influence his/her performance at school (Ichado, 1998). However, the findings on gender difference in children's responds to marriage separation (broken homes) have been contradictory. Some researches point to more adjustment problem for boys in broken homes or families than for girls (Guidubaldi and Perry, 2005). While Farber (2003); Kinard and Reiherz (2004) observe negative effect on girls than boys. In terms of crime, boys are affected by divorce very deeply than girls.

Children belonging to lower socio-economic group after divorce experience greater hardship. These hardships translate into adjustment problem. Some researchers argue that this decline in socio-economic status is directly linked to a variety of problems experienced by the children, such as psychological maladjustment and behavioral difficulties in school. However, research has also found that across the economic spectrum, 75% of long terms prison inmate who grew up in the broken homes are boys (Ross, 2005). Also, most male juvenile criminals who are threat to the public are from separated families.

In terms of self esteem, truancy and social network, girls from separated homes are victims. They have lower self esteem, more behavioural problem than adolescent boys (Farber, 2003). Clinical director's college mental health counseling centers said that female adolescent had more difficulty than males in adapting to divorce. Guidubaldi and Perry (2005) found that boys in divorce household exhibit more adverse effect than girls in terms of behavioural work effort and happiness. Family separation has more impact on younger children's academic performance than the older children (Hetherington, 1999). The reviewed literature indicated that there is an awareness of the importance of the home environment (family) on the students' academic performance. The home has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state.

The family is supposed to be the fundamental segment of a lasting society and civilization. Families that fall apart decline into social, cultural and education problems. Thus, if any country is to advance educationally, culturally and socially, effort should be made to keep families intact so as to create room for healthy growth of children educationally, physically and mentally. The aim of this study is therefore to examine the influence of broken homes on the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The following questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. Is there any difference in the academic performance of students from broken homes and those from intact families?
- ii. Is there any difference in the academic performance of students in rural area and those from urban area?
- iii. Is there any difference in the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of students between the ages of 10 and 15 and those between the age 16 and 20?

The following hypotheses were raised to test the relationship.

- i. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students from broken homes and those from intact families.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students in rural area and those from urban area.
- iii. There is no significance different in the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of the students between the age of 10 and 15 and those between the age 16 and 20.

METHOD

This study uses a survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all students in public secondary school (junior and senior) in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. There are seventeen secondary schools in the local government with a population of two thousand two hundred and thirty nine students. A stratified random sampling method was employed to select four schools from the population of schools and also 25 students were selected from each sampled school which cut across JSS1 to SS2. Five students were again selected from each class making a total of 100 respondents used for the study. The respondent comprised of 48 students from broken homes and 52 from intact homes. It was ensured that the students in question were actually from different school and wrote the same examination commonly set by the Ministry of Education Benin city.

Table 1: Detailed information of the sample schools

Name of school	Students sample size					Total
	JSI	JSII	JSIII	SSI	SSII	
Ujemen S/S Ekpoma	5	5	5	5	5	25
Ukhum S/S Ekpoma	5	5	5	5	5	25
Eguare S/S Ekpoma	5	5	5	5	5	25
Ujoelen S/S Ekpoma	5	5	5	5	5	25
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire entitled: Influences of Broken Homes on Secondary School Students Assessment Test (IBHSSAST). The test contained 24 items designed to assess the respondent used for the study.

The items were designed to identify student from broken homes and those from intact homes and to compare their academic performance in school. Also, the students' school records (result booklet and board sheet) and their performance in 2011/2012 academic session were used for analysis. The reason for this is because the researcher did not manipulate any variable of interest. The instrument was validated by experts in science education, measurement and evaluation and guidance and counseling. Using a test-retest method, a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained for the questionnaire. This coefficient was considered adequate for the instrument. The questionnaire was administrated to the 100 respondents and data collected were analyzed using t-test statistical method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented on tables 2 to 8. The tables show 2011/2012 session ratio result of the sampled school from intact and separated homes. Table 2 consists of the ratio of student examination score for both first second and third terms. The total ratio of the three examination scores for the session is also shown on the table 2. The total score for the session for student from broken homes (BH) was six hundred and forty (640). The average is (160). One hundred and sixty while the intact homes (IH) were three thousand four hundred and fifty three. (3453). The average was eight hundred and sixty three (863.2). The average ratio of student from broken homes (BH) to intact home (IH) is 1:5, i.e BH : IH = 1 : 5. On table 3, the total ratio for the session for student from broken homes (BH) was 1354.2. The average score ratio was 338.6.

The total ratio for the session for the students from intact home (IH) was 2998 and the average was 749.5. The average ratio of the students from broken homes (BH) on table 3 is 1:2, i.e. BH: IH = 1:2. Table 4 shows that the ratio of the scores for the session for both broken home (BH) an average of 358.2 while intact home (IH) has an average of 837. The average total score of broken homes (BH) to that of intact home (IH) was 1 : 2, i.e BH : IH = 1 : 2. Finally, table 5 reveals that total score for broken homes (HB) were 712.2 with an average of 178.05 while that of intact homes was 4008 with an average of 1002. The ratio of broken homes (BH) to that of intact homes (IH) was 1: 6. i.e BH : IH = 1 : 6.

Table 6 reveals that the calculated t-value of 2.94 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t- value, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the students from broken homes and those from intact families is hereby rejected. This means that there is a difference in the academic performance of the students from broken homes and those of intact homes. The result further shows that those from intact homes performed better academically than their counterpart from broken homes.

Table 7 shows that the calculated t-value of 69.7 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students in rural area and those from urban area is hereby rejected. This means that there is a difference in the academic performance of students in rural area and those from urban areas. The result further shows that students from the urban areas perform better academically than their counterpart from rural areas.

Finally, result from table 8 revealed that the calculated t-value of 0.030 was less than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of student between the age of 10 and 15 and those between the age of 16 and 20 is hereby retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the effect of broken homes on the academic performance of students between age 10-15 years and those between ages 15-20 years. The result further showed that the two groups performed equally.

The results of this study indicate that there is a difference between the academic performance of the students from broken homes and students from intact homes. Table 2-6 showed the performance of student from broken homes. From the table, the performance of the students from broken homes fell below average when compared with those from intact homes which is in ratio 1 : 2, 1 : 5 and 1 : 6. This finding is in agreement with Wiseman (2003), who is of the opinion that poor family structure (broken homes) due to either natural causes or divorce is one of the factors responsible for the poor academic performance of the students in secondary schools.

The results equally show that broken homes affect student's academic performance of students in urban areas more than the rural areas. This finding also agrees with the pervious finding of Ichado (1998) who observed that the environment or location, in which the students are living, can greatly influence his/her academic performance in school. However, the study showed that broken homes affect student of age 10-15 the same way it affects student of age 15-20. This finding disagrees with the conclusion of Hetherington (1999) who observed that family separation has more impact on younger children's academic performance than the older children (student).

Finally, this finding could be explained by the fact that life in a single parent family can be traumatic and student brought up in such family structure often suffer some emotion problem like lack of warmth, love as well as financial problem which can lead to change of social and environmental status. Also, the cultural practice in Africa allows support for parent (single parent) resulting from broken

homes either due to natural or divorce causes. This helps to reduce the negative effect of single parenthood. Back home to our country Nigeria, single parent family, some of the functions due to absence of parent are sufficiently taken over by the extended family members, friends and children.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The essence of life is to produce children, take good care of them; so that they can carry on with the responsibility when we grow old. Students of today are leaders of tomorrow. We should not destroy their future. Broken homes can lead to broken future. We must try to create a healthy and conducive atmosphere for their growth in every sphere of life by discouraging separation in marriage. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the need for recognition of individual difference in students and the need to deal with them adequately must be ensured. School Counselor should be employed in school to provide the necessary assistance and psychological support for students from broken homes to enable them overcome their psychological problems. There is the need also to counsel parents on the importance of the home structure and the life of students so that they can understand the implication and consequences of parental separation and thus mobilize all resources to curtail the problems from the situation.

Table 2: Ujemen Secondary School Year Ratio Summary

Family type	No. students	Terms 1 ratio	Terms 2 ratio	Terms 3 ratio	Total ratio	
Broken home	18	A	67.2	72	36	175.2
		B	36	48	48	132.0
		C	86	72	36	194
		D	36	36	67.2	139.2
Total					640	
Intact home	17	A	195	288	480	963
		B	204	306	240	750
		C	144	216	240	600
		D	228	342	570	1140
Total					3453	

Source: Students' school records, 2011/2012 academic session

Table 3: Ukhun Secondary School Year Ratio Summary

Family type	No. students	Terms 1 ratio	Terms 2 ratio	Terms 3 ratio	Total ratio	
Broken home	4	A	67.2	129	180	376.2
		B	67.2	126	240	433.2
		C	28.8	144	240	412.8
		D	36	48	48	132
Total					1354.2	
Intact home	21	A	144	216	240	600
		B	168	252	420	840
		C	195	288	480	963
		D	67.2	288	240	595.2
Total					2998	

Source: Students' School Records, 2011/2012 academic session

Table 4: Eguare Secondary School Year Ratio Summary

Family type	No. students	Terms 1 ratio	Terms 2 ratio	Terms 3 ratio	Total ratio	
Broken home	12	A	20.8	119	230	369
		B	36	134	170	340
		C	21.8	45	230	296
		D	15	23	30	68
Total					1074.6	
Intact home	13	A	72	206	450	
		B	148	242	410	728
		C	185	268	405	800
		D	30	40	55	858
Total					2511	

Source: Students' School Records, 2011/2012 academic session

Table 5: Ujoelen Secondary School Year Ratio Summary

Family type	No. students	Terms 1 ratio	Terms 2 ratio	Terms 3 ratio	Total ratio	
Broken home	14	A	14.4	28.8	144	187
		B	67.2	129	180	316.2
		C	36	36	67.2	139
		D	28.8	23.0	18.0	69.8
Total					712.2	
Intact home	11	A	228	342	570	1140
		B	195	480	480	115
		C	195	288	240	728
		D	168	252	570	990
Total					4008	

Source: Students' School Records, 2011/2012 academic session

Table 6: t-test difference of performance between students from broken

Family type	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Intact homes	51	12.75	0.64	98	2.94	1.98	sig
Broken homes	49	12.25	0.80				

Table 7: t-test of performance between students from rural area and urban areas

Family type	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Intact homes	67	16.75	2.96	98	67.7	1.98	sig
Broken homes	33	8.25	2.55				

Table 8: t-test difference on students' age and performance

Family type	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Intact homes	50	12.5	0.755	98	0.030	1.98	Not sig
Broken home	50	12.5	0.755				

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