

Influence of Broken Home on Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja-Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the Influence of broken home on academic achievement of senior secondary school student in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population of this study consists of 1,208 senior secondary school (SSS1) students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (FCT Secondary Education Board, 2024). The sample for the study consists of a total of 400 male and female senior secondary school (SSS 1) students drawn from each secondary school across the six area councils in Abuja. Simple random probability sampling was used for the study. A self-structured instrument by the researcher entitled: Broken Home on Academic Achievement Questionnaire (BHAA-Q) with a 4-point Likert summative scale of SA-Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, SD-Strongly Disagreed and D-Disagreed. The instrument was faced and content validated by experts in measurement and evaluation department of Educational Foundations, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akunbga, Ondo State. To test the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted on 30 students who were not part of the sample size but the population. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The study used descriptive statistics to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed among others that there is a significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their own married parents and their counterpart living with their foster parents. The study concludes that broken homes exert a lot of influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students, ranging from poor motivation and parental attention, un-favourable home environment and emotional instability. The study recommended that government and school proprietors should engage school counsellors in all secondary schools to provide the necessary assistance to children from broken homes.

Keywords: Broken home, Academic achievement, Secondary school, Students

INTRODUCTION

The family is the child's first introduction to the outside world. As a result, the youngster receives their earliest education and socialisation from parents and other prominent family members. The family establishes the psychological, moral, and spiritual groundwork for the child's entire development. A broken home in this context is seen as a home that is physically deficient because of divorce or separation by parents.

Education has always been a vital institution in many societies, and Agogo (2020) cited Aliu (2018) as describing education as the process through which a society passes its knowledge, culture, and values from generation to generation. Furthermore, it was emphasised that education is the eye of an individual; it is the process through which a person receives knowledge, develops skills, and cultivates the talents and attitudes essential for workplace survival. Indeed, education has evolved into a massive government enterprise, characterised by a progressive expansion of dynamic government engagement and active participation (FGN 2024). With the current educational system in place, people today view education as a right, not a privilege. This instils a sense of belonging in everyone, since everyone views themselves as having a responsibility to fulfil. As a result, many people feel that education is the path to success, and against this backdrop, education is ranked as an individual's eye (Agogo, 2020). Hornby (2022) identified a home as a group of people who live together and how they act, whereas a family is defined as a group of one or two parents and their children (Ibid). A broken home is a word that refers to a household, most often in relation to parenting, in which the family unit does not operate correctly in accordance with established societal standards (Wikipedia online). The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of family units that do not adhere to established societal standards on the academic achievement of secondary school pupils in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Individual disparities in achievement are assumed to exist within any cohort of learners. The instructor may notice that children do not all learn at the same rate in a class of 40 children. Even though he employed the same materials and methods throughout the class, there are variances in students' academic achievement. Several elements, however, have been presented as possible explanations for such disparities in achievement, human intelligence, environment, and the meaninglessness of learning materials; learning style, for example, may influence the rate of learning (Ibid). The identification of a broken home as a factor influencing academic achievement is not surprising given that the family is the fundamental unit of society (Abah 2016), and the home has a significant influence on the psychological, emotional, social, and economic well-being of the student (Ajila & Olutola, 2017). Because parents are the first socialising agents in an individual's life, the status of the home has influences on the individual (Ibid). The primary factor laying the emotional, moral, and spiritual groundwork for a child's total growth is their family (Uwaifo, 2018).

It is ideal that the school is responsible for experiences that equip and make up the individual's life during school periods however, the parents and the individuals' experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and determining the child school life. Thus, Ichado (2019) concluded that the environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence their personality and achievement of secondary school students and hence the importance of education warrants the desire for this study so, to research the influence of a broken home on the academic achievement of secondary school students and recommend possible remedies to such influence. The place of secondary education in the entire educational process is highly essential and need not to be neglected hence the quality of primary and secondary education play significant role in determining the quality of higher institutions for people (Agogo, 2020). This study will principally explore the various aspects of a broken home and how each influences children's academic achievement. It will examine issues like: to what extent do children living with their own married parents perform academically better than children living with foster parents? To what extent do children who live with single parents perform academically better than children who live with both parents? It will also analyse the extent to which broken home has affected the level of attention given to students by their parents, and the degree to which broken homes have affected the level of academic motivation given by parents to their children. Is also intended that this work will discuss the degree of influence broken homes exert on the emotional atmosphere at homes, socio-economic status of parents and the general emotional stability of children.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, investigations into the factors that influence academic achievement of students have attracted the interest of teachers, counsellors, psychologist, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria. This is due to public outcry concerning the low standard of education in the country, the declining quality of education in the country in general and FCT-Abuja in particular, as characterised by poor academic achievement and the breeding of graduates with little technical know-how, has resulted into serious setback in the industrial development of the nation in general and poor turnout of qualified students in Abuja for admission in the various tertiary institutions in the country.

Some factors such as students internal state namely intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety as well as their environment which includes availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure have been identified as possible causes of poor academic achievement. For example, a daily sketch publications on “causes and curses of poor achievement at West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE)” in 2023 identified and categorised issues responsible for students poor achievement to issues of teachers, problems of inadequate facilities in schools, issues traceable to students, issues caused by parents and society at large, and issues caused by government policies and low funding of educational sector. With regards to issues caused by parents and constant disagreement often affects the children emotionally and could lead to poor educational achievement. Children from broken homes exhibit lower self-esteem, lower achievement motivation, lower tolerance for delay of gratification and lower educational achievement than those from intact homes where both parents are present. It is based on the above that the researchers carry-out this study on the influence of broken homes on academic achievement of secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The researchers intend to find out the magnitude of adverse influence that broken homes have on the academic achievement of secondary school students.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the extent children living with their own married parents perform academically better than children living with foster parents.
2. Examine the extent children who live with both parents perform academically better than children who live with a single parent(s).

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer to the following research questions.

1. To what extent do children living with their own married parents perform academically better than children living with foster parents?
2. To what extent do children who live with both parents perform academically better than children who live with single parents?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their own married parents and children living with foster parents.
2. There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their parents and their counterparts living with a single parent.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This research design is mainly applied to real life situation in education where need to determine the capacity building needs. Olaitan, (2019) opted that descriptive research design is the plan, structure and strategy that the investigator/researcher adopt to obtain solution to research problems using questionnaire in collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. The target population of this study consists of 1,208 senior secondary school (SSS1) students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (FCT Secondary Education Board, 2024). The sample for the study consists of a total of 400 senior secondary school (SSS 1) students drawn from each secondary school across the six area councils in Abuja. The simple random probability sampling was adopted for the study. A self-structured instrument by the researchers entitled: Broken Home on Academic Achievement Questionnaire (BHAA-Q) with a 4-point Likert summative scale of SA-Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, SD=Strongly Disagreed and D-Disagreed. The instrument was faced and content validated by experts in measurement and evaluation department of Educational Foundation, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akunbga, Ondo State. To test the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted on 30 students who were not part of the sample size but the population. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The study used descriptive statistics to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent do children living with their own married parents perform academically better than children living with foster parents?

Table 1: Table of mean achievement score of children living with their own married parents and children living with foster parents

N1	\bar{X}_1	N2	\bar{X}_2	Difference
174	66.36	76	45.37	20.99

Table 1 reveals that the mean score of 174 children from intact homes is 66.36 while that of 76 children from foster parents is 45.37 with mean difference of 20.99 in favour of children from married parent homes.

Research Question 2

To what extent do children who live with a single parent perform academically better than children who live with both father and mother?

Table 2: Table of mean achievement score of children who live with both parents and their counterparts from single parent

N1	$\bar{X}1$	N2	$\bar{X}2$	Difference
174	66.36	150	51.2	15.16

Table 2 shows that the mean achievement scores of 174 children from intact home is 66.36 while that of 150 children from single parent is 51.2 with 15.16 mean differences in favour of those from intact homes.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their own married parents and children living with foster parents.

Analysis of data to test H01 in Table 3

Table 3: Table of t-test analysis of data of children from intact homes and foster parent homes

t-cal	t-critical	d.f	p	interpretation	decision
7	1.960	248	0.05	significant	rejected

The result in Table 3 shows, there is significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their own married parents and children living with foster parents (t-calculated, $7 > t$ -critical, 1.960, df 248 at p 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result also revealed, children living with their own married parents perform academically better than children living with foster parents.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their parents and their counterpart living with single parent(s).

Analysis of data to test H02 in Table 4

Table 4

Table of t-test analysis of data of children from both parent family and their counterparts from single-parent family

t-cal	t-critical	df	p	interpretation	decision
5.3	1.960	322	0.05	significant	rejected

The result in Table 4 shows, there is significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with both parents and their counterparts living with single-parent(s) (t-calculated, 5.3 > t-critical, 1.960, df 322 at p 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result revealed children living with both parents perform academically better than children living with single parent(s).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One of the findings of this study reveals that there was a significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with their own married parents and their counterparts living with foster parents. The data analysed strongly support this finding (t-calculated 7 > t-critical, 1.960, df 248 at 0.05 alpha level). The findings of this study aligned with Adejo (2024) who upheld that in a family where unusual structure exists because of divorce, bereavement or death of both parents, the socialization pattern could be seriously affected resulting into abnormality in the adult life of children.

Secondly, the findings of this study underscore the complexity of the significant difference between the academic achievement of children living with both parents and their counterparts living with single-parent (t-calculated 5.3 > t-critical 1.960 df 322 df at 0.05 alpha level). This finding is also in line with the opinion of Israel, Beaulieu and Hartless (2021), who maintained that children in families with different family structures.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that.

Broken homes exert a lot of influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students, ranging from poor motivation and parental attention, unfavourable home environment and emotional instability. Owing to this, there is the need for all stakeholders, including guidance, foster/single parents, teachers among others to carry along children from broken homes by identifying their individual issues and profiling solutions to same.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The government and school proprietors should engage school counsellors in all secondary schools to provide the necessary assistance to children from broken homes.
2. Parents' primarily single and foster parents should adequately supervise children to boost their self-esteem.

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