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BROKEN HOMES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IBADAN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of broken home on academic performances of adolescents of secondary schools in Ibadan. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with the sample consisting of 200 students drawn from four randomly selected secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. One validated instrument (Effect of Broken Homes on Academic Performance of Secondary School Adolescents' Questionnaire (EBASQ)) was used for data collection and the data collected were analysed using the Spearman Correlation Coefficient. Four null hypotheses were answered. The results showed that there were significant differences between the family type/family structure and academic performances of students from broken homes ($r=0.25$, $p<0.05$). There were significant differences in the academic performances of adolescents from broken and intact home based on religion ($r=0.081$, $p<0.05$); male and female adolescents from broken and intact or two-parent homes ($r=0.070$, $p<0.05$); junior and senior students ($r=0.41$, $p<0.05$). It is recommended that school counsellors should be employed in all schools where they should provide necessary assistance to students especially those that are from single-parent families or broken homes to enable them overcome their emotional concerns. Implications of the findings for the parents and the school counsellors were highlighted.

Key Words: Adolescent Students, Academic Performance, Broken Homes, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000), defined a home as the house, flat/apartment that an individual live in especially with his/her family. Family is broadly defined as any two people who are related to each other through a genetic connection, adoption, marriage, or by mutual agreement. Family members share emotional and economic bonds (Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2001). The term nuclear family is used to refer to family members who live together and share emotional, economic, and social responsibilities. The nuclear family is often comprised of a married couple who are parents to their biological or adopted children; all members live together in one household. This type of nuclear family is increasingly referred to by social scientists as an "intact family", signifying that the family had not been through a divorce, separation, or death of a member (Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2001). When a family has experienced divorce or death leaving one parent to be primarily responsible for raising the children, they become a single-parent family. (The term broken family and broken home are no longer widely used because of their negative connotation) (Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2001; Conkline, 2006).

Following the end of marriage, one or both of the ex-spouses may enter a new marriage. Through the process of remarriage, stepfamilies are formed. The second spouse becomes a stepparent to the children for the first marriage. In the family formed by the second marriage, the children from each spouse's first marriage become step-siblings. Children born or adopted by the couple of the second

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marriage are half-siblings to the children from the first marriage, since they share one parent in common (Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2001). In some cases, a stepparent will legally adopt his or her spouse's children from a previous marriage. The biological father or mother must either be absent with no legal claim to custody, or must grant permission for the stepparent to adopt. In situations where a single parent lives with someone outside of marriage, that person may be referred to as a co-parent. Co-parent is also the name given to the partner in a homosexual relationship who shares the household and parenting responsibilities with a child's legal adoptive or biological parent (Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2001).

Academic performance is an objective score of attainment after a specified instructional programme. Academic performance can be influenced by many factors, but the impact family relationships play on a child's scholastic achievement alongside the development of the child cannot be overemphasized. This may be associated with tensions in the home, family discord or family instability. All these cumulatively produce an emotionally barren atmosphere in the home. The relationship between the husband and wife, parents and children, relationship among siblings if not cordial, resulting into conflicts especially between husband and wife and also leading to continuum of frequent quarrels and antagonism of both parties from time to time can completely end in broken homes.

The gradual development of these problems till its full manifestation directly affects the emotions of growing children especially young adolescents and can adversely disrupt the level of concentration and learning abilities of these children in school. Thus, the family structure a child emanates from can seriously affect the academic performance of an individual especially an adolescent. It has been proven that children from stable homes do better in their academic pursuits in their various schools due to their emotional stability/balance and family than those from unstable or broken homes. Broken home is a situation that arises when (a) a man or woman losses his/her spouse by death; (b) a man or a woman divorces his/her spouse; (c) family separation; (d) single parenting and (e) never married but with a child/children.

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents bred from this kind of families (broken homes) usually face different forms of emotional problems caused by lack of adequate parental care, serious financial insolvency, unstable/lack of family relationship, perceived and unperceived aggression, less involvement in formal social relations and organised group activities. All these evolve from the family structure and in turn have a very strong impact on the educational attainment in the development of the child.

In Nigeria, particularly among the Yorubas, parental roles are culturally determined. Maternal role is that of child care and home making while paternal role is that of economic responsibilities and discipline of children. Generally it is the responsibility of the family to train and bring up the child in the norms and values of the society. They are to be responsible for the psychological and emotional welfare of the child.

Ibadan is one of the centres of social, cultural, and religious diffusion in Oyo state of Nigeria, as such many aspects of the social life of people living in this part of the world is diffused and naturalised there hence we can find families where the parents are practicing different religion with different religious background. Regardless of these religious backgrounds, divorce and separation of various kinds or death of one spouse may leave the roles of child care and or child welfare in the hands of a single parent. When a female or a male decides to produce and rear a child or children outside wedlock, it may result in single parenthood (Ortese, 1998).

In Nigeria, the existence of single parents was formerly unknown and where they existed, they are ignored as exceptional cases. However, nowadays, they are the fast growing family patterns both inside and outside Nigeria (Nwachukwu, 1998). The child is morally upright and emotionally stable when the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents. The family is the first socializing agent the child comes in contact with. It has great influence on the child's physical, mental, and moral development. The family lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to school is determined by the home. Salami (1998) pointed out that both parents have roles to play in child education. The father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement while the mother is supposed to supplement the father's efforts in this regard. When the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as supervise the academic performance of the child, he/she (the child) will be backward or withdrawn. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough (Ortese, 1998).

Life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Such families are faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources (Children's Defence Fund 2004), assumptions of new rules and responsibilities, establishment of new patterns in intra-familial interaction and reorganization of routines and schedules (Agulanna, 2000). Brofenbrenner (2006) suggested that the mother's capability in handling her child after separation was greatly influenced by the assistance and support received from friends, relatives, and the child's father. Whether or not a child's parents are married and stayed married has a massive affect on his or her future prosperity and that of the next generation. Unfortunately, the growth in the number of children born into broken homes is increasing by the day especially in Nigeria (Wegman, 2006). One-parent families were the result of the death of a spouse in the past. Now, most one-parent families are the result of divorce, some are created when unmarried mothers bear children (Munroe & Blum, 1999; Wadsworth, 2002).

Most one-parent families, however, eventually became two-parent families through remarriage. Thus, a step-family is created by a new marriage of a single parent. It may consist of a parent and children and a childless spouse, a parent and children and a spouse whose children live elsewhere, or two joined one-parent families (Ottawa, 2004). In a stepfamily, problems in relations between non-biological parents and children may generate tension; the difficulties can be especially great in the marriage of single parents when the children of both parents live with them as siblings (Keith & Amato, 2001). When a female or a male decides to produce and rear children outside wedlock, it may result in single parenthood, hence a broken family (Ortese, 1999). According to Child Trends (2004), single parent families refer primarily to families in which only one parent is present, but may include some families where both parents are present but unmarried. No-parent families refer to families where neither parent of the child lives in the household. In Nigeria, the existence of single parents was formerly unknown and where they existed, they are ignored as exceptional cases. However, nowadays, they are the fast growing family patterns both inside and outside Nigeria (Nwachukwu, 1999).

Marriage involves an emotional and sexual relationship between particular human beings. At the same time, marriage is an institution that transcends the particular individuals involved in it and unites two families (Rebecca, 2000). Therefore, the usual roles and responsibilities of the husband and wife as regards marriage include living together, having sexual relations with one another, sharing economic resources, and being recognized as the parents of their children (Farber et al, 2003). When children see their parents getting along and supporting each other, they will mirror and will likely get along with each other and their friends. This implies that every single ounce of energy that two individuals (husband and wife) put into their relationship will come back to them tenfold through their children (Wadsworth et al, 2002). It has been argued that the entrance of a new and possibly unwelcome adult into the family can be a source of stress and rivalry for the children (Hetherington & Camara, 1999). Simons (2000) suggests that children may become resentful of the time they lose with the custodial parent as a result of the new partner. Furthermore, dating and remarriage may destroy children's belief that their parents will remarry. Remarriage is often confusing for children and adolescent because they must learn to adapt and accept yet another new family structure. However, it is interesting to note that children/adolescents living with stepfathers are much more likely to say that their stepfather is a member of their family than they are to include their non-residential biological father as a family member (Furstenber & Nord, 2005 cited in Seltzer, 2004).

Stolba and Amato (2003), however, argue that adolescents' well-being is not solely associated with the loss of the noncustodial parent. Instead, they conclude that alternative family forms can be suitable for raising adolescents, if they provide support, control and supervision. They however, suggest that extended single-parent households may be less beneficial for younger children. Usually, one of the first impact that divorce/broken home has on a child is a dramatic decline in the standard of living in the custodial household (Bean, Berg & VanHook, 2005; Duncan, 2004; Ross, 2005). Krantz (1999) suggests that children belonging to lower socio-economic groups after divorce experience greater hardships. Do these hardships, however translate into adjustment problems? Some researchers argue that this decline in socio-economic status is directly linked to a variety of problems experienced by the child, such as psychological maladjustment and behavioural difficulties in school. However, research has found that across the economic spectrum, children from single parent households/broken homes are more involved in crimes and drugs than kids from two-parent homes Rector (1999). Fincham (2002) suggest that the question of whether boys or girls are more adversely affected is quite complex, and the answer is likely to depend on a host of factors such as the sex of the custodial parent, their parenting style, whether they have remarried, the quality of the parent-child relationship, and the amount of contact with the noncustodial

parent. The impact of parental conflict on children's post-divorce adjustment has received considerable attention in literature. Most theorists agree that parental conflict, at the very least, provides some negative influences for children's adjustment to the divorce (Grych & Fincham, 2002).

Frustration – Aggression Theory

John Dollard (1999) and others propounded this theory. The theory rests on the basic stimulus response (S-R) hypothesis. It proposes that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and that conflict has its root cause in the frustration of one or more of an actor's goal achievement. Going by the context of this theory, it explains that frustration is at the root of conflict and therefore, it is only when people are prevented from achieving their goals that they are frustrated and eventually seek avenue with which to displace such frustration. Kelly (2003) argues that the effects of conflict are indirect- they are either mediated through other behaviours of the parents or dependent on the strategies used to resolve conflict, or related to the extent to which parents expressed their conflicts directly with and through the children. However, when parents are psychologically able to provide a loving relationship, children will be buffered from the stresses divorce can engender and will prosper developmentally (Cohen, 2005).

Child Trends (2005) states that Divorce or dissolution of marriage is a judicially administered process that legally terminates a marriage that is considered as no longer viable by one or both of the spouses and permits both of them to remarry. It entails cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between two persons. A divorce does not declare a marriage null and void, as in an annulment, but divorce cancels the marital status of the parties, thus, allowing each to marry another person. The legal process for divorce according to Amato, Paul R. (2002) may involve issues of spousal support, child custody, child support, distribution of property and division of debt, these matters are usually only ancillary or consequential to the dissolution of marriage. The basis on which broken homes emerge include adultery, desertion, habitual drunkenness, conviction of a felony, impotence, which is most commonly used by divorcing parties, "cruel and inhuman treatment".

Statistics from Canada's ground-breaking Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) made it clear that in Canada violence against women in the family context is far from rare. Twenty nine percent of all women who had ever been married or had lived with a man in a common law relationship had experienced at least one episode of violence by a husband or a live-partner (Johnson, 2006). Therefore, relationships with violence are therefore more likely to end than peaceable ones and in some cases, the woman's decision to terminate the relationship results in violent response from her partner (Wilson & Daly, 2004). Many men increase the level of battering against their wives when the women take steps to leave (Johnson, 2006). Separating couples are therefore particularly at risk. Moreover, the VAWS showed that in 39 percent of marital relationships with violence, victims said their children had been their witnesses and that when the children were exposed to assaults on their mothers, in 61 percent cases the women suffered physical injuries and in 52 percent of cases the violence was so severe that the victim feared for her life. It is clear that any treatment of the issues surrounding divorce, custody and access is incomplete without an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence.

Children/Adolescents who experience conflict and are under this parenting structure suffer from serious emotional difficulties, living in shame, their sense of self undermined and with little confidence in the future. They are anxious, living in fear and waiting for the next violent episode to occur (Jaffe, 2000). Adolescents can react either by running away or becoming involved in delinquent behaviours or trying to take on responsibility for keeping the peace and ensuring the safety of their family. The irony of this on the children/adolescents is that the very people on whom they depend for safety and nurturance can offer them neither (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 2000). If the effects of violence are not acknowledged, women may appear unstable or emotional while the batterers are perceived as confident, rational and economically secure (Rosnes, 2007). However, it is important to link the negative impact of wife abuse on children to the abuser to avoid judging the mother as unfit by virtue of being a victim of spouse assault.

Also, children are also great imitators of less than perfect behaviours; they see their parents arguing constantly, calling each other names, putting each other down, or hitting each other, you will probably see them repeating these behaviours. They will probably feel insecure, and this insecurity might reflect in poor grades, bad behaviour at school or home, or even depression. Therefore, if parents are going through a rough period, it is expedient of them to work on their relationship, knowing that the entire family benefits from the relationship and not just the two of them McLanahan, S. & G. Sandefur, (2004). Broken home is an effect which can seriously impair the function of the family as a socializing agency. Thus, the rising incidence of broken home suggests that the institutions of marriage and the

family as a whole are in serious trouble. This increasing trend in marital discord is greatly hindering the current well-being and future prospects of children who are most effectively socialized with two parents present in the home.

Broken Home and Academic Performance

The psychological development of the adolescent in the family is influenced not only by what occurs in their new environment but also the environments their parents spend a considerable time in, such as their workplace Bronfenbrenner (2006). Broken home is generally associated with increased stress and emotional difficulties among adolescents, several aspects have a mediating effect. The amount of family conflict experienced by the adolescents, their religious background, their age, and place in the sibling order were reported to have a vital impact on their efforts to adapt to this transition (Farber et al., 2003). Meanwhile, it is important to explain to children/adolescents the reason why the divorce is occurring. In addition, Mitchell (1998) determined that one-third of the children/adolescents under this family structure were not given a reason as to why their parents' separated. Therefore, repressed anger due to divorce may be channelled into destructive patterns. These patterns may include, "compensatory lying, self-doubt, self-estrangement, compulsive rituals, malevolent dreams, and many other behaviours". In regard to separation anxiety, the child may repeatedly fear abandonment Munger and Morse (2002).

Munger and Morse (2002) revealed that, "children can stand helpless in a divorce situation and may become so frustrated that they might strive toward unreal and unattainable psychological compensation". In child development, an important factor is that a child's anger at loss can be channelled incorrectly or poorly and that separation anxiety may become overpowering. Kelly (2003) states that adolescents can escape the negative consequences of parental conflict when they are not caught in it by their parents, when their parents avoid direct, aggressive expressions of their conflict in front of them or when they use compromise styles of conflict resolution. Buchanan et al. (2001) found that with adolescents who were living part of the time with each parent, the effects of discord between parents is stronger and they tended to feel caught in the middle. Children/Adolescents who were involved in their parent's disagreements and who felt they had to manage their parent's relationship to make things run smoothly were the most likely to feel depressed and exhibit deviant behaviour (Buchanan, 2001).

Relative Deprivation Theory

The Relative Deprivation theory proposed by Gurr (1990) is at variance with frustration-aggression theory. Besides, any form of deprivation could breed conflict; hence this theory will lend credence to conflict handling in the home. According to Gurr (1990) relative deprivation refers to perceived discrepancy between value expectation (resources to which one feels entitled) and value capabilities (resources which one feels capable of acquiring and keeping). The greater the average degree of perceived discrepancy between expected and value capabilities, the greater the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of same collectivity and the greater the potential for collective violence. Violence (a manifestation of conflict with physical, psychological or structural hurt), in this situation, occurs when an individual or group makes a comparison with others (perceived to be the same class or status with them) and they feel less measurable, due to deprivation of opportunities or resources they are equally entitled to within the system. When their attempts to meet up are thwarted, frustration sets in and they are most likely to strike at the source of frustration.

Adolescents like young children, experience considerable initial emotional pain and anger when their parents divorce. However, they are usually better able to accurately assign responsibility for the break-up, to resolve loyalty conflicts, to more effectively cope with economic changes, and to deal with a new family structure than young children. The older adolescents may also be able to take advantage of available support systems to deal with the additional stresses (Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan & Anderson, 1999). It has been revealed that many broken-home-effected adolescents experience premature detachment from their parents. Many of these children become involved in antisocial groups and activities with disastrous outcomes. Older adolescents, because they have more self-confidence and resources, may confront and question some aspects of family function and roles that younger children would not (Hetherington & Anderson, 1999).

Rising Expectation Theory

The rising expectation theory proposed by Feierabends (1991) is another variant of the frustration-aggression theory. To him, dissatisfaction arises out of comparison between what one currently enjoys and what one expects; what one thinks one ought to have or what one regards as ideal.

This theory identifies the genesis of violence in hope not in despair. It differs from Relative Deprivation (comparing with others) because the comparison involved is not external rather individuals or group compare their present benefit to what they ought to be enjoying. Divorce/separation/broken home usually brings about many changes in a child's life that provides disorders. Relocation or weakened relationships with the non-custodial parent are examples of these changes that can provide disorders. Also, because of the added responsibilities, the custodial parent may become less available. Hetherington (1999) pointed out that many families usually experience a significant decrease in income which might involve the custodial parent.

The quality of education in the country is declining therefore, breeding secondary school graduates with little technical know-how and more than average poor performance in academics has resulted in serious setbacks in the industrial development of the nation (Imoge, 2002). Different factors are capable of influencing the academic performances of secondary school students. Such factors may be the student's internal state in terms of intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety, etc., and their environment which may involve: availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories (Imoge, 2002). A Daily Sketch Publication on "causes and cures of poor performance at West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE)" in 2006 identified and categorized problems responsible for students' poor performance to problems of teachers, problems of inadequate facilities in the schools, problem traceable to students, problems caused by parents and society at large and problems of government policies and low funding of the education sector (Ajila and Olutola 2007).

Family income is another factor that influences parental support and involvement in education-factors related to school achievement. Students who regard their parents as warm, firm, and involved in their education earn better grades than their classmates with uninvolved parents Deslandes, & Daniel (2007). In these families, parent support acts as a protective factor countering some of the risk factors these children encounter Deslandes, Rollande; Royer, Egide; & Turcotte, Daniel (2007). Economic pressures often limit or prevent parent involvement in single parent families, when single parents make effort to support their children's education especially the adolescents, their efforts acts as a protective factor. Therefore, parent support act as a protective factor countering some of the risk factors that these children encounter Children who have a combination of risk factors such as poverty, many siblings close in age, who are under the tutelage of single parent are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child development outcomes 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 (Seifer, Ronald; Sameroff, Arnold J., Baldwin, Clara P. & Baldwin, Alfred (2002).

On the other hand, protective factors mediate and limit the impact of risk factors have on academic achievement or performance and other aspects of child/adolescent development. These factors include: high self-esteem, strong social support at home and parenting figures, positive parent mental health, college-educated parents, high income, and parenting strategies that effectively address high-risk situations (Kaplan, Diane S.; Liu, Xiaoru ; & Kaplan, Howard B. (2001). Reviewed literature indicated that there is an awareness of the importance of the home environment or family on student's academic performance. The home has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2007), the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in the individual's life. This is because the family background and context of a child affects his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. Therefore, the environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance at school (Ichado, 1998).

The home environment or family has been recognized as having a lot of influence on the academic performance of students (Nzewuanah, 1999). Ichado (1998) stated that parent's constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could lead to poor academic performance in school. Recently, a common assumption in the divorce literature was that both parents living in the same household as the child would be a better environment for children's development than a single-parent family (Ichado, 1998). According to this view, the absence of one parent from the household may be problematic for children's socialization. Although there is some support for this view, it does not appear

to be the only factor involved in children's well-being following divorce. Therefore, the type of behaviour problems and coping mechanisms differ for children of different ages since their responses as children as well as adolescents to situations are dealt with by their limited cognitive and social competencies, their dependency on their parents, and their restriction to the home (Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan & Anderson, 1999). Many factors interplay to encourage a child's academic success. Regardless of family type, parents should stay involved with their children's education from elementary school through secondary school and beyond to help them maximise their academic achievement and performances.

Studies have shown that the foundation of a happy family is a strong, loving relationship between the two parents. The single, most important thing that parents can do for their children is to do everything in their power to have the best possible relationship with their spouses (Thiessen, Sarah, 2007). According to Conkline (2006), Broken home is a situation that arises when an individual loses his/her spouse by death, separation, divorce, desertion, single parenting, never married but with a child/children. Mothers and fathers both play important roles in the growth and development of children (Child Trends, 2002). Both the number and the type of parents (i.e., biological, step) in a child's household can have strong effects on their well-being. Single-parent families/broken families tend to have much lower incomes than do two-parent families, but research indicates that the income differential accounts for only about one half of the negative effects of parent absence on many areas of child and youth wellbeing, including health, educational attainment and assessments, behaviour problems, and psychological wellbeing (Brown, Susan L. (2004); The Urban Institute, 2006). Over half of all children living with a single parent (mother) are living in poverty: a rate five to six times that of kids living with two parents (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series, 1991). In 1991, 60% of all poor families with children were headed by single mothers. Also, fatherlessness consigns children to poverty; children in father-absent households are six times more likely to be poor than children whose homes are headed by a father (Murphy Brown, 2002).

Anthropological studies have suggested that it may lead boys, in particular, to become hyper masculine and violence-prone. It deprives inner-city neighbourhoods the quasi-policy function played by good family men. Of all juveniles serving in long-term correctional facilities, 70% did not live with their fathers while growing up (The Washington Post, June 7, 2002). The Washington Times, May 22, 2002, says Cheri Hayes, executive director of the National Commission on Children, who is concerned in her findings, that kids do best with both mother and father and this may lead to bashing single mothers/parents. Among young children, for example, those living with no biological parents or single parent households are less likely than children with two biological parents to exhibit behavioural self-control. Young children/adolescents with single parents are also more likely to be exposed to high levels of aggravated parenting (Manning, Wendy and Kathleen, 2003). Among children in two-parent families, those living with both biological parents in a low-conflict marriage tend to be doing much better than those living in step parent families on a host of outcomes. Children in step families are in many cases more similar to children growing up in single-parent families (Child Trends, 2002; Manning, Wendy and Kathleen, 2003). Rector (1999) opined that the most accurate indicator of future delinquency in children is whether they are reared in one or two parent homes. Scholar Nicholas Davidson has similar findings. Davidson has noted in The Heritage Foundation Journal Policy Review that ninety percent of a repeat adolescent fire-starters live in a mother only constellation as do "75% of adolescent murderers, and 60% of rapist". (Davidson, Nicholas, 1999).

The amount of children in our nation that experience their broken homes increased from 22% in the 1960s to 46% in the 1980s (Chase-Landsdale & Hetherington, 1990). Wegman (2006) noted that in 1993, approximately one million children experienced their parents' separation, doubling the amount from 20 years ago. Sorrentino (1999) has shown that this trend is continuing into the 1990s, when he reported that the rate of broken homes was almost tripled the amount compared to in the 1960s. These statistics indicated that broken home is a problem that has increased in our society and will continue to disrupt the family structure of many children. A 1996 U.S. Census Report has indicated that in the last three years, the upward trend in broken home has stabilized. It is not known if this levelling factor is a pause in the broken home rate or a result of more positive interpersonal relationships of parents.

However, the findings on gender differences in children's responses to marriage separation (broken home) have been contradictory. Some research points to more adjustment problems for boys in broken families than for girls (Guidubaldi & Perry, 2005; Hetherington et al., 1999; Kaye, 1999; Kurdek, 2007); other research finds more negative effects for girls (Farber et al., 2003; Frost & Pakiz, 1999; Slater, Stewart & Linn, 2003; Wallerstein & Kelly, 2005); and some research has found no differences in the

effects of marriage/family separation which is also called divorce on boys than girls (Kinard & Reinherz, 2004; Mechanic & Hansell, 1999; Rosen, 2007; Zill et al., 2003). There are some studies that go a step further, demonstrating that conflict, rather than divorce per se, is the major determinant of children's adjustment. For instance, Bishop and Ingersoll (1990) found that marital conflict had a greater impact on adolescents' self-concept than family structure. Similarly, Mechanic and Hansell (1999) found that family conflict had more direct effects on long-term changes in well-being (i.e., depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, self-esteem) than divorce, current separation from parents, or parental death. For instance, it has been found that conflict can affect children's self-esteem, ability to adjust and cope, social competence and behaviour (Grych & Fincham, 2002).

Using data from the United States National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth, Jekielek (2006) found that both parental conflict and marital disruption were associated with decreases in the adolescent's well being but adolescents who remain in the high conflict environments do worse than adolescents who experienced high conflict but whose parents had divorced at least two years previously. The results suggest that parental divorce following high conflict may actually improve the well being of children relative to a high conflict status. Using a 12 year longitudinal study, Amato, Loomis & Booth (2005) also found that the consequences of parental divorce depend on the degree of parental conflict prior to divorce. In high conflict families, children had higher levels of well being as young adults if their parents divorced than if they stayed together. In low conflict families, however, children had higher levels of well being if their parents stayed together than if they divorced. In marriages that did not end in divorce, parental conflict was negatively associated with the well being of the adolescents/young adults.

Schoettle and Cantwell (1999) have shown that adolescents who experience family disruption due to divorce have an increased possibility of impulse control problems and displays of antisocial behaviour. Also, studies have shown that the effects of family disruption (broken homes) due to divorce have pointed to higher levels of aggression and acts of violent behaviours in children and adolescents respectively, heightened anxiety, intense anger, loneliness, and somatic complaints along with sadness, fear, and depression (Felner, Farber, Ginter, Boike & Cowen, 2001). Farber, Primavera, and Felner (2003) had presented a study that indicated that parental separation and divorce may be a highly stressful life transition for adolescents. They indicated that, "as with young children this life transition appears to lead to heightened vulnerability and risk for emotional difficulties". Because of broken home, patterns of problem behaviour include increased difficulties in interpersonal relationships, sexual identity, and academic performance, as well as heightened levels of emotional difficulties, along with drug and alcohol use.

However, it is evident from the research that inter-parental conflict has a major impact on children's post-adjustment. Thus, it is critical that parents attempt to reduce conflict among them. How to accomplish this, however, may be quite difficult, especially when they are long-standing hostilities. At the very least, as suggested by Hetherington and Camara (2008) and Devine (2006), children should not be directly exposed to the conflict. Slater et al. (2003) found that adolescent girls from disrupted homes had lower self-esteem and more behaviour problems than adolescent boys in similar home life situations. While female adolescents from disrupted homes reported higher levels of family conflict than females from intact families, the opposite was true for males. Wallerstein & Kelly (2005) found that, one year following divorce, 63 percent of the girls were in worse psychological condition compared to 27 percent of the boys. Frost and Pakiz (2000) found that girls from recently disrupted households reported truancy in higher proportions than their male counterparts and than the children from intact families. However, some studies have found no differences on various effects of divorce between girls and boys (Kinard & Reinherz, 2004; Mechanic & Hansell, 2008; Rosen, 2007). Frost and adolescents from divorced families, although they found gender differences in other areas (such as truancy and social networks).

In a study by Farber et al. (2003), clinical directors of college mental health counselling centres said that female adolescents had more difficulty than males in adapting to divorce. However, in a review of literature, Amato (in press) found minimal sex differences, although women from divorced families appear to attain lower levels of education than those from intact families. In a meta-analysis of 37 studies which examined the long-term consequences of parental divorce for adult well-being, Amato and Keith (2001) found no support for the contention that parental separation has more detrimental consequences for males than females. Finally, in a longitudinal study, Zill et al. (2003) found no evidence to support the hypothesis that young adult males were more likely than girls to be vulnerable to the effects of marital disruption. A possible reason for the contradictory findings related to gender could be that boys and girls may be affected by family separation/broken homes in different ways. For instance, Kalter (2007)

suggests that disruptions in the father-son relationship are linked to a multitude of development interferences in boys. For girls, on the other hand, the emotional loss of father is seen as rejection. Similarly, Healy et al. (1990) argue that boys and girls show sex-role-typical patterns of distress when they see their fathers more often and more regularly-high self-esteem and more behaviour problems for girls.

Amato (in press) suggests that the negative effects on social adjustment may be stronger for boys than girls, but in other areas there are major differences. Other research suggests that girls may be more affected psychologically (e.g. depression) (Peterson & Zill, 2006). Also, it is possible that behaviour problems commonly seen in boys are the more readily observed behaviours than the types of problems that girls have (self-esteem). Another possible reason for the differing results among studies could be that boys and girls are affected by different aspects of the divorce process. For instance, although Hetherington et al. (1995) found that the divorce had more adverse, long-term effects on boys than girls, they found that girls had more adverse effects as a result of remarriage of the custodial mother. He also heightened divorce/broken home adjustment problems for boys found in some research may be less related to gender per se than to characteristics of the post divorce household arrangements.

For instance, Peterson and Zill (2006) found that children living with parents of opposite sex were especially prone to problem behaviours. However, other studies (e.g. Buchanan, Maccoby & Dornbusch, 2002; Rosnes, 2007) have found no significant differences between sex of custodial parent and child's adjustment. It has also been argued that the differential impact of broken home/divorce on children may be linked to parenting styles- particularly with regard to the issue of discipline. Heath and MacKinnon (1999) found that mothers on boys were a high predictor of the child's competent social behaviour. Furthermore, custodial fathers and mothers have been found to differ in their parenting style, with fathers much less likely to become involved in coercive exchanges with boys than mothers. The very small number of father custody families and the very selective nature of this arrangement compared to mother custody families means that these studies must be interpreted with a great deal of caution Grych and Fincham (2002).

Knox, Virginia W. (2006) found that many people have questions about the influence of single-parent families (broken homes) on a child's academic achievement and the ways in which single parents can help their children succeed in school. Research using the Family Deficit Model begins with the assumption that single parenting is bad for children, and the results of these studies typically support this assumption. Some studies using the Family Deficit Model minimize or overlook the influence economics and other background factors have on academic achievement rather than alter this research model (Marsh, Herbert W. (2000); Thiessen, Sarah (2007)). Children in broken homes via single parenting are at greater risk than children in other types of families in some ways. When they have similar academic abilities at times, children in single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out of secondary school than children from two-parent families (Thiessen, Sarah, 2007; Zmiles, Herbert, & Lee, Valerie E. 2001).

Single parents have less time to help children with homework, they are less likely to use consistent discipline, and they have less parental control, because they are the primary and frequent sole source of financial support for the family, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement or performance Astone; Nan M, & McLanahan, Sara S. (2001); Mulkey, Lynn M.; Craiin, Robert L.; & Harrington, Alexander J.C. (2002); Thiessen, Sarah (2007). Therefore, no matter which parent is missing, children from single-parent families generally find it more difficult to connect with school Mulkey, Lynn M. & McLanahan, Sara S. (2001). Immediately following divorce, Kaye (1998) found that both boys and girls showed poorer performance on academic achievement tests compared to children from intact families. However, by the fifth year following divorce, boys' grades and achievement tests were adversely affected, while girls' were not. Similarly, Hetherington et al. (1997) found that, immediately following the separation (divorce), boys and girls experienced some disruption in play situations; however, the effects appeared to be more sustained in boys.

Wallerstein (2005), in a ten-year follow-up of children who were pre-schoolers at the time of separation found that although there were no initial sex differences in the effects of broken home, eighteen months following the separation, many of the girls appeared recovered, but boys were significantly more troubled at school, in the playground and at home. Five years after the separation, these sex differences had again disappeared. Guidubaldi and Perry (2008) found that boys in divorced households or broken homes exhibited more adverse effects than girls, in terms of inappropriate behaviour, work effort, and happiness. Girls with divorced parents, on the other hand, scored higher in

locus of control than their counterparts. Over the years, the investigations of the factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria (Wiseman 2003; Sogbetan 2001). This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country (Imoge 2002).

Clemens and Oelke (2007) and Emeke (2004) identified two factors that cause poor academic performance as the combination of personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to the individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability. While institutional factors are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences, and school related factors- student/teacher rapport, teacher related factors, accommodation and living conditions (Clemens, Oelke (2007); Emeke 2004). In the same vein, Wiseman (2003), Sogbetan (2001) and Hassan (2003) among others have examined the causes of poor academic performance among secondary school students. Some of the factors identified are intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socio-economic status of the family, poor family structure and anxiety. The consequences of these include indiscipline in schools and low level of educational standard.

The financial advantages that step-children enjoy over those in single-parent families are evident though research to date has failed to show a beneficial effect of marriage on children's achievement or behaviour Zill (2003). In a national longitudinal study of children (aged 12-16), Peterson and Zill (2006) found more behaviour problems among girls living with remarried mother, as compared to boys. This is another factor contributing to the poor performances in the academic achievement of children as well as adolescents. In a follow-up study with these children at ages 18-22, Zill et al. (2003) concluded that remarriage didn't have a protective effect on children. Hetherington and her colleagues (Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington et al., 1995) found remarriage to be associated with more negative effects. For instance, remarriage of the custodial mother had more adverse effects on boys. Over time, though, children adjust to remarriage and then there is an improvement (Hetherington, 1993; Peterson & Zill, 2006; Zill et al., 2003).

Nelson (1990) found that family income, rather than marital status, was associated with mothers' life strains and children's self-esteem. In addition, Kalter, Kloner, Schreier and Okla (1998) found a negative relation between socio-economic status and children's adjustment in post divorce households. However, they suggest that economic deprivation, along with a number of other factors (e.g. inter-parental hostilities, burden of single parenting) take their toll on custodial mothers, which results in poorer adjustment among children. Guidubaldi and Perry (2004) attempted to examine the relation between single-parent status and adolescent's development, controlling for socio-economic status. They found an association between socio-economic status of parents and intellectual, academic and personal-social development of adolescents. However, even when socio-economic status was controlled, adolescents from broken homes/divorced families entered school with significantly less social and academic competence than those from intact families. This indicates that single parent status may predict poor academic and social competence in addition to, and independent of, socio-economic status has a generalized association with both intellectual and non-intellectual measures, while single-parent status is associated with only non-intellectual variables.

A single parent faces double responsibilities requiring time, attention and money hence less attention is paid to the education of the child. Teachers commonly describe children from single parents as more hostile, aggressive, anxious, fearful, hyperactive and distractible than the children from intact families (Nwachukwu, 1998). This study therefore, focussed on the effects of broken home on the academic performance/ achievement of secondary school adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following hypotheses were answered in the study;

1. There is no significant difference between the family type/ family structure and academic performances of secondary school adolescents.
2. There is no significance difference between the academic performances of Junior and Secondary school adolescents from broken and intact homes in Ibadan.
3. There is no significant relationship between the academic performances of adolescents from broken and intact home based on religion.

4. There is no significance between the academic performances of male and female adolescents from broken homes and those from intact or two-parent homes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study employed the use of descriptive survey design. The reason for this is because the researchers did not manipulate any variable of interest.

Subjects: The subjects of this study are students selected from four secondary schools in Ibadan. They consist of male and female students whose ages range between 11 and 21 years. The sample consists of 200 subjects.

Instrumentation: The major instrument used for the study is the Effect of Broken home on Academic performance on Secondary school adolescents' Questionnaire (EBASQ). The questionnaire contains three sections: Section A contains information on the personal background of the respondent such as: sex, age, religion, while section B is divided into sub-section I and II. These sub-sections are based on information on the effects of broken homes on academic performances of adolescents as well as the study habit of the adolescents as it concerns their academic performances. Sub-section I has 11 questions while sub-section II has 10 questions with scores ranging from one point to four points and four options of response: Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, Disagree = 3, Strongly disagree = 4. The point for each response depends on the question. Cronbach alpha was used to find the reliability of the instrument. The calculated value was found to be 0.65.

Sampling Procedure: Personal visit to the four schools were made by the researchers and the questionnaire was administered to 25 respondents randomly selected from each school. In each school, the selected respondents for the study were assembled in a convenient classroom where the questionnaire was distributed to them to be filled. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and on completion of the questionnaire, they were collected immediately. The administration of the inventory was personally supervised by the researchers. On the whole, 200 students comprising 100 males and 100 females were selected.

Data Analysis: The data collected from the students were analysed with the aid of the Spearman correlation coefficient to ascertain the statistical relationship in the hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results and discussions are presented according to the stated hypotheses. Respondent characteristics of the 200 young boys and girls (100 males & 100 females) in the sample showed that about 43.5 % were aged 11-14 years, 47.0 % were aged 14-18 years, and 9.5% were aged 18 years - above. Their mean age is 33.3, and the respondents are from Junior and senior schools respectively, 55.5% of them were Christians, while 43.0% were Muslims and 1.5% was from other religious background. The junior students consists 50.5%, while the senior students consists 49.5% of the population. Relatively, participants reported to be from broken homes consists (53%) while the remaining (47%) are from intact homes.

There is no significant difference between the family type/ family structure and academic performances of secondary school adolescents.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and correlation Coefficients of Students from Broken Homes and Academic Performance.

Types of variables	N	Correlation	Mean	SD	SD Error mean	DF	95% confidence	Remark
Adolescents from broken homes	200	0.315	51.41	12.75	0.902	199	53.2	S
Average academic performance	200	0.25	49.045	12.56	0.89	199	50.8	

$p < 0.05$

There was a weak correlation between the academic performance and family structure ($r = 0.25$). We can say that family structure affects the academic performance of the adolescents in secondary schools. This involves parents who stay with their children at home. We therefore reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between broken home and academic performance of secondary school adolescents based on the family type /structure. It is important to note that the result on this table was as a

result of paired outcomes from pair1 (English and parent separated), pair 2 (English and presently staying with parent), pair 3 (maths & parent separated), and pair 4 (maths & presently staying with parents), after which the average results from pair 1&3 and pair 2 & 4 were computed. It is illustrated in the table below:

Table 2: Correlation coefficient of paired samples

Pairs	Variables	N	correlation	Mean	SD	DF	95% confidence
1	Eng & parent separated	200	.32	52.695	13.3	199	54.55
2	Eng & presently staying with parents	200	.25	50.33	13.11	199	52.16
3	Maths & parent separated	200	.31	50.125	12.2	199	51.82
4	Maths & parent stay together	200	.24	47.76	12.01	199	49.43
1&3		200	.315	51.41	12.75	199	53.2
2&4		200	.25	49.045	12.56	199	50.8

There is no significance between the academic performances of Junior and Secondary school adolescents from broken and intact homes in Ibadan.

Table 3: Mean, Standard deviation and Correlation of Junior and Senior Secondary Adolescents from Broken and Intact Homes

Types of variables	N	Correlation	Mean	SD	SD Error mean	DF	95% confidence lower	Remark
Academic performance from broken homes	200	-0.17	25.72	6.73	0.21	199	-24.8	S
Academic performance from intact homes	200	0.21	-25.7	6.71	0.20	199	-24.7	

$p > 0.05$

From the above result, (a) there was difference in the academic performance of junior and senior secondary school adolescents ($r = 0.41$). (b) There was difference in the academic performance of junior and senior adolescents from broken homes ($r = 0.029$). This difference is not so much pronounced even though there was. (c) There was difference in the academic performance of junior and senior adolescents from intact homes ($r = 0.080$). This difference also was not so significant. We therefore reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant difference between the academic performances of Junior and Senior secondary school adolescents from broken and intact homes in Ibadan. Variables in pairs 9,10,15,16 were used in collating the results in this table, the average of pair 15 & 16 were calculated, after which the average of pair 9 alongside the already calculated average of pair 15&16 were computed, the same goes for pair 10 with pair 15&16. It is illustrated on the table below:

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation of Paired samples

Pairs	variables	N	Correlation	Mean	SD	DF	95% confidence
9	Class & parent together	200	-0.079	-0.03	.736	199	.072
10	Class & parent separated	200	0.029	.025	.697	199	.122
15	Class & English	200	.40	-52.67	13.294	199	-50.82
16	Class & maths	200	.42	-50.1	12.146	199	-48.41
15 & 16		200	.41	-51.4	12.92	199	-49.62
9 vs 15&16		200	-0.17	-25.72	6.73	199	-24.8
10 vs 15&16			.21	-25.7	6.71	199	-24.7

There is no significant relationship between the academic performances of adolescents from broken and intact home based on religion.

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation of Students and Academic achievement based on Religion

Types of variables	N	correlation	Mean	SD	SD Error mean	DF	95% Confidence lower	Remark
Acad. perfmc. of Xtian & muslim from broken homes	200	0.013	-25.7	6.83	0.5	199	-24.8	S
Acad perf of Xtian & Muslim from intact homes	200	-0.05	-25.72	6.85	0.73	199	-24.8	

$p > 0.05$

From the above result, (a) there was difference between the academic performance of Christian and Muslim secondary school adolescents from broken homes ($r = 0.081$). This difference is not so much pronounced even though there was; (b) There was difference in the academic performances of Christian and Muslim secondary school adolescents from intact homes ($r = 0.051$). This difference is not so significant. We therefore reject the null hypothesis H_0 that there is no significant difference between broken home and academic performance of secondary school adolescents in Ibadan.

Variables in pair 5, 6 13 & 14 were used in collating the result on this table. The average of pair 13&14 was computed, after which the average of pair 5 alongside pair 13&14 that was already calculated was again computed, the same goes for pair 6 with pair 13&14. It is illustrated on the table below:

Table 6: Paired Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation of students and Academic Performance

Pairs	variables	N	correlation	Mean	SD	DF	95% confidence lower
5	Religion & parent together	200	.05	-0.065	.71	199	.033
6	Religion & parent separated	200	-0.08	-0.01	.76	199	.095
13	Religion & English	200	-0.077	-52.705	13.54	199	-50.8
14	Religion & maths	200	.029	-50.135	12.34	199	-48.4
13 & 14		200	-0.024	-51.42	12.94	199	-49.6
5 vs 13&14		200	.013	-25.7	6.83	199	-24.8
6 vs 13&14		200	-0.05	-25.72	6.85	199	-24.8

There is no significance difference between the academic performances of male and female adolescents from broken homes and those from intact or two-parent homes.

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation of students and Academic Performance

Types of variables	N	Correlation	Mean	SD	SD Error mean	DF	95% confidence	remark
Academic performances of Male and female Adolescents from broken homes	200	-0.08	-25.7	6.84	0.486	199	24.84	S
Academic performance of male and female adolescents from intact homes.	200	0.070	-2-57	6.82	0.485	199	24.86	

$p > 0.05$

From the above result, (a) there was relationship between the academic performance of male and female adolescents from broken homes ($r = 0.080$). This relationship is not very pronounced. (b) There was relationship between academic performance of male and female adolescents from intact homes ($r = 0.070$). This relationship is not very strong. We therefore reject the null hypothesis H_0 that there is no significant difference between broken home and academic performance of secondary school adolescents in Ibadan. Variables in pair 7, 8, 11 & 12 were used to compute the data on table 4. The average of pair 11 & 12 was calculated after which the averages of pair 7 alongside with readily computed average of pair 11 & 12 were also calculated, as well as pair 8. It is illustrated on the table below:

Table 8: Paired Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation of students and Academic Performance

Pairs	variables	N	correlation	Mean	SD	DF	95% confidence lower
7	Gender & parent together	200	-0.07	-0.025	.73	199	.08
8	Gender & parent separated	200	.08	.03	.68	199	.125
11	Gender & English	200	-0.03	-52.67	13.5	199	-50.8
12	Gender & maths	200	-0.12	-50.1	12.42	199	-48.4
11 & 12		200	-0.08	-51.4	12.96	199	49.6
7 vs 11&12		200	-0.06	-25.7	6.84	199	24.84
8 vs 11&12		200	0.08	-25.7	6.82	199	24.86

Discussion of the Findings

The discussions of the findings are done according to the stated hypotheses.

Hypothesis I: There is no significant difference between the family structure and academic performances of secondary school adolescents.

The above hypothesis was rejected which means that there is a relationship between the academic performances of adolescents and family structure. This hypothesis is predicated upon the fact that when adolescents are with their parents they feel more secured and are able to concentrate than when they are not with any or one of their parents. This finding is supported by that of Ajila and Olutola (2007) who states that the home environment and family is important as it affects the academic performances of pupils/students because the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. Therefore, family background and the environment in which a child grows affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. The finding also agrees with Ichado (1998) that parents' constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could lead to poor academic performance in school. Sameroff, Seifer, Ronald, Alfred and Clara (1993) also pointed out that close relationship with both parents is associated with positive adjustment in academic achievements of children. Social support availability factors include whether the child has advocates at home, at school, and elsewhere in the community.

Hypothesis II: There is no significance between the academic performances of junior and senior secondary school adolescents from broken and intact homes.

The result of this finding showed that there is a significant difference between the academic performances of junior and senior adolescents from broken and intact homes. This finding corroborates the findings of other researchers like Bichlery, (1996); Stephen, (1997) and Agbo, (1997) who found that children from single-parenting homes exhibit lower self-esteem, lower achievement motivation, lower tolerance for delay of gratification and lower academic achievement than those from intact homes where both father and mother are present. The explanation for poor academic achievement of adolescents from broken homes is that the single-parent or guardian has so much work and family responsibilities that require time, attention, and money which he/she cannot meet with the consequence of paying less attention to the education of his/her children. The result therefore, is poor academic achievement on the part of the children from broken or single-parent homes. Amato (2001) opined that personality factors such as the child's intellectual ability and approach to learning, attitude to disposition, self-esteem, and impulse control can impact a child positively. A vital factor that parents need to understand is the importance of their child maintaining contact with both parents. Guidubaldi and Peter (1995) suggest that

contact maintenance is of particular importance for adolescents in custodial households. They also found that the more contact the child has with both parents added to the academic input of a child's learning, it gives him or her access to educational knowledge of both parents. They recommended that schools need to get involved to help ease the effects of broken homes on children especially adolescents. Adolescents from broken homes need to be encouraged by their parents, guardians, and others concerned to become involved in sports, hobbies, co-curricular activities and to focus on academic achievement. According to them, it has been reported that parents who use mild forms of discipline and have insight to effective child-rearing practices have children who readily adjust emotionally to separation.

Hypothesis III: There is no significant relationship between the academic performances of Christian and Muslim secondary school adolescents from broken and intact homes.

Results from the study also showed significant difference in the academic achievement of Christian and Muslim adolescents from the two family structures. This finding is supported by that of Stapples (1986) that children from broken homes regardless of their religious affiliations are subjected to the same strains and stress. This result also agrees with that of Benjamin (2007) that association between student religiosity and academic achievement is largely due to family social capital and academic achievement and religious homogeneity between parents and adolescents is largely independent of family and community social capital. Moreover, Byfield 's (2008) findings agreed with this result as he found out that most of the students in his study were religious and their church community engineered cultural and social capital; their belief in God engineered religious capital all of which made significant contributions to the black male students' academic achievement.

Hypothesis IV: There is no significance between the academic performance of male and female adolescents from broken and intact homes.

The study showed differences in the performance of male and female students from the two family structures. These findings agreed with the conclusion of Uwakwe (1997) that poor interpersonal relations inhibit effective and good academic performance. Also, children/adolescents from broken homes experience more behavioural problems and the ability of the males and females to cope with these problems differs and is also accountable for the differences in their academic achievements. Fuller (1999) opined that the most important factor in creating a positive environment for children from broken homes is for parents and teachers to examine their own attitudes towards these children and determine whether they are accurate.

Implications of the Findings

The knowledge gained from this study can be of help to educators and families in dealing with adolescents from broken homes and help them to make smoother and positive adjustments following separation of their parents. Parents and educators as well as counsellors need to gain much insight into these areas of study if they are to effectively help this growing population of children and adolescents to live satisfying lives and to become healthy functioning individuals.

Findings from this study have implication for counsellors, psychologists, social workers, parents, teachers, youths and the society at large. Since broken homes have negative impact on the academic achievement of adolescents, their talents, abilities and interest may not be fully developed to allow them achieve self-actualization in life. The fact that a significant difference exists between the academic achievement of male and female adolescents from broken homes has implications for counselling. When counsellors are out to assist students with poor academic achievement, efforts should be made to identify the type of home the students come from and as much as it is possible, counsel the parents of such students if it is found that such student is from a single-parent or broken home. Such parents should be educated on the need to reduce the amount of housework assigned to the students so that they can face their studies better.

The single parents should also be counselled on social needs of their children so that their academic work will not suffer at school. Children and their parents should be counselled along their religious affiliation, as it affects their children's academic performances/achievement. In this respect, whatever the religious affiliation of the parents, this should not be allowed to tamper with the academic achievement of the students. In conclusion, all hands must be on deck in ensuring that appropriate counselling programmes such as group counselling, home visits, and supportive associations are designed to help children and adolescents from single-parent household or broken homes and their parents so as to improve the children's academic performances at school.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study. Parents should realize that their children need their support for effectiveness because the affection they receive from their parents revolves round their cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, thus, reflecting in their academic performances, attitudes, behaviours, skill acquisitions, and interests – hence parents should show openly their support for their children at all times. Fuller (1999) supported this when he said that there are several things that can be done by parents, educators, and others concerned in an effort to be supportive of children from broken homes. Adolescents are most likely to feel uncomfortable with the term “broken home”, as it suggests their life is defected, out of order, or not structured. Using the term “single-parent household” can describe the structure without making a negative value judgement. Other recommendations that are in line with that of Fuller (1999) are (a) provide in-service training for educators with accurate information on broken homes so that their perceptions are appropriate to the children of these households; (b) avoid stereotyping children from broken homes/single-parent homes since some of the problems faced by these children may be caused by expectations based on inaccurate and harmful stereotypes; (c) employ flexible scheduling when planning school activities so that single parents that must work may be able to become more involved in their child’s schooling.

It is important for government to contribute to the well-being of these children by demonstrating the importance of affordable childcare and effective child support enforcement so as to reduce economic hardship. Also, parents should supervise their children appropriately and help them boost their self-esteem. Finally, it is important that the needs of young adolescents be met as much as possible. Individual group support systems for adolescents from broken homes need to be provided on the elementary level. Schools need to establish safe, orderly and effective learning environments along with instituting procedures to better accommodate children of a changed family structure.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study can be used to develop effective intervention to assist in the adjustment of these adolescents to a new family structure. A vital task in assisting and supporting them is to assure them that the separation was a result of interpersonal problems of their parents and not as a result of their behaviour. This study clearly showed that parental separation can produce a stressful life transition for adolescents. Parental separation poses specific adaptive difficulties for many adolescents who experience it. Also, it should be pointed out that while academic differences do occur in many adolescents, many of the declines are not too extensive. Parents, teachers, and others involved with children from broken homes can help by creating a healthy environment which will have a positive effect on the child’s future. Knowledge of the child’s inner struggles along with committed support can have a positive effect. By understanding and investing in the whole child with insight into the emotional dimensions, those concerned can genuinely help the child’s psychological survival during separation and divorce. This procedure is crucial because many at times, adult’s perceptions become children’s self-conceptions. With proper perceptions and quality support, children as well as adolescents from broken homes will be satisfied as most children and adolescents from two-parent families.

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