

## PERCEPTIONS OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN KWARA STATE ON THE INFLUENCE OF BROKEN HOMES ON THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State. The descriptive survey research design was employed. A total of 600 respondents were drawn from 30 schools within the three senatorial districts in Kwara State. The distribution of respondents by gender indicated that 259(43.2%) were male while 341(56.8%) were female. On the other hand, the distribution of respondents by class showed that JSS and SSS class has 300 respondents each representing 50% each of the class level. Moreover, the distribution of respondents by the number of siblings indicated that 240(40%) of the respondents had neither brother nor sister, 237(37%) had 1 or 2 brothers or sister while 127 representing 20% had 3 or more brothers or sisters. Questionnaire was used for data collection, the data collected were analyzed with the use of simple percentage, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Findings showed that in-school adolescents from broken homes have serious academic challenges, such as problems with studying, learning difficulties, payment of school fees and lateness to school. No significant differences were found based on gender, class level and the number of siblings. Thus, it was recommended that school counsellors should be employed in all schools where they are expected to provide necessary assistance to students, especially those from broken homes to enable the in-school adolescents to overcome their academic problems and challenges.*

**keywords: perceptions, in-school adolescents, broken homes, academic performance.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Marriage has been defined by different authors, based on cultural, religion and personal view of its purposes. Denga (1990) as stated in Yahaya *et al.* (2008) described marriage as a partnership contract without an escape clause. This means that marriage should be a never-ending agreement between the couples which cannot be justified by either divorce or separation. Haviland *et al.* (2011) defines marriage as a culturally

sanctioned union between two or more people that establishes certain rights and obligations between the people, between them and their children, and between them and their in-law's marriage as a formal union, social and legal contract between two individuals that are joined in wedlock legally, economically and emotionally. According to Nwobi (1997) in Ibeh *et al.* (2013) marriage creates a social relationship and authorized reciprocal rights between those involved in it. It establishes the right and status of the children as well as the building of the home and the family (Brookes, 2006).

Family, according to Abah (2006) and Brookes (2006) is a bio-social group, a network of persons intimately held together by a bond of kinship and social relationships. This includes genetic connection, adoption, marriage or by mutual agreement. Family is a substratum of society. It is the child's first place of contact with the world. Uwaifo (2008) pointed out that family lays the psychological, moral and spiritual foundation for the overall development of a child. It then implies that when family core values fall apart, society falls into social and cultural decline (Olaleye and Oladeji, 2010). Therefore, family as a unit of the society according to Frisco *et al.* (2007) is recognized as having a lot of influence on the academic performance of students. Sun and Li (2002), Strohschein (2005) and Amato and James (2010) stated that when families disintegrate, children often end up with a problem which ranges from poorer psychological well-being, intellectual, physical and emotional trauma that persists for a long time.

According to Egbo (2013), an intact home is the one that consists of the father, mother and children without separation, divorce, death of one or both parents, desertion or single parenthood; while a broken home is the one that is affected by divorce, separation, and death of one or both of the parents, desertion or single parenthood. Broken home is a term used to describe a household usually about parenting in which the family unit does not properly function according to accepted social norms (Wikipedia, 2009). Zhou and Buehler (2017) stated that problems of broken homes are not restricted to the couples involved but equally affect the children and the society which can adversely lead to academic problems of children, especially among the in-school adolescents. Oribabor (2014) further defines broken homes as the situation whereby husband and wife separated as a result of one problem or the other. The problems range from the inability to understand each other (Onwuasoanya, 2006; Meyer, 2011). Adams (2004) opined that parent's constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this may lead to poor academic performance in school.

Academic performance on the other hand is an objective score of attainment after a specified instructional programme. According to Santrock (2006), this is usually measured through assessments like standardized tests, performance assessments and portfolio assessments. Therefore, the influence of family relationships on a child's scholastic achievement alongside the development of the child cannot be overemphasized (Philiat and Blessing, 2010). According to Philiat and Blessing, (2010), the gradual development of conflicts and disputes between the couples till its full manifestation adversely affects the emotions of growing children especially young adolescents. Moreover, this can adversely hinder their level of

concentration and learning ability in school. The choice of a broken home as a factor affecting academic performance is not far from the fact the family and the home has a great influence on the student's psychological, emotional, social and economic state (Maina and Kitainge, 2018; Ajila and Olutola 2007). Therefore, the impact of broken home on the academic achievements of students is thus beyond measure.

Adegoke (2003) defined adolescence as one of the most fascinating and complex transitions in the life span, a time of accelerated growth and changes second only to infancy. A time of expanding horizons, self-discovery and emerging social independence as well as a time of metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood (Steinberg, 2014). Uwaifo (2008) opined that adolescent from a broken home are usually associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic records. Salami and Alawode (2000) claimed that adolescents are characterized by emotional instabilities and hyper-activities, which cause them to experience storms and stress. This is also incongruent with Schults (2006), who observed that teenagers and students from broken homes were more likely to miss school, come late, or abscond classes than students or teenagers from an intact family. According to Amato (2001) divorce is associated with a range of poor outcomes among children regardless of gender when compared with children from stable/intact homes. Children from broken homes score significantly lower on measures of academic achievement, conduct, psychological adjustment, self-concept and social relations. Nyarko and Vorgelegt (2007) asserts that children who had experienced family dissolution showed lower educational attainment compared to children from stable two-parent families.

However, it is opined that in any class of learner, there must be differences in individual performance. For instance, in a class of 40 pupils, the teacher may discover that children do not equally learn at the same rate even though he has used the same contents and methodology for the class (Mallum and Haggai, 2004). Therefore, this suggests that there exist differences in students' academic performance. However, several factors have been advanced for the causes of such differences in performance, personal intelligence, environment, meaningless of learning materials; learning style among others which could affect the rate of learning (Ayodele, 2006). Cascio (2015), Rahamneh (2012) and Aremu and Jokan (2003) among others, examined the causes of poor academic performance among secondary school students. Some of the factors identified are poor study habit, lack of achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, the low socio-economy status of the family, poor family structure and anxiety. The consequences of these in the end transforms into cognitive difficulties and behavioural problems (Adams, 2004). Stephen and Udisi (2016) opined those children from single-parenting homes exhibit lower self-esteem, lower achievement motivation, and lower academic achievement compared to those from intact homes.

Safer, Roland, and Alfred (2002) posited that children who have a combination of risk factors such as poverty, many siblings close in age, who are under the tutelage of a single parent are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child development outcomes compared to children from single-parent homes with higher incomes and fewer siblings. Ayodele (2006) concluded that the environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence students' personality and academic performance hence this

warrants the desire for this study to research the influence of broken homes on the academic performance of secondary school students and recommend possible remedies to such influence.

A lot of changes are taking place in Nigeria as a developing nation. The changes have brought many problems in the marriage institution. At present, marriage breakdown appears to be on the increase. The studies of Ibeh *et al.* (2013) among others, have reports of breakdown and instability of marriage in Nigeria. Broken homes could lead to problems of different expectations and challenges for the students. Problems of loneliness, loss of financial support, emotional instability, and single parenting for the students; all these could affect their learning in school (Amoakohene, 2013). The period of adolescence is very important to the development of an individual. Any laxity on the part of the parents in assisting and guiding the adolescents may result in academic problems such as frequent absence from school or truancy in school, fear of going to school, dropping out of school, academic under-achievement, etc. and development of unwholesome behaviours.

It is often very difficult or rare for in-school adolescents from a broken home to receive parental assistance and guidance and this may lead to academic problems. The current nature of the effect of the marriage disorder is very tasking on in-school adolescents. Because of the above, therefore, there is a need to investigate the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes. Some previous researchers have carried out researches on the related field. For instance, many researchers have carried out their studies on broken homes but concentrated much more on causes of broken homes and how they affect the academic performance of children. It could be seen from their works that no investigation has been carried out on academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes. Therefore, the study was conducted to fill this gap. Thus, the present researcher examined the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State. The variables of interest include gender, class, and number of siblings.

### ***Research Objectives***

The broad objective of this study is to examine the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State?
2. Assess if there is any difference in the academic problems of the in-school adolescent from broken homes in Kwara State based on gender?
3. Examine if there is any difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on class?
4. Assess if there is any difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on the number of siblings?

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference in the academic problems of the in-school adolescent from broken homes in Kwara State based on gender?
3. Is there any difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on class?
4. Is there any difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on number of siblings?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on class.
3. There is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on number of siblings.

### **Methodology**

This study is a descriptive research survey type. This is thought to be appropriate according to Cohen *et al.* (2011) who submitted that descriptive research findings as they are since this is what is expected. The population for the study was comprised of all secondary school students from broken homes in Kwara State. In the first stage, the researcher purposively selected 10 secondary schools from each of the three senatorial districts based on location and population with the help of the school counsellors of each secondary school. The three senatorial districts in Kwara State are Kwara South, Kwara North, and Kwara Central. The total number of schools involved is thirty secondary schools.

At the second stage, the school counsellor used the cumulative record folder of the school to identify the students from broken homes. Samples of respondents were selected out of the students from broken homes identified by the school counsellor. At the third stage, the researcher randomly selected a sample of 600 from the thirty schools within the three senatorial districts in Kwara State. Twenty students from broken homes as earlier indicated by the school counselors were selected in each school with the help of two trained research assistants. Ten students from broken homes in JS classes and ten students from broken homes in SS classes for better comparison between the two categories of students.

The instrument used for the study was a researcher-designed questionnaire, Academic Problems of In-School Adolescents from Broken Homes Questionnaire tagged (APISABHQ). The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A has to do with the demographic data of the students, while Section B had 20 items

used to determine the respondent's perception. The instrument was given to four experts in the Counsellor Education Department University of Ilorin who validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest reliability method. The instrument was administered to the same set of in-school adolescents from broken homes within four weeks. The two sets of scores obtained from the two administrations were correlated; using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.75 at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument was administered to in-school adolescents with the assistance of the research assistant. The data gathered from the study were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, while a t-test was used to test the null hypotheses formulated. ANOVA was also used to compare academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes based on number of siblings. The student's responses were based on four-point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, and the mean rating is 2.5, with the mean values of each item compared to determine the perceived influence of broken homes on academic performance of in-school adolescent in Kwara State. Any mean value which is equal to or greater than 2.5 means agreement to the questionnaire item, but when the mean value is less than 2.5 it means disagreement.

### **Results**

The results are presented based on demographic information, research questions, and hypotheses.

The distribution of respondents by gender indicated a total of 600 respondents of which 259(43.2%) were male while 341(56.8%) were female. On the other hand, the distribution of respondents by class level shows that both JSS and SSS class has 300 respondents which represent 50% each of the class level.

Moreso, the distribution of respondents by the number of siblings further indicated that 240(40%) of the respondents had neither brother nor sister, 37(39.5%) had 1 or 2 brothers or sister while 127 representing 20% had 3 or more brothers or sisters.

Research Question 1: What are the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes?

**Table 1: Means Orders of Respondents' Score on Academic Problems of In-school Adolescents from Broken Home**

<b>Item No</b>	<b>As far as I am concerned</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
2.	I have a problem with studying	2.88	1 <sup>st</sup>
1.	I have greater learning difficulties than most of my mates	2.72	2 <sup>nd</sup>
9	I find it difficult to pay my school fees	2.64	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6	I am often late for school	2.61	4 <sup>th</sup>
15	My school needs (e.g textbooks writing materials, etc) are not being adequately provided for	2.58	5 <sup>th</sup>
20	I am discouraged whenever I score low marks in test and examination	2.43	6 <sup>th</sup>

17	I am not good in English Language	2.30	7 <sup>th</sup>
18	I always feel threatened during tests or examination	2.29	8 <sup>th</sup>
19	I always find it difficult to cover the syllabus before the examination	2.28	9 <sup>th</sup>
3	I need assistance with extra home lessons	2.27	10 <sup>th</sup>
4	I don't have enough time for reading	2.26	11 <sup>th</sup>
16	My academic performance is not encouraging	2.24	12 <sup>th</sup>
14	I have difficulty participating in class	2.22	13 <sup>th</sup>
13	I have difficulty concentrating in class	2.22	14 <sup>th</sup>
11	I have felt anxious or threatened in the class	2.21	15 <sup>th</sup>
5	I have difficulty in relating to other students	2.19	16 <sup>th</sup>
12	I always feel lonely	2.07	17 <sup>th</sup>
7	I am often absent from school	1.87	18 <sup>th</sup>
8	I often leave school before closing hours	1.86	19 <sup>th</sup>
10	I do my academic planning myself	1.85	20 <sup>th</sup>

Table 1 revealed the responses of the influence of broken home on academic problems as perceived by the in-school adolescent in Kwara State. Item 1 shows that 2.72 of the respondents perceived that they have greater learning difficulty than most of their classmates. However, 2.88 of the in-school adolescents perceived that they have problems with studying. On the other hand, 1.86 of the respondents perceived that they do not often leave school before closing hours. Moreover, 2.22 of the in-school adolescents perceived no difficulty in participating in the class.

**Testing of Null Hypotheses.**

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on gender.

**Table 2: The Results of t-test Comparing Academic Problems of in-school Adolescents from Broken Home based on Gender**

Gender	No	Means	Standard Deviation	Df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
Male	259	89.14	16.29	598	0.02	1.96
Female	341	89.17	16.47			

Table 2 showed that there is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on gender since the calculated t-value (0.02) was less than the critical t-

value (1.96) with 598 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Hence, null hypothesis 1 was not rejected. This indicated that gender does not affect academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes.

**Ho 2:** There is no significant difference in the Academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on class.

**Table 3: The Results of t-test Comparing problems of in-school Adolescents from Broken Home based on Class**

Class	No	Means	Standard Deviation	Df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
JSS	300	46.15	14.52			
SSS	300	44.55	16.59	598	1.25	1.96

Table 3 showed that there is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on the class since the calculated t-value (1.25) was less than the critical t-value (1.96) with 598 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis 4 was not rejected. This indicated that class does not affect academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes.

**Ho 3:** There is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on number of siblings.

**Table 4: ANOVA Results Comparing Academic Problems of in-school Adolescents from Broken Home based on Number of Siblings**

Source of variation	Df	Sum of square	Mean square	Calculated F- value	Critical F-value
Between Groups	2	374.503	187.251		
Within Groups	597	53907.452	96.297	2.07	3.00
Total	599	57142.073			

Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from a broken home in Kwara State based on number of siblings since the calculated F-value (2.07) was less than the critical F-value (3.00). Hence, null hypothesis 3 was not rejected. This indicated that the number of siblings does not affect academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes.

### **Discussion**

The finding from the study revealed that item 2 with the mean value of 2.88 was ranked first as the problem encountered by the students from broken homes and the item states that they have problems with studying. This finding confirms the report of Philiias and Blessing (2010) that discovered that the level of concentration and learning abilities of children from broken homes can be adversely disrupted. However, item



1 which states that the respondents have learning difficulties more than their mate was ranked second with a mean value of 2.72 This finding supports the study of Kelly (2000), Amato (2001), Rodgers & Rose (2001) which stated that children and adolescents from broken homes had more problems academically compared to children and adolescents from stable homes. This was further buttressed by Egbo, (2013) who stated that children that grow up in a broken home are unlikely to develop their academic potentials to the fullest while children brought up in a stabilized or organized home are more likely to develop their academic potentials to the fullest. Meanwhile item 10 with the mean value of 1.85 which states that the respondents do their academic planning themselves was ranked last.

Another finding from the study showed that there is no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken in Kwara State based on gender. The result is in support of Amato (2001) that poor learning outcomes were associated with children with divorce parents irrespective of gender compared with children with continuously married parents. Meanwhile, children with divorced parents continue to score significantly lower on measures of academic achievement, conduct, psychological adjustment self-concept, and social relations. The similarity between the findings of the present study and the finding of the previous researchers was probably because both were carried out in secondary schools. Also, it was found in the study that there was no significant difference in the academic problems of in-school adolescents from broken homes in Kwara State based on class level. The assumption that junior and senior students from broken homes would express similar academic problems was accepted. This is because they are all of the secondary school age group.

There was no significant difference in the academic problems of the in-school adolescent from broken homes in Kwara State based on number of siblings. The finding disagrees with the view of Safer, Ronald, and Alfred (2002) who posited that children who have a combination of risk factors such as poverty, many siblings close in age, who are under the tutelage of a single parent are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child development out-comes than children from single-parent homes with higher incomes and fewer siblings. Therefore, the more risk factors children have, the more likely they will experience negative outcomes. Risk factors can lead to negative results, but the presence of risk factors does not guarantee poor outcomes. The difference in the findings was probably since the works of both researchers were carried out in-school adolescents in different locales and because of the difference in the years of the studies. On the other hand, Dika and Singh (2002) also found that academic achievement is negatively associated with family structure.

### ***Conclusion and Recommendation***

The study established that in-school adolescents from broken homes with a mean value of 2.88 perceived that they have problems with studying. However, respondents with a mean value of 2.72 perceived that they have greater learning difficulties than most of their mates. While respondents with a mean value of 1.85 perceived that they do their academic planning themselves. It was also established from the study that in-

school adolescents' gender, class level, and the number of siblings have no significant influence on their academic problems. From the result presented, there is every conviction that broken homes come with dangerous consequences as per the trauma and stresses encountered by children from broken homes leading to academic problems.

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are put forward: Both male and female students from broken homes should be given equal treatment when catering to their needs. Parents should realize that their children need support for effectiveness as affection received from the parents revolves around the children's cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, thus, reflecting in their academic achievement, attitudes, behaviours, skill acquisitions, and interests. Hence, parents should provide support for the children at all times.

More so, school counsellors should be employed in institutions of learning and adequate supervision to be put in place for the provision of necessary guidance services to the students. Moreover, the counsellor should provide the necessary assistance and psychological support for the in-school adolescents from broken homes to overcome their emotional and academic problems.

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