



Influence of Broken Homes on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State

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Abstract : This study examined the influence of broken homes on academic performance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State. Four research questions guided the study and four hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population was 2,543 secondary schools' students. A sample of two hundred twelve (254) respondents were used. The study employed multi-stage sampling technique. Four-point rating scale was used as instrument for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions and Chi-square to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that; broken homes have significant influence on school attendance and class participation of secondary school students in Oju local government area. The study recommended that; Counselling should be offered to help such students from broken homes to adjust with challenges that comes with such gaps created both the absence of a parent, such learning how to read and write.

Keyword : Broken Homes and Academic Performance

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INTRODUCTION

A home is the environment where children live with their parents or guardians and receive their early upbringing. It is within the home that children first learn the norms, values, and behavioral patterns of the society in which they live (Ogbemudia & Aisha, 2013). The family, as a fundamental social unit, provides the earliest experiences and stimulation that shape a child's development (Adeyemo, 2017). According to Tenibiaje and Tenibiafe (2011), the home is the first social institution a child is exposed to, and it significantly influences their physical, mental, and moral growth. This is largely because socialization depends on the complementary roles played by both parents in nurturing the child (Igbinoso, 2014).

The home, therefore, plays a vital role in shaping a child's psychological, emotional, social, and economic development. Ajila and Olutola (2015) emphasized that the condition of the home greatly affects the child, as parents serve as the primary agents of socialization. Consequently, a child's family background influences their responses to life situations and overall performance. This underscores the home as a critical institution that contributes to socio-cultural, socio-economic, and psychological development, as well as to the broader society.

Beyond the home, studies have also shown that students' academic outcomes are influenced by the leadership and support they receive in school. Slaa and Inamungu (2025) noted that transformative leadership practices—such as inspiring a shared vision, motivating students, and fostering a supportive learning environment—significantly enhance academic achievement. This highlights the combined importance of family stability and effective school leadership in shaping students' performance.

Furthermore, recent studies have emphasized the growing role of digital platforms in education. Ochai et al. (2025) observed that structured social media management strategies, including institutional guidelines, scheduled academic interactions, and moderated content, improve students' engagement and participation in Nigerian universities. Their findings revealed increased involvement in discussions, better assignment completion rates, and enhanced collaboration when social media is effectively managed. This suggests that integrating digital tools into education can improve academic outcomes while minimizing the negative effects of uncontrolled usage.

The home also serves essential functions such as transmitting societal values and norms to children (Guler & Erka, 2013), as well as laying the psychological, moral, and spiritual foundation for their overall development (Eweniyi, 2012). Ideally,

the home should provide a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes holistic development and proper moral upbringing (Adeyemo, 2012).

Homes can generally be categorized into ideal (stable) and non-ideal (broken) types. An ideal home is one where parents and children live together harmoniously, and where parents adequately meet the psychological, educational, socio-economic, moral, and spiritual needs of their children (Fadeiyi in Tenibiaje, 2011). In contrast, a broken home arises from circumstances such as divorce, death, or persistent conflict (Igbinsosa, 2014), often resulting in instability and inadequate support for children. When children lack proper emotional and mental care, their academic performance may be negatively affected.

Students often bring challenges from their family backgrounds into the classroom. A stable family structure provides the security and emotional balance necessary for effective learning and adjustment. However, in broken homes, children frequently depend on a single parent who may struggle to meet their needs due to financial limitations or lack of support. This can reduce the level of guidance and encouragement available to the child, thereby affecting academic performance.

Academic performance refers to the measurable outcomes of learning, typically assessed through tests,

assignments, and examinations (Adeyemi, 2018). These outcomes are expressed in grades, rankings, or percentages to evaluate students' competence. Agboola (2015) identified key learning outcomes, including verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, and psychomotor skills, all of which contribute to academic success. Disruptions in any of these areas can negatively affect students' performance. Attendance and attentiveness in class are also crucial determinants of academic achievement.

Regular school attendance is strongly associated with improved academic performance. Roby (2004) suggested that consistent attendance promotes academic excellence, while Fleming (2018) emphasized its role in enhancing classroom engagement. Teachers and parents also contribute to improving attendance through guidance and encouragement (Black, 2014), while schools maintain attendance records for monitoring and quality assurance (Bagaya, 2019; Nsubuga, 2018). Research indicates that students who attend school regularly perform better academically than those who are frequently absent (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Ready, 2010). However, students from broken homes may face attendance challenges due to emotional instability and lack of parental support.

Class participation involves students' active engagement in classroom activities, including asking questions, contributing to discussions,

collaborating with peers, and paying attention. This engagement enhances understanding, critical thinking, and knowledge retention. However, students from broken homes may experience emotional stress that affects their ability to concentrate and participate effectively (Taylor & Levin, 2014).

Class participation also contributes to the development of communication, analytical, teamwork, and technological skills (Coldwell et al., 2018). It fosters a sense of belonging and connection to the school environment, which further encourages engagement (Browers, 2015). However, parental separation can significantly influence students' level of participation, depending on factors such as age, family circumstances, and the level of parental support available.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the influence of broken homes on the academic performance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

A broken home refers to a family structure in which parents are divorced, separated, or otherwise absent, leading to a fragmented family system. Such fragmentation often negatively affects children, who naturally require care, love, support, and affection from both parents. In Oju Local Government Area, this

phenomenon has become increasingly common and is a growing social concern.

Family disunity can adversely affect children's physical, social, and psychological well-being, as well as their overall health and personality development. Students from broken homes may experience emotional challenges such as grief, resentment, embarrassment, anger, and divided loyalty between parents. These emotional difficulties can be traumatic and may interfere with their ability to function effectively both at home and in school.

Although certain protective factors—such as reduced parental conflict, effective co-parenting, strong parent-child relationships, and supportive parenting—can help children adjust to parental separation, many affected students still struggle to cope. In Oju, the increasing rate of divorce and separation appears to be linked with declining academic performance among secondary school students, particularly in internal and external examinations.

Given this situation, there is a need to examine how broken homes influence students' academic outcomes. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the influence of broken homes on the academic performance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of broken homes on the academic performance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area, Benue State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine the influence of broken homes on students' school attendance.
2. Determine the influence of broken homes on students' class participation.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of broken homes on students' school attendance?
2. What is the influence of broken homes on students' class participation?

Hypotheses

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

1. Broken homes have no significant influence on the school attendance of secondary school students.
2. Broken homes have no significant influence on the class participation of secondary school students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive research design to systematically describe and analyze the influence of broken homes on students' academic

performance. The choice of this design was based on its suitability for providing detailed and accurate descriptions of existing conditions and relationships among variables (Emaikwu, 2011).

The study was conducted in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State and focused on public secondary school students. The total population comprised 2,543 students, as reported by the Benue State Ministry of Education (BENSME, 2023). This population was selected due to the noticeable prevalence of broken homes in the area despite ongoing interventions by counselors and religious leaders.

A sample size of 254 students, representing 10% of the population, was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage involved proportionate stratified sampling, where the population was divided into strata. Next, schools were grouped into clusters for accessibility. In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select the schools. Finally, a ballot method ("Yes" and "No" slips) was employed to select the required number of respondents from each stratum.

Data were collected using a structured instrument titled *Broken Homes and Academic Performance Rating Scale (BHAPRS)*. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while chi-square (goodness-of-fit) was used to test the

hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research Question 1: find out the influence of broken homes on school attendance of secondary school students

Table 1: The Table Below is the Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Broken Homes on School Attendance
Mean Scores and Standard Deviation influence of broken homes on school attendance of secondary school students

SN	Item	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	I often miss school because it is just me and my mother/father and I need to assist her at home first.	251	2.79	1.035	Accepted
2.	I sometimes miss school because I have to follow my father/mother to the farm since mother left him.	251	2.73	1.038	Accepted
3.	I am not always in school because I sometimes need to help my mother/father to make some money since our father is no longer living with us.	251	2.78	1.070	Accepted
4.	I often leave school before closing hours because I need to go to market and assist my mother.	251	2.86	1.033	Accepted
5.	I sometime miss school because mother cannot pay my school fees since my father no	251	2.78	.941	Accepted

longer pays my fees.	2.79	0.23
Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation		

Source: field work 2025

Table 1 indicates that the mean ratings of respondents' responses with corresponding standard deviations as 2.79 (1.035), 2.73 (1.038), 2.78 (1.070), 2.86 (1.033), 2.78(.941). Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point as indicated on the cluster mean of 2.79 and standard deviation of 0.23. This implies that broken homes have a significance influence on school attendance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State.

Research Question 2: examine the influence of broken homes on class Participation by secondary school students?

Table 2: The Table Below is the Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Broken Homes on Class Participation

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation influence of broken homes on class Participation of secondary school students

SN	Item	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	I sometimes lose attention in class when I am missing my mother/father.	251	2.97	.944	Accepted
2.	I often lose interest in class when I remember the work waiting for me at home since my mother/father not there to do.	251	2.76	1.159	Accepted
3.	I sometimes miss class work because I need to leave school	251	2.63	1.136	Accepted

	to assist my mother/father who is alone at the farm.						
4.	I miss my morning lessons any time delay in the house to assist my father since my mother/father left us.	251	2.96	1.015	Accepted		
5.	I sometimes lose focus in class when and thinking about the crisis between my parents that made my mother to leave.	251	2.82	1.080	Accepted		
			2.89	0.10			
	Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation						

Source: field work 2025

Table 2 indicates that the mean ratings of respondents' responses with corresponding standard deviations as 2.97 (.944), 2.76 (1.159), 2.63 (1.136), 2.96 (1.015), 2.82 (1.080). Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point as indicated on the cluster mean of 2.83 and standard deviation of 1.03. This implies that broken homes have a significance influence on school class participation of students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State.

Hypothesis 1 Broken homes have no significant influence on school attendance of secondary school students.

Table 3: The Table Below Shows the Chi-Square Test of Broken-Homes and School Attendance of Secondary School Adolescence Students.

Chi-Square Test for the influence of Broken-homes and school attendance of secondary school adolescence students.

Reponses Mode	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level Sign	X ²	P-value	Decision
Very High Extent	356	62.8	3	0.05	473.335	0.00	Significant
High Extent	472	62.8					
Low Extent	231	62.8					

Source: field work 2025

Hypothesis 3 shows X² of 473.335, df= 3, and P-value= 0.000. Since P-value 0.00<0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis which states that Broken homes have no significant influence on school attendance of secondary school students is rejected. This implies that broken homes have significant influence on school attendance of secondary school students in Oju local government area.

Hypothesis 2 Broken homes have no significant influence on class participation by secondary school students.

Table 4: The Table Below Shows the Chi-Square Test of Broken-Homes and Class Participation of Secondary School Adolescence Students.

Chi-Square Test for the influence of Broken-homes and class participation of secondary school adolescence students.

Reponses Mode	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	Level Sign	X ²	P-value	Decision
Very High Extent	424	62.8	3	0.05	371.215	0.00	Significant
High Extent	403	62.8					
Low Extent	216	62.8					
Very Low Extent	212	62.8					

Source: field work 2025

Hypothesis 4 shows X^2 of 371.215, $df= 3$, and $P\text{-value}= 0.000$. Since $P\text{-value } 0.00 < 0.05$ level of significance, the null hypothesis which states that Broken homes have no significant influence on class participation of secondary school students is rejected. This implies that broken homes have significant influence on class participation of secondary school students in Oju local government area.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings in this study is based on the two hypotheses that were formulated and tested. The results showed that both null hypotheses were rejected, indicating that broken homes have a significant influence on students' school attendance and class participation.

The first finding revealed that broken homes significantly affect the school attendance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area. Responses from the students indicated that many of them frequently miss school due to responsibilities at home, especially in situations where they live with a single parent. Some students reported staying back to assist with household chores before coming to school, while others accompany their parents to farms or engage in income-generating activities to support the family. In some cases, students leave school before closing hours to help their parents in markets or other activities.

These findings are consistent with the study by Adeyemo (2014), which reported that a large proportion of students with low academic grades attributed their poor performance to parental separation. This suggests that children from broken homes often face additional responsibilities and constraints that limit their ability to attend school regularly, thereby negatively affecting their academic performance compared to their peers from stable family backgrounds.

The second finding showed that broken homes also have a significant influence on students' class participation. Students indicated that emotional challenges, such as missing an absent parent, often lead to a loss of concentration during lessons. Many also reported losing interest in classroom activities due to concerns about responsibilities awaiting them at home. Additionally, some students miss lessons or classwork because they are required to assist their single parent, particularly in farming or other economic activities. Delays caused by household duties also result in missing important morning lessons.

This finding aligns with Pomerantz (2018), who observed that parental separation can negatively affect children's school engagement, including participation in classroom activities. The lack of adequate parental support, supervision, and involvement in academic work—such as helping with homework—contributes to reduced participation. Furthermore,

the emotional and physical strain experienced by students from broken homes may lead to fatigue, causing some to become less attentive or even fall asleep during lessons.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the significant impact of broken homes on both school attendance and class participation, which are critical factors in students' academic success.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that; the role of both parents has significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Counselling should be offered to help such students from broken homes to adjust with challenges that come with such gaps created both by the absence of a parent as; study time management, assignments completion, school attendance and class participation.

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