

## Home Factors and Academic Performances of Primary School Pupils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the effect of divorce on the academic performance of primary schools pupils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions were formulated and three hypotheses were stated in their null form and tested with appropriate statistics at .05 level of significance. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Population of the study comprised 100 pupils selected from public primary schools in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondent. Questionnaire and achievement test were used as a major research instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was tagged “Effect of divorce on pupils’ academic performance Questionnaire (ECODOPAP)”. Cronbach Alpha analysis for internal consistency reliability of the instrument yielded a co-efficient of .96. Research questions were answered using frequency and percentages while the hypotheses were tested using independent t-test. The study revealed that there is serious effects of divorce on pupils’ academic performance in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The independent t- test of the hypotheses indicated significant differences on academic performance of pupils from broken homes and unbroken home and it was concluded that divorce has effects on academic performance of pupils in Akwa Ibom State. The researcher made some useful recommendations which include teachers and guardians need to give psychological supports to pupils from the broken homes to perform excellently in their academic studies. Parents should maintain a stable home in order to avoid the effects of divorce on children among other recommendations.*

**Keywords:** *Effect, divorce, pupils, academic performance*

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### **Introduction /Literature Review**

Parents play a vital role in their pupil's lives, serving as their earliest and most important role model. Children tend to look up to and observe their parents behavior from a very young age (Herzog & Cooney, 2002.). Throughout childhood, family experiences play a vital role in building pupil's attitude, beliefs and expectation. (Rogers and Rose (2002) report that children of divorce experience determined sad effects such as depression, anger, aggression, parent-child conflict as well as parental divorce in terms of research, a common question among social scientist regarding children and divorce is how these children are affected by their experience and how they are different from those who are not experiencing ongoing parental conflict and discord. Experiencing parental discord may lead a child to trivialize the importance of commitment and view the institution of marriage with negativity (Doland 2003).

It is observed by the researchers that marriage between a man and a woman is expected to be a permanent affair and lasting association until death takes away one of the partners but changes in the Nigerian society, marriage is now seen to be a temporary affair which can be dissolved if either part by cruelty, desertion or adultery goes against the wishes of their union. Divorce is actually a legal dissolution of the marital union which, involve the governance of the marriage bind between a husband and his wife. For a marriage to be successful there is need for a couple to be in harmony mentally, physically and spiritual. In other words, the husband and the wife must have a common goal and each have to contribute his or her own towards the fulfillment in the family and keyword should be love (Cohen, 2002, Amato, 2020).

According to Mc Doland (2003) as cited earlier on, divorce is defined as the dissolution of a relationship, which is recognized as marital relationship. It marked by formal court proceedings and its decree is divorce. Divorce is usually accompanied by formal arrangements for owing of property, custody and support of children if there any. The property adjustment may also include a provision requiring alimony to be paid by one partner to the other although alimony is less frequently granted today.

Children from divorced families are nearly five times more likely to suffer damaging mental troubles than those who live with both parents. This shows that two parents are much better in bringing up healthy children than one. Children who come from broken families will most likely have difficult time in life. Children of divorce parent are roughly two times more likely to dropout from school than their peers who benefit from living with parents who are not divorced (Mclannahan 2006). Some children from broken marriages are likely to turn to drug abuse or negative behaviors. The truth is that every child needs and deserves the love and provision of a mother and a father. Happy family is the best environment for children. A strong family home is a place where children gain the identity, discipline, and moral education that are essential for their full individual development. Nigeria, as a nation with a strong marriage, had created the best route to achieving the Nigeria dream. It has now become a nation in which divorce is commonly seen as the path to personal liberation. In this case many experts argue that, because nothing can be done about it, all Nigeria should simply accept the culture of divorce without considering the future of the children.

The closeness between the parents and the children have a greater impact on a children's behaviour. The mother provides lots of social and emotional support to the child while the father provides more of physical support (Nseabasi, 2021). The qualities of parental relationship spills over into relationship with their children. Couples with satisfying marital relationship are more warm and supportive towards their children. (Amato and Ketin 2021) speculated that the gap in well-being between children with divorced and non-divorced parents might have narrowed either because divorce became more easily socially accepted or parents were making greater efforts to reduce the potentially disruptive impact of divorce on their children. Children with divorced parents score lower than children with continuously married parents on measure of academic success (Astone Mclanahan, 2002). The quality of functioning is one of the best predictors of pupil's behavior and well-being. Several within group studies shows that either a conflicted relationship with the custodial parent inept parenting on the part of the custodial parent are linked with a variety of negative outcomes on children including lower academic performance, internalizing problems, externalizing problems, reduced self-esteem, and poorer social competence (Buchnan, Smacco by Dombush, 2006).

The effects of divorce on children are traumatic divorce can cause children to question their self-worth, to experience unnecessary grief, guilt or confusion. Young children especially, have difficulty understanding the rationalities of their parents' decision to divorce. In a marriage it is difficult for children to find a sense of security because experience shows them that what seemed stable and good fell to pieces to and left them empty. Growing up in a broken home may also cause children to have difficult in future relation.

Parental relationship plays a very important role in determining the academic performance of their children in school. Family harmony can easily be affected due to parental conflicts. The degree of parental conflicts varies from mild to serious. These conflicts affect the academic performance their children hence lead to drop out from school. In their recent longitudinal study, (Harold A, and Shelton, 2007) revealed the roles of marital relations and pupil's academic performance. In accounting for the relationship between spouses affects their pupil's adjustment directly through the emotional stress level, role modeling and academic performance (Cumming, 2000).

Reaction of children to parental divorce may be influenced by remarriage of custodial parent. According to (Zinsmeister, 2000), remarriage of parents can add to, rather than subtract from, the stress of a child. Divorce makes children unsafe, uncertain of the future or makes children feel that the future is bleak and they become helpless because they fear that something bad could happen to them (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003). Some children perform better in school as an attempt to shut out problems at home (Lansky, 2000). In contrast, other children may intentionally allow grades to slip in an attempt to gain attention from both parents (Richmond, 2006). Children living with newly divorced mothers are more likely to be late for school and are less likely to have a help in their homework (Hetherington, 2002). For many years the prevailing view has been that divorce was not only traumatic for children but contributed to negative life outcomes for the majority of those whose parents divorced recently. However, in 'for better for worse' Divorce reconsidered by (Hetherington and Kelly, 2002) a new picture has emerged the good news. 75% of the children of divorce did not end up having serious psychological, social or academic problems. 25% of the children from divorce did not end up having such problems.

It is immediately important to further clarify these percentages. Historically divorce research has been relatively short-term, generally exploring the first two years post-divorce, which is clearly the period of greatest upheaval and therefore, the time when all parties, parents and children look the worst. Hetherington, a research psychologist, not only has been following some families, Hetherington compared divorced families to non-divorced families, providing much more refined data. This article will report on a number of her findings along with some of my own observation.

The important of comparing the two types of families becomes immediately apparent when discussing the negative outcomes rates for children. Since 10% of the children from non-divorced families in Hetherington's research and significant problems, the "true cost" of divorce is an additional 15% of children with significant problems. Again, this is one of those good-bad news pieces of data. It reduces the negative impact of divorce on children to rate much lower than has been typically reported and tells parents that divorce will not permanently the lives of most their children. Nevertheless, 15% of children from divorced families represent million of struggling lives.

According to (Sun and Li, 2002), high parental conflict is associated with lower score on Mathematics and reading exams among adolescents from divorced families compared to adolescents in intact families. Divorce generally leads to a severe decline in the standard of living of single mother families, and this decline may increase children's development risk in various aspects including academic achievement. According to (Sun, 2001) and (Sun and Li 2001), the economic hardship associated with divorced families was found to mediate the educational defects of children in such families.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As adolescent become young adults, they begin to explore various aspects of life that include dating, intimate relationships and thoughts about future according to Idiong(2023) good life foundation is inspired and formed by good and positive values. Research had shown that many factors are involved in the formation of a young adult's view of marriage such as their experience or lack of experience with parental divorce (Jones and Nelson, 2001). In their study of young adults and intimate relationships (Sinclair Nelson,2004) found out that students from divorced and intact families do not differ in the ability to experience intimate relationship, contradicting many other studies which have shown a difference between the groups. Parental conflicts within divorced and non-divorced families can have a detrimental effect on how young adults view marriage thus leaving many young adults uncommitted to a number of partners in the early dating years due to fear. In relation, (Sinclair and Nelson, 2001) found that parental divorce can give young adults feelings of insecurity as well as have a greater variety of dating partners and interest in relationships, (Franklin, Jan off-Bulinan and Roberts 2008) found that college students who experienced parental and success of their future marriage.

While Literature on the relationship between broken marriages has focused on school going children's drop out, it is silent on the role of teachers in minimizing the negative effects on off divorce on school going children. Because the increasing rate of drop out has affected the government and family social economic abilities, it is important to consider teachers and community member's role in minimizing the effects of broken marriages on school going children. This study intended to fill the gap in the literature. Studies such as those of (Harold et al, 2007; Cummings and Davies 2000; Turner and Koplecc.2006) were done in USA with a focus on nuclear

family. Not much has been done in Africa where most families still have the elements of communal and extended families.

Parenting and by implication lack of it, it is the single largest variable implicated in truancy school disruption and under-achievement. It is therefore described as the most important public issue facing the society. Both mothers and fathers make a vital contribution to the cognitive and emotional well-being of their children. For Idiong(2023) authentic education should not be ignored for the development of the child. However, studies suggest that the single most important family trend in the United States is the growing absence of fathers from children and this lead to truancy. (Healy, Stewart and Copeland 2000), in a study of primary school children six months after parental separation, found that one third reported some feelings of self-became, in turn was related to variety of child's problem, and lowered feelings of self-competence.

Unhappy marriage of parents may be associated with low performance of children in school, because witnessing conflicts between parents heightens a level of stress on children and keep them from focusing on school work. These children also learn in appropriate social problem solving skills through modeling parental behaviors. In Korea, parent in Lee and Chung (2004) found that the marital relationship perceived by Korean adolescent students were positively related to their school adjustment. Parents in a dysfunctional marriage are likely to be distressed and distracted by conflicts with their spouses and they cannot afford to invest their time and energy in children. In turn, inappropriate, parenting style worsens parent-child relations. In view of this, the study tend to investigate effect of divorce on pupils academic performance in primary schools in Akwa Ibom State to fill gap in research and knowledge.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

1. To determine effect of domestic violence on academic performance of pupils.
2. To determine effect of divorce on academic performance of pupils.

#### **Research Questions**

1. Do pupils from peaceful homes perform academically better than pupils from violence homes?
2. To what extent could divorce have effects on academic performance?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from peaceful home and from violence homes.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant effect of divorce on the academic performances of primary school pupils

#### **Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that findings from this study will enrich programs of teaching social sciences. Although all extensive research has been done on how children are afflicted by parental divorce, on research area that lack depth is the effect of divorce on young adult's attitude and perception of divorce and marriage as well as their beliefs on the formation of their own intimate relationship. With the high divorce rate and growing prevalence of marriage and divorce in today's society, it is equally important to research the attitudes and perceptions of individuals from divorced and non- divorced as well. It will also make youngsters to be discriminative in their choice mate. Findings from this study and building from parent who have thought divorce in the understanding of the problem experienced by their parent and give assurance about their children.

#### **Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used to give the reader[s] an interesting study.

**Effect:** This is the change which is a result or consequences of an action or other cause.

**Divorce:** This is the way of dissolving a legal marriage which permit's the partners to remarry if they choose

**Pupils:** Children who are being taught in a primary school

**Academic Performance:** Refers to the degree of exhibition of output in educational activities in school or learning outcome of the recipient in an highly institutionalize.

**Research Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was survey design. The population for the study consist of 100 pupils from some selected schools in the three Senatorial Distract of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondent. Questionnaire and achievement test were used as a major research instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was tagged "Effect of divorce on pupils academic performance Questionnaire (ECODOPAP)". The questionnaire for this consist two sections. Section A and B. Cronbach Apha statistics was used to test the internal consistency reliability of the instrument which yielded a co-efficient of .96 the research questions were answered using frequency counts and percentages and the hypotheses were analyzed using Independent t-test .

**Research Question 1:** Do pupils from stable homes perform academically than pupils from broken homes?

This research question was analyzed using frequency count and percentage

**Table 5: Analysis of academic performance of primary school pupils from violence home and non-violence home**

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES		NO	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Pupils from peaceful homes perform better academically?	72	(72%)	28	(28%)
2.	Pupils from violence homes perform better academically?	57	(57%)	43	(43%)
3.	Domestic violence could have positive effects on career of pupils after living school?	70	(70%)	30	(30%)
4.	Domestic violence could have negative effect on career of pupils after living school?	75	(75%)	25	(25%)

5.	Pupils from peaceful homes have moral than pupils from broken homes?	45	(45%)	55	(55%)
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Table 5 shows the response of the respondents on the pupils from stable homes perform academically than pupils from broken homes. Item 1 reveal that “Pupils from stable homes perform better academically” 72 (72%) respondent chooses yes while 28 (28%) said no.

Item 2 shows that “Pupils from broken homes perform better academically” 57 (57%) respondent chooses yes and 43 (43%) went for no. item 3 reveal that “Domestic violence could have positive effects on career of pupils after living school” 70 (70%) respondent go for yes while 30 (30%) were of no decision. Item 4 revealed that “Domestic violence could have negative effect on career of pupils after living school” yes were 75 (75%) while on the other hand 25(25%) said no. item 5 tells us that “Pupils from stable homes have moral than pupils from broken homes” 45(45%) said yes while 55 (55%) said no.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent could divorce have effects on academic performance?

This research question was analyzed using frequency count and percentage

**Table 6: Analysis of extent could divorce have effects on academic performance**

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES		NO	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Does the separation of your parent affect your education performance?	80	(80%)	20	(20%)
2.	Do your parent pay your school fees regularly?	75	(75%)	25	(25%)
3.	Do your parental have enough time to check your school exercise?	60	(60%)	40	(40%)
4.	Do your father make provision for the family?	80	(80%)	20	(20%)

5.	Do your mother have time to prepare food for you?	85	(85%)	15	(15%)
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Table 6 shows the analysis of extent could divorce have effects on academic performance. Item 1 revealed that “Does the separation of your parent affect your education performance” 80(80%) go for yes while 20 (20%) said no, item 2 shows that “Do your parent pay your school fees regularly” yes were 70(70%) and 30(30%) were no, item 3 revealed that “Do your parent have enough time to check your school exercise” 60(60%) of respondents go for yes while 40(40%) go for no, item 4 “Do your father make provision for the family” 80(80%) of the respondents go for yes and no were 30(30%) from the respondents, item 5 revealed that “Do your mother have time to prepare food for you” 85(85%) of the respondents said yes and just 15(15%) said no.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from violence home and from non-violence homes.

In order to test hypothesis 1, responses of the respondents to items that addressed the academic performances of primary school pupils from broken and from unbroken homes were computed using independent t-test.

**Table 9: Independent t-test of difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from violence and from non-violence homes**

Variables	No	Mean	Std	Df	Cal.t-value	Sig	Decision
Broken Home	42	26.22					
			98	98	0.0327	1.922	Accepted
Unbroken Home	58	9.45					
Total	100						

P<0.05

Table 9: reveal that the calculated t-value of 0.0327 is less than significant value of 1.922 at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from violence and from non-violence homes.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant effect of divorce on the academic performances of primary school pupils.

In order to test hypothesis 2, responses of the respondents to items that addressed the academic performances of primary school pupils in term of divorce were computed using independent t-test.



**Table 10: Independent t-test of effect on the academic performances of primary school pupils in term of socialization of the home**

Variables	No	Mean	Std	Df	Cal.t-value	Sig	Decision
Broken Home	42	26.22					
			98	98	0.0327	1.922	Accepted
Unbroken Home	58	9.45					
Total	100						

P<0.05

Table 10: reveals that the calculated t-value is 0.153 is less than significant value of 1.519. at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant effect on the academic performances of primary school pupils in term of socialization of the home.

### Discussion of the Findings

One of the finding of this research work is Pupils from stable homes perform academically than pupils from broken homes this agrees with the finding of Wolchick, (2002) who observed that children who have experienced a divorce frequently have lower academic achievement than children from non-divorced families. In the same vain, Elmore's (2003) opined that, children of divorced family are at risk of lower academic performance than their peers from non- divorced families.

The second finding reveal that Divorce have effects on academic performance of pupils. This finding go in line with the work of Barthelomew and Kwadwo (2015) who reported that The issue of divorce is an increasing social problem that has become a topic for discussion in recent times. It is traumatic for those who experience it. Those affected may experience grief, embarrassment, resentment, disappointment, intense anger and divided loyalty. Similarly, Amato and Keith (2021) observed that children of divorced families are at a greater risk of not reaching their full academic potentials since they encounter many challenges in their family lives which they bring with them into the classroom.

The third finding of this work was on Pupils from broken homes have moral laxity than stable homes. This agrees with the finding of Salami (1998) who postulated that adolescents from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic records. The conjecture is that when parents separate or divorce, children often lose both the financial and emotional support of their fathers, which can have a negative impact on academic performance.

The forth finding shows that Divorce has higher effects on moral behavior of pupils from broken homes this finding is in accordance with the findings of Udansky and Wolf (2008) identified single parenting as a major problem on the rise. Single parenthood may arise when either the male or female decides to produce and rear a child or children outside wedlock.

The fifth finding reveals that there is significant difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from broken and from unbroken homes. The present finding also supports

the findings of Rodgers and Rose (2001) found out that family and school factors related to adolescents' academic performance, it noted that it is two times more likely for a child from a divorced family to drop out of high school than a child from a non-divorced family. These children from divorced families may also be less likely to attend college, resulting in the discontinuation of their academic career.

Furthermore, The fifth finding of this research work which is on the significant difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from broken and from unbroken homes, this finding is in accordance with the research conducted by Otu-Danquah (2002) who literary expressed that academic performance is 'what a student is capable of achieving when tested or examined on what he/she has been taught' this is also agrees with the work of Lamden et al, (2002). The school as a system is confronted with large numbers of families coping with transitions created by divorce which mostly affects the pupils academics performance in school. Also the work of Yongm and Yuanzhang, (2008) agrees with this above finding that in some cases children who experience separation or divorce do not always perform well or achieve academically.

The sixth finding of this was on the significant effect on the academic performances of primary school pupils in term of socialization of the home and this agrees with the findings of Rogers and Rose (2002) who submitted that children of divorce parents experience sad effects of divorce such as depression, anger, aggression and low self-esteem and self-confidence thus this affects their socialization at home among their peers. Similarly the observation of Amato and Keith (2021) agrees that after a systematic analysis of the effect of divorce on children, concluded that parental divorce is associated with negative outcome in academic achievement that will result into bad conduct, psychological imbalance, low self-esteem, fear for future and social relations(including home and society) of the pupils.

### **Summary of Findings**

From the proceeding data analysis, the following findings were deduced:

1. Pupils from stable homes perform academically than pupils from broken homes.
2. Divorces have effects on academic performance of pupils.
3. Pupils from broken homes have moral laxity than stable homes.
4. Divorce has higher effects on moral behavior of pupils from broken homes.
5. There is significant difference in the academic performances of primary school pupils from broken and from unbroken homes.
6. There is significant effect on the academic performances of primary school pupils in term of socialization of the home.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that divorce has high level of negative impact on the academic and social relation of the pupils from broken home since they encounter many challenges in their family lives that they bring them into the classroom. However, pupils from non-broken home perform better and have the potential to reach and attain their academic height therefore divorce is not the sole predictor of academic failure for pupils.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers and guardians need to give psychological supports to pupils from the broken homes to perform excellently in their academic studies.
2. Parents should put their children into consideration before divorce as they are the ones to suffer from such decision to separate by their parent.
3. The intended parent who wish to separate should know their move will affects the proper upbringing of their children especially on the moral grand and anytime their displayed moral laxities the blame will be largely on such parents who encourages divorce.
4. Parents/guardians needs to pay more attention to moral upbringing of every child.
5. Teacher and the school management need to treat all pupils equally irrespective of their family background.
6. More attention need to be paid to child upbringing as the home serves as first agent of socialization.

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