

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY INSTABILITY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE.

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Abstract

The study investigated influence of family instability on the academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. Two objectives, research questions with two corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 10801 students which comprises 4554 male students and 6137 female students of senior secondary class 2 (SS2) in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, 2023/2024 academic session. The sample size of the study was 386 which was determined by Taro Yamane's sample size formula. The sample size was proportional distributed to male 167 and female 219 and was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed Questionnaire titled: Influence of Family Instability on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (IFAPSSS). The questionnaire was validated by expert in Sociology of Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of the instruments used for data collection for the study were estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability index of 0.82 was obtained, the instrument was therefore adjudged reliable and suitable enough for the study. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation and hypotheses tested with the t-test at 0.05% level of significance. The findings revealed that both male and female students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State accepted that violence in the family influence their academic performance to a high extent and male and female students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State accepted that broken family influence their academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that families must inculcate the habit of understanding, tolerance and forgiveness in order to avoid violence in the home.

Keywords: Family Instability and Academic performance

Introduction

Family remains the primary environment of every child. The impact of family on the success of a child cannot be over emphasized, because the family plays cogent role in the life of a child generally. The child needs support from the family in order to achieve his aim and get successful in life. In the education of a child, he or she needs the support of the family in terms of getting adequate and necessary working materials in the school, the child needs peace to be emotionally stable so as to concentrate on learning and thereby achieve success academically, an enabling domestic environment to operate and plan his /her life adequately and so on is paramount. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018), the family is the basic unit in society, traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children or a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head. The family acts as a socializer and provides vital support in financial, social, emotional, and educational support. The families begin the process of education and provide physiological and psychological needs of the child.

Grych & Fincham (2001) describe family as a bio-social group, a network of persons intimately held together by a band of social and kinship relationship. He sees the family as the core of the society and that corrupt families yield bad societies, while good families yield good citizens and society.

Abdul (2007) states also that the family is a unit of interacting personalities rather than purely a common fixation of sexual, parental and filial instincts. Olaitan & Akpan (2003) also noted that the family is the small primary group in the society to which the state entrusts the care and training of its future citizens in the formative period of their lives. The family is a unit of people tied together by bonds of marriage, birth or adoption, having in most cases a common residence and sharing economic activities (Onunuju, 2004).

Transmission of social values of right and wrong, what is morally and religiously accepted or condemned is by the family. It follows therefore, that by the time a child is of age, he must have learnt what his rights are, his obligations and roles within the society. Amato and Anthony (2014) defined a family as a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing. According to Sharma (2013), family comprises people ordinarily living in the same house, unless work, study, imprisonment, confinement, foreign sojourn, or any other exigencies compelled. The family is the smallest unit of every society and the first school of a child. This means that the family is where a child learns his language, values and behaviours. Education begins at home and parents are the first teachers that interact with the child. A child always watches and learns from his parents. That is the reason Latu (2018) states that a child grew up and often imitated his parents, and would continue to do so throughout his schooling.

A stable family is one which its members accept each other's shortcomings, understand, and appreciate the contribution of each member, always ready to assist, forgive and think on how to see the progress of each member and the entire family. It is the complete state of disunity, chaos, anarchy and confusion, capable of changing at any time. Structurally, a family can be broken into two types; stable (intact) and unstable (broken) family. The family lays the psychosocial, moral and spiritual foundations in the overall development of the child. A closely knitted family, solidified by love, understanding and respect for each other is certainly more likely to bring up a child well disciplined and socially upright than a disagreeable family. A stable home is one in which both parents (father and mother) live together with their children. The level at which the home operates may determine the academic achievement of a student in school. Also, children that have suffered from neglect or lack of love (in broken homes) are known to be psychologically imbalanced to face the realities of life.

Hassan (2016) opines that family instability is the degree to which families fail to provide continuity, cohesiveness and stability for children. Crosnoe & Elder (2011) opined that family instability affects child's social and personal relationships with his/her colleagues, mates and peers within and outside his/her environment. A very unstable family will not be able to create an enabling environment for the child to do well in his education, thus leading to the reductions in the amount of time parents spend monitoring school work, supervising their children and reductions in parent-child communication. A child experiencing family instability may not be emotionally stable to concentrate on studies. Again, a child that is brought up in an emotionally tense matrimonial home that is characterized by constant marital and family conflict will not be able to perform well academically because he/she will not concentrate on learning. This is often accompanied by increase in truancy and more negative attitudes towards school as exhibited by the adolescent.

An unstable family is one where members do not accept each other's shortcomings, do not understand, and do not appreciate the contribution of each member, is not ready to assist, unforgivable and do not think on how to see the progress of each member or the entire family. It is

the complete state of disunity, chaos, anarchy and confusion, capable of changing at any time. Structurally, a family can be broken into two types; stable (intact) and unstable (broken) family. Childhood is the phase where parents' experiences are believed to exert their most significant and salient influences of the child.

Laible & Carlo (2004) who reported that family environment and their relationship have a great influence on the academic performance of the student. They further stated that parental relationship predict adolescent's outcomes in school attendance and academic performance of school age children. Igbiosa, (2014) observes that a broken home affects the physical, emotional and academic life of the child affected. The student from a broken home finds things very difficult most especially his academics and these invariably affect his/her performance in school. He also pointed out that a crisis home has negative effect on academic performance on their children

Pong & Ju (2000) reveal that children who experienced two or more instability from their parents were more likely to show disruptive behavior at school, to have poorer emotional adjustment, and to have lower grades and achievement scores compared to children who experienced no misunderstanding. Pong & Ju earlier affirmed that students who observed longitudinally, experiencing more than one transition in family structure were associated with a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. Laible & Carlo (2004) affirmed that parental relationship predicts adolescent's outcomes in school in school attendance and academic performance of school age children. Osborn & McLanahan (2007) reported that violence at home can shape students' attitudes about school. Julia (2012) stressed that a child surrounded by a violent at home who does not expect to live to adulthood may see little purpose in completing an education. Julia (2012) maintained that violence in the home increases the likelihood that a student will spend at least part of childhood and/or adolescence in the child protective services system, perhaps in foster care. For children who live with violence, the situation is quite often just one of a constellation of challenging circumstances that affects their school attendance compare.

The families begin the process of education and provide physiological and psychological needs of the child. But the type of family that will provide this support in all areas will be a stable family. Family structure suggests whether a family is intact or broken. A broken family in the context of this research work is a family that has split or separated for various reasons such as death of a parent, separation, divorce or abandonment that may lead to children being raised by single parents, stepparents or relatives. On the other hand, an intact family refers to a family in which both biological parents are present and living together in the home. The intactness of a family may not necessarily mean that it functions well or that the children are being well catered for, as all manners of normal conflicts and problems as well as life threatening issues do occur in intact families as well.

The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2011) posits that the influence of type of family structure on academic success continue through high school and it significantly influences outcomes such as high school dropout rates, graduation rates and age at first pregnancy. This view was shared by Ajila & Akinleke, (2012), when they noted that the home has a great influence on the child's psychological, emotional, social and economic state. According to them, the state of the home affects the individual since the family is the first point of contact and socializing agent in an individual's life. Structural analysis of families is important because family is the most important and informal socializing agent that molds the child in society and the future of the child depends upon

it. It helps children to recognize and achieve important societal goals. Impliedly, family setting and background play important role in strengthening or upsetting student's academic performance.

Family instability exerts some high degree of influence on the children being the direct target. This is because they directly carry all the problems which affect them adversely in their academic pursuits. Uche (2014) observes that the family has an important influence on the child's academic achievement. What the child learns at home and how his/her family motivates them towards education contributes to a large extent on their success or failure in school. Similarly, psychologists are of the view that children from disintegrated families have lower academic achievements than those in united homes. Stone (2012) supported this view when he opined that "the children of divorced parents do worse than the children of individual parents. He further concluded that the problems of some children brought up by some parents include poor health, behavioral difficulties, low achievements at school, psychiatric illness, and more involvement in alcohol abuse and crime.

Family instability does not provide a safe environment for all family members; it rather produces "child abuse" with its consequences. It is observed in recent times that safest environment for a child is one in which the biological parents are married and the family has always been intact (Stone, 2012). Such enabling environment will impart positively on the child. Similarly, Morrish (2014) declares that the child living in the shadow of the broken family will feel bewildered by coming and goings and by the mere fact that essential relationships are not promoted or are broken off and disrupted at a very impressionable time.

A family is either broken or intact. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons; such as death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never completed (Gabriel, 2010). Life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent and such families may be faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources, assumptions of new roles and responsibilities, establishment of new pattern in intra familial interactions and reorganization or routines and schedules (Khantric, 2010). Single parents are overburdened by responsibilities which affect their children academic achievement (Ekpata, 2012).

In single parent families, children may suffer some psychological and social problems which affect their academic achievement. Danesy & Okediran (2012) view street hawking among secondary school students as what has other psychologically imposed problems, such as sex networking behaviour, juvenile delinquent behaviour, taking much of the students' school time that necessitated the poor academic achievement and drop out syndrome noticed among young school students. The family type that a child comes from either monogamous (nuclear), polygamous, divorced parents, re-married parents, single parents, or stepparents usually has an impact on a child's academic achievement. The nuclear family consists of two parents and children. It is held in esteem by society as being the ideal in which to raise children. Children in nuclear families receive strength and stability from the two parents' structure and generally have more opportunities due to financial ease of two parents.

Billings (2012) is of the opinion that children become delinquent because they are most often deprived of security, protection and love that should come from both parents and these impacts negatively on academic success of the child or children. Stone (2012) stated that children from single homes are more likely to show to a great extent, the effect of under nourishment, illness, insufficient

rest as well as negative attitude towards school, which manifest in infancy, which is a factor that can affect achievement and performance negatively. In the same vein, Mdanda (2016) blames poor academic achievement to another family type known as step family. Individuals who divorce most times choose to remarry. This type of family constitutes two separate families merging in to one unit (a new husband and new wife and their children from previous marriage or relationship).

Mdanda (2016) states that children from such families most often become depressed and would want to compensate themselves in acts of unrest and might go astray and loose academic focus. This is because the atmosphere at such homes is not likely to be conducive for the children to make decisions of their own. Kennedy (2016) observes that children of female- headed families (single mothers) are at a greater risk of poor academic achievement, because of mother having very low incomes and inability to provide the basic needs of the children which becomes responsible poor academic achievement of the children.

A child brought up in an emotionally tense home that is characterized by constant marital or family conflict will not be able to concentrate on learning which will affect drastically the academic performance of the child at school. Academic performance is a very important tool with which the success, ability and capability of a student to contribute to the development of a society are measured. The implication of this is that students that perform beyond average of the standard set by the society is not only seen as brilliant but as well probable to contribute meaningfully to the sustenance, growth and development of such society, especially, in the future. As a result of this, every society constantly observe the academic performance of its students at all levels of educational institutions.

Academic performance can be defined as comparing individual students' performance assessment scores from one year to the next, aggregated to the school level. Various schools establish their Satisfactory Academic achievement standards as requested by the state. Satisfactory Academic achievement standards ensure that, students are completing their coursework and, in some cases, ensure that scholarship students can continue to receive financial aid. Several factors contribute to successful academic achievement, such as socioeconomic status, supportive teachers, student motivation, and language competency. Academic achievement compares individual students' performance assessment scores from one year to the next, aggregated to the school level. Students' academic achievement is affected by many factors such as socioeconomic status, supportive teachers, student motivation, and language competency.

Academic performance is an important parameter in measuring success in students. Vedel & Poropat (2017) defines academic performance as the extent to which an individual, typically a student had achieved an educational goal. Kim (2017) referred to academic performance as metrics that measured and tracked academic progress and achievement. It is also a very important tool with which the success, ability and capability of a student to contribute to the development of a society is measured. Of recent, there have been major complaints of a decline in academic performance of students in Nigeria. The decline was affirmed by Soyinka (2013) who stated that academic standard had fallen drastically and the quality of graduates being produced by the nation's schools was questionable and subject to re-examination. This may be as result of many factors, especially family structures, since the family or the parents are the first socializing agents the child gets to know at the beginning of his life.

Statement of the Problem

A general family atmosphere of peace, harmony and cohesion strongly influences the overall development of the child, just as an atmosphere of anger and discord has a greater impact on children. Cuning, (1993) stated that, the nature of family which a child belongs has a lot of influence on the general life pattern of the child. Therefore, the successful passage through the process of educational attainment is partly dependent on the entire family assistance. Thus ineffectiveness or inadequate family assistance may lead a child to feel overwhelmed, consequently to withdraw from school. Hence, family stability can be a strong determinant of student's academic performance in school, the opposite of which can be disastrous.

Family instability can cause parents to become more inconsistent and ineffective in parenting and may reduce responsiveness to children's cognitive needs, diminishing the quality of the emotional relationships and attachment between parents and children. This will consequently promote less parental involvement in school work, less or no attention given to early and regular attendance at school and less supervision outside the home. These children are more likely to drop out of school; disengagement from school is associated with low parental involvement and educational aspirations.

A very unstable family has little or no time for playing parental roles, thus leading to the reductions in the amount of time parents spend monitoring school work, supervising their children and reductions in parent-child communication. This is often accompanied by increase in truancy and more negative attitudes towards school as exhibited by the adolescent. Virtually from all the write ups and experiences so far gathered, it has come to full knowledge that most parents, teachers, and even the society are ignorant of the role family stability or otherwise play on school attendance and academic performance of secondary school students. It is in the light of these situations that the researcher intended to carry out a study to investigate the influence of family instability on the academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Aim & Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine influence of family instability on the academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of this study sought to:

- i. Determine the extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the extent to which broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions would guide the study:

- i. To what extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- ii. To what extent to which broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated would guide the study:

- i. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which sought to determine influence of family instability on the academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, without the researcher manipulating the independent variables. The population of the study was 10801 which comprises 4554 male students and 6137 female students of Senior Secondary Class 2 (SS2) in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, 2023/2024 academic session. The sample size of the study was 386 which was determined by Taro Yamane's sample size formula. The sample size was proportional distributed to male 167 and female 219 and was used for the study. The instrument for data collection is Questionnaire on

Influence of Family Instability on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (QIFAPSSS). Reliability of the instrument was determined by experts in Sociology of Education and those in Measurement and Evaluation. The experts scrutinized the instruments in terms of quality, relevance and appropriateness of the items. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of the instruments used for data collection for the study were estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability index of 0.82 was obtained, the instrument was therefore adjudged reliable and suitable enough for the study. A total of 386 instrument was distributed and all the copies were retrieved in good condition and used for the analysis. The data collected for the study were analysis using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) at the acceptable mean score bench mark of 2.50 and above, as well as t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: To what extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on Violence in the Family Influence Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

	Statement: Violence in the Family	Male (n=167)		Female (n=219)		Aggte $\bar{X}$	RKS
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
1	The quarreling and fighting in my home makes me lost concentration thereby affecting my performance	2.99	0.98	3.15	0.92	3.07	HE
2	The crying of my mum makes me sad thereby affecting my academic performance	3.02	1.00	3.30	0.79	3.16	HE
3	The unhappy mod of my mum makes me feel sorrowful thereby affecting my performance	2.93	1.01	3.20	0.85	3.07	HE

4	The bitterness and hatred among my parents makes me lost focus thereby affecting my performance	2.89	1.01	3.16	0.85	3.03	HE
5	I hardly read at home thereby affecting my academic performance	3.17	0.90	3.26	0.81	3.22	HE
6	I always go out with friends thereby affecting my academic performance	3.07	0.96	3.09	0.93	3.08	HE
7	The lack of concern and care at home makes me lost focus thereby affecting my academic performance	2.85	1.05	3.02	0.97	2.94	HE
Grand mean		2.99	0.99	3.17	0.87		HE

Field study 2024: Acceptable mean score (mean cut-off point) is 2.50 and above

Table 1 showed item by item analyses of mean scores and standard deviation of the respondents (Male and Female) on extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. From the result it can be observed that the mean scores and standard deviation of the respondents (Male and Female) on all items are above the decision mean of 2.50. With the grand mean of 2.99 and 3.17 for male and female are above the acceptable mean score (mean cut-off point) of 2.50 and above. Since the mean scores of the respondents are above the acceptable mean of 2.50 and above set by the researcher, it can therefore be concluded that violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Research Question Two: To what extent to which broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on Broken Family Influence Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

	Statement: Broken Family	Male (n = 167)		Female (n=219)		Aggte	RKS
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	
8	I was raise by my mum alone thereby affecting my academic performance	2.34	0.98	2.52	1.08	2.43	LE
9	I was not given total care by my dad and mum thereby affecting my academic performance	2.73	1.12	3.00	1.01	2.87	HE
10	I was neglected due to my dad and mum were not together thereby affecting my performance	2.47	1.00	2.59	1.07	2.53	HE
11	I lack motherly care and love and this affected my academic performance	2.86	1.09	2.75	1.07	2.81	HE
12	I struggle to feed myself thereby affecting my academic performance	2.97	1.07	3.03	0.89	3.00	HE
13	I do come to school sad and unhappy thereby affecting my academic performance	2.83	1.06	3.06	0.88	2.95	HE
Grand mean		2.70	1.05	2.83	1.00		

Field study 2024: Acceptable mean score (mean cut-off point) is 2.50 and above

Table 2 showed item by item analyses of mean scores and standard deviation of the respondents (Male and Female) on extent to which broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. From the result it can be observed that the mean scores and standard deviation of the respondents (Male and Female) on all items are above the decision mean of 2.50. Except item 8 which is less than the decision mean of 2.50. It was observed from the table that the items which mean scores are above the decision mean of 2.50 for male and female, this shows that the students were not given total care by my dad and

mum thereby affecting my academic performance with the mean scores of 2.73, 3.00, the students lack motherly care and love and this affected my academic performance with the mean scores of 2.86, 2.75, the male and female students differ in their opinion on neglected due to my dad and mum were not together thereby affecting my performance with the mean scores of 2.47, 2.59. On the whole the grand mean of 2.70 and 2.83 for male and female students, it could therefore, be concluded that broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Students on the extent to which Violence in the Family Influence Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Std Error	Df	t-calc	t-crit	α	Remarks
Male	167	2.99	0.99	0.10	384	1.80	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female	219	3.17	0.87						

The result of the z-test analysis above showed that the calculated value of t is less than the table value that is $\{t_{calc} (1.80) > z_{cri} (1.96)\}$. Since the calculated t-value is less than tabulated value, it implies that the computed value is not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State is accepted. The implication is that there is no significant difference between male and female students on the extent to which violence in the family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. This suggest that male and female students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State accepted that violence in the family influence their academic performance to a high extent.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which broken family influence academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Students on the extent to which Broken Family Influence Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Std Error	Df	t-calc	t-crit	α	Remarks
Male	167	2.70	1.05	0.11	384	1.82	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female	219	2.83	1.00						

From the table, it could be observed that the computed value of t is (1.82) is less than the critical value (1.96). Since the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted

at 0.05 level of significant. The implication is that the difference is no significant that it cannot be due to chance. It could be inferred that both male and female students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State accepted to high extent that broken family influence their academic performance.

Discussion of Finding

The finding in hypothesis one revealed that both male and female students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State accepted that violence in the family influence their academic performance to a high extent. The finding of this study is in agreement with the finding of Osborn & McLanahan (2007) who opines that violence at home can shape students' attitudes about school. This view was supported by Julia (2012) who stressed that, a child surrounded by a violent at home who does not expect to live to adulthood may see little purpose in completing an education. Julia (2012) maintained that violence in the home increases the likelihood that a student will spend at least part of childhood and/or adolescence in the child protective services system, perhaps in foster care. For children who live with violence, the situation is quite often just one of constellations of challenging circumstances that affects their school attendance and academic performance.

The finding in hypothesis two revealed that male and female students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State accepted that broken family influence their academic performance. The finding of this study is in agreement with the finding of Igbinsosa (2014) who observed that a broken home affects the physical, emotional and academic life of the child affected. The student from a broken home finds things very difficult most especially his academics and these invariably affect his/her performance in school. Igbinsosa (2014) also pointed out that a crisis home has negative effect on academic performance on their children. In line with this view Morrish (2014) asserts that the child living in the shadow of the broken family will feel bewildered by coming and goings and by the mere fact that essential relationships are not promoted or are broken off and disrupted at a very impressionable time. Stone (2012) supported this view when he opined that "the children of divorced parents do worse than the children of individual parents. Stone (2012) concluded that the problems of some children brought up by some parents include poor health, behavioral difficulties, low achievements at school, psychiatric illness, and more involvement in alcohol abuse and crime

This view was shared by Ajila & Akinleke, (2012) when they noted that the home has a great influence on the child's psychological, emotional, social and economic state. According to them, the state of the home affects the individual since the family is the first point of contact and socializing agent in an individual's life. Structural analysis of families is important because family is the most important and informal socializing agent that molds the child in society and the future of the child depends upon it. It helps children to recognize and achieve important societal goals. The level at which the home operates may determine the academic achievement of a student in school. Also, children that have suffered from neglect or lack of love (in broken homes) are known to be psychologically imbalanced to face the realities of life.

Conclusion

The family has an important influence on the child's academic achievement. What the child learns at home and how his/her family motivates them towards education contributes to a large extent on their success or failure in school. A child brought up in an emotionally tense home that is characterized by constant marital or family conflict will not be able to concentrate on learning which

will affect drastically the academic performance of the child at school. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons; such as death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never completed.

Life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent and such families may be faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources, assumptions of new roles and responsibilities, establishment of new pattern in intra familial interactions and reorganization or routines and schedules. Single parents are overburdened by responsibilities which affect their children academic achievement. It is observed in recent times that safest environment for a child is one in which the biological parents are married and the family has always been intact. Such enabling environment will impart positively on the child.

Recommendations

- i. Families must inculcate the habit of understanding, tolerance and forgiveness in order to avoid violence in the home. This is because violence in the home has negative effect on the academic achievement of their children.
- ii. Parents should endeavour to maintain staying together within the family for their overall benefit of their children.
- iii. Marriage/Family counseling services should be intensified and expanded to cover a larger population in order to sensitize parents to understand the effect of separation on students' academic achievement.

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