

ASSESSMENT OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF BROKEN HOMES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN ASSIN-SOUTH DISTRICT

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Abstract:- The study sought to assess the causes of broken homes; problems faced by pupils from broken homes and the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District. A descriptive survey was the research design used for the study. In all, a total of 60 respondents made up of 45 pupils and 15 parents were used as sample size for the study. A purposive sampling procedure was used to select the sample. Questionnaire and interview were the 2 main instruments used for the study. Data from the questionnaire were analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics mainly frequency and simple percentages, whereas data from the interview were analysed qualitatively. The study revealed that there were several factors that cause broken homes among Basic school pupils and the four (4) most serious causal factors include divorce; forced or early marriage; death and sexual incompatibility. It was also observed that pupils from broken homes faced a lot of problems and the 2 major problems identified were academic problems and financial problems. Also, it was found out that the specific problems faced by pupils from broken homes include early engagement in sexual activities; poor academic performance; school drop-out, low self-esteem and insecurity. Finally, it was revealed that broken homes had impacted negatively on the pupils' academic performance as well as their educational progress and development in schools. It was recommended that stakeholders in education should adopt innovative strategies to help solve the numerous problems faced by Basic school pupils from broken homes so as to help them perform better academically and also behave well in schools.

Keywords:- Assessment, causes, effects, broken home, academic performance, Basic, school, pupils

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Owens (2000), marriage is a ceremony, act or contract by which a man and a woman who have come to agreement on fixed terms, a bound which is expected and adhered by both parties to the contractual agreement.

The ultimate aim of any fruitful marriage is the bearing of children which is regarded as blessing from God or by nature as well as the provision of ideal home for these children to lay their heads peacefully. It is the responsibility of parents to provide an ideal and peaceful home for these children when born into a family with both the father and the mother.

An ideal home according to (Yahaya, 2012), is a place where the parents and their children stay together and there is always good relationship between the parents and the children. The parents provide their children with basic necessities like clothing, food, shelter, education and also take some of their busy schedules to visit them in school. Also, all the needs of the children are easily communicated to the parents who are also ever readily to provide and satisfy such needs unequivocally.

According to Nyarko (2007), it is undisputable fact that children (pupils) from ideal homes where all the necessary school materials are provided by the parents and that either the father or mother is always available to support their children will by all means excel in all works of life rather than those without such privileges. But could all the children under the sun have the same ideal and better privileges?. Then, why is it that some children have caring, supportive and peaceful homes whereas others have no peaceful homes; but rather confused, dejected and unstable homes?

One of the reasons that have been incriminated by several researchers responsible for children without caring and unstable home is "broken home". In a study, Colcord (1919) opined that a broken home is a home in which one of or both parents have been removed by death, divorce, desertion and separation of prolonged absence where only one parent is taking onus responsibilities of the children.

Studies by (Amato 2000; Anderson, 2002) asserted that broken homes are always serious calamity if there are children between the couples and that these children suffer the most. This implies that, children are innocent victims of broken homes and they suffer unnecessary for something of not their faults. This confirms an old adage that "when two elephants fights, it is the grass which sufferers".

The issue or problem of broken home and its replicating effects on pupils' academic performance in schools cannot be overemphasised or ignored considerably. In a study, Nyarko (2011) posited that a broken home produces children denied of quality education and better academic performance.

Studies by (Schultz, 2006; Abudu & Naim, 2013) revealed that broken home has negative impact on a pupils' academic performance in schools. On his part, Fadeiye (1985) stated that children from broken homes have low-esteem; perform poor academically and eventually drop out of school.

Other studies by (Orenstein, 1998; Anderson, 2002; Schultz, 2006) opined that children from broken homes are at greater risk for symptoms of poor psychological adjustment, behavioural and social problems; low self-esteem, tearful or depressed; poverty and poor academic performance in schools. A careful search of literature reveals that broken homes negatively affect the academic performance, vocational, personal and social development as well as emotional, social and life planning of school pupils.

It is an undeniable fact that broken homes are causing much havoc to the academic, vocational and personal development as well as emotional, and life planning of Basic school pupils in Ghana of which pupils in Assin-South District are of no exception.

Therefore, it is imperative that a study should be conducted to assess the causes of broken home and its effects on the academic performance of Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District.

It is against this background that the study was conducted to assess the causes of broken homes; problems faced by school pupils from broken homes and the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District.

Statement of the Problem

Through persistent interaction with teachers and school pupils in the Assin-South District, it was observed that most of the Basic school pupils exhibited some deviant behaviours which were not acceptable in the Ghanaian educational settings or code of ethics in the public Basic schools.

Some of the unacceptable behaviours exhibited by the pupils include truancy, teenage pregnancy, alcoholism and among many others. This development had impacted negatively on their punctuality to school which has culminated to the poor academic performance of these school pupils in the District and also has lowered their self-esteem in schools.

Upon series of interactions with the head teachers, teachers and pupils in some of the schools, it was revealed that most of these pupils were from broken homes and that the broken home may be responsible for such deviant and acceptable behaviours. Some of the head teachers and teachers were quick to conclude that if no solution is found against this menace of broken home, its repercussions on the total development of the school pupils in the District and the whole Ghanaian society will be disastrous in a near future.

In a recent study, Yahaya (2012) posited that broken homes are caused by several factors. In another study (Yahaya, 2012; Saikia, 2017) revealed that pupils from broken homes are faced with a lot of problems; and some of these problems are immediate while the others only begin to manifest later in life. On their parts (Salami & Alawode, 2000; Schultz, 2006) also indicated that broken home affects the academic, vocational and personal development of school pupils.

It is in the light of this that this study was conducted to assess the causes of broken homes among pupils; problems faced by pupils from broken homes and effects of broken homes on pupils' academic performance in schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the causes and effects of broken homes on the academic performance of Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District. Specifically, the study intends to find out:

- 1) Causes of broken homes among some selected Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District.
- 2) Problems faced by Basic school pupils from broken homes in the Assin-South District.
- 3) Effects of broken homes on the academic performance of Basic school pupils in the District.

Research Questions

The following three (3) investigative questions directed research activity in the study:

1. What are the causes of broken homes among Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District?
2. What are the problems faced by Basic school pupils from broken homes in the Assin-South District?
3. What are the effects of broken homes on academic performance of school pupils in the Assin-South District?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This aspect of the study reviews related literature that underpins the study. The review was done under the:- meaning and historical perspective of broken home; causes of broken homes among school pupils; problems faced by pupils from broken homes and effects of broken homes on pupils' academic performance in schools.

Meaning and Historical Perspective of Broken Home

Many researchers have different definitions of what a broken home is with regards to educational research. It is sufficed to say that every definition of broken home matters. To Colcord (1919), a broken home is a home in which one of or both parents have been removed by death, divorce, desertion and separation of prolonged absence; where only one parent is taking good care of the children.

Polanen (1990) maintains that although a broken home is usually taken to mean a home where one parent has been by certain cause, a home can still be broken with both parents present. She argues that if there is no communication, interaction or investment in each other's lives by the couple, the home is broken.

Margaret (1918) argues that before the home is broken, the individual members of such home are first broken or wrecked. From this explanation, it follows that a home is deemed to be broken when the couple (i.e. husband and wife) that constitute a unified home cease to live together functionally as an integrated unit in one abode.

Causes of Broken Homes Among School Pupils

Studies by (Colcord, 1919; Polanen, 1990; Yahaya, 2012) have revealed that broken homes are caused by several factors. Colcord (1919) outlined five (5) causes of broken homes and these include death, divorce and separation. On her part, Polanen (1990) indicated that lack of marriage counselling, forced marriage, poverty, high expectations and extravagance are some of the causes of broken homes.

Yahaya (2012) indicated that divorce, death, separation, prolonged absence of either or both parents, differences in socio-economic background, wrong basis of marriage, poverty, ill health, infertility, sexual incompatibility, interference of relatives are some of the causes of broken homes.

In a more recent study, Saikia (2017) attributed recent upsurge of broken homes to parents' divorce, death, misconception between family members and parental influence. It is obvious that literature is full of causes of broken homes in the society.

Problems Faced By Pupils from Broken Homes

Researchers (Saheed, 1988; Aremu & Sokan, 2003; Yahaya, 2012; Saikia, 2017) have indicated that pupils from broken homes faces a lot of problems; and some of the problems are immediate while the others only begin to manifest later. Aremu and Sokan (2003) posited that

students from broken homes suffer poor academic performance; and that poor academic achievement is related to low motivational orientation, low self esteem, emotional problems, poor study habits and poor interpersonal relationships.

Saheed (1988) indicated that “attachment disorder” is the main problem faced by pupils from broken homes; and it is the lack of attachment that brings about a package of ill behaviours. Polanen (1990) mentioned that children from broken homes have higher incidence of emotional and behavioural problems.

Wallerstein and Blakeslee (2003) stated that broken home 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

Studies by (Orenstein, 1998; Anderson, 2002) indicated that children from broken homes are at greater risk for symptoms of poor psychological adjustment, behavioural and social problems; low self-esteem; school dropout rates; tearful or depressed; poverty and poor performance in schools.

Nyarko (2007) identified streetism, school dropout, truancy, teenage pregnancy and drug addiction as some of the problems faced by children from broken homes. Yahaya (2012) identified educational problems; emotional problems; social, behaviour and learning difficulties as some of the problems.

Saikia (2017) also mentioned adjustment problems, discontentment in schools, academic problems; internalizing and externalizing problems; low self-esteem and early engagement in sexual; insecurity; lack of confidence; school drop-out; vulnerable to anger; depression; as well as alcohol and drugs addictions. The study concluded that too much depression, alcohol addiction and drug dependency, if left untreated, can make him or her mentally ill or can turn him or her into a criminal.

Effects of Broken Homes on Pupils’ Academic Performance in schools

Studies by (Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990; Amato, 1991; Salami & Alawode, 2000) have indicated that broken homes negatively affect pupils’ academic performance in schools and that pupils from broken homes often suffer poor academic performance. Poor academic performance is understood principally as falling below an expected standard set up by an institution.

In a quantitative meta-analysis study, Amato (1991) revealed that there is statistical significance difference in academic achievements between children from broken homes and children from continuously married parents; with the lower or poor academic achievement in children of broken homes.

In a pioneer study, Natriello, McDill and Pallas (1990) also reported that a study conducted by National Association of Educational Procurement (NAEP) in 1986 revealed that pupils from broken homes had lower academic achievement than children from intact homes.

In a similar study, Salami and Alawode (2000) concluded that children from broken homes have higher incidence of poor academic performance than other children from intact homes.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This design used for this study was descriptive survey. The rationale for using this design was to assess the views of the respondents on the causes of broken homes; problems faced by pupils from broken homes and the effects of broken homes on pupils’ academic performance in the Assin-South District. Anane and Anyanful (2017) posited that this design allowed the use of multiple data collection tools in seeking to address the research questions posed by the study in an in-depth manner.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The total sample size for the study was 60 respondents made up of 45 pupils and 15 parents. The 45 pupils were selected from six (6) Junior high schools (JHS) in the District. The 45 pupils were made up of 27 girls and 18 boys and they were all from broken homes. The 15 parents were made up of 11 females and 4 males and they were all single-parents as a result of broken homes.

A purposive sampling procedure of the non-probability procedure was used to select the sample size. The respondents were selected because of their willingness to participate in the study and also their in-depth knowledge of the problem under study.

Research Instruments

The study used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering instruments. Two (2) instruments namely questionnaire and interview were used to collect data. Two (2) questionnaires (Parents’ questionnaire and Pupils’ questionnaire) were designed and used to collect data from the respondents. The parents’ questionnaire was used to collect data from the parents whereas pupils’ questionnaire was also used to collect data from the pupils. In addition, pupils’ interview guide was also used to collect information from the pupils.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was first sought from the school authorities, the teachers of the schools and the parents of the pupils used for the study. Consents of the selected parents who took part in the study were also sought. The questionnaire was administered to all the 45 pupils in the selected schools in person by the researchers to ensure complete coverage, evade bias and guarantee high return rate.

Again, the researchers also visited each of the 15 parents and administered questionnaire to them in their respective homes to answer in our presence and also had interactions with them. This gave the researchers opportunities to interact with the respondents. All the 60 questionnaires distributed were collected and this process ensures 100% return rate of the questionnaires.

After the administration of the questionnaire to parents and pupils, a face-to-face interactive interview session was conducted for only 25 pupils using the interview guide to obtain additional information that were not captured in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Method

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. Data collected were organised and edited to ensure consistency. Data from the questionnaire were analysed quantitatively using frequency and percentages; whiles data from the interview guide were also analysed qualitatively, summarised and presented thematically based on the research questions that guided the study.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for windows was used for the analysis of the data and Microsoft excel programme was used to present the data into tables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Results

The analyses of the results were done to answer the 3 research questions posed by the study.

Research Question 1: What are the causes of broken homes among Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District?

In answering research question 1, the respondents' responses to question items on the causes of broken homes among Basic school pupils were analysed and are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Parents and Pupils' Responses on Causes of Broken Homes

No.	Causes of broken homes.	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Forced or early marriage.	60	100
2.	High expectations in marriage.	40	67
3.	Poverty (lack of money or financial problems).	52	87
4.	Divorce.	60	100
5.	Death.	60	100
6.	Separation.	51	85
7.	Misconceptions between family members.	33	55
8.	Ill- health and infertility.	55	92
9.	Sexual incompatibility.	60	100
10.	Parental or relatives influence.	59	98

Source (From Parents' & pupils' questionnaires, 2018)

Responses in Table 1 shows that all the 60 respondents representing 100% agreed that the most common causes of broken homes among Basic school pupils are forced or early marriage; divorce; death and sexual incompatibility. Again, 59 respondents representing 98% indicated parental or relatives influence; 55 respondents representing 92% stated ill- health and infertility; 52 respondents representing 87% mentioned poverty; 51 respondents representing 85% indicated separation; 40 respondents representing 67 % indicated high expectations in marriage whereas only 33 respondents representing 55% stated misconceptions between family members as causes of broken homes.

Other causes of broken homes mentioned by the pupils during the interview sessions were interference of relatives; lack of marriage counselling; prolonged absence of either or both parents; differences in socio-economic background; wrong basis of marriage and desertion.

Research Question 2: What are the problems faced by Basic school pupils from broken homes in the Assin-South District?

In answering research question 2, pupils' and parents' responses to questions on the problems faced by Basic school pupils from broken homes were analysed and are presented in Tables 2 and 3 below:

Table 2: Awareness of problems and types of problem faced by pupils from broken homes

No.	Awareness of problems	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
1.	Are you aware that pupils from broken homes face a lot of problems?	60	100	0	0.0	60	100
2.	Types of general problems faced by school pupils.	Frequency		Percentage			
a).	Academic problems.	30		50.0			
b).	Cultural problems.	2		3.3			
c).	Psychological problems.	10		16.7			
d).	Physical problems.	5		8.3			
e).	Financial problems.	13		21.7			
	Total	60		100			

Source (From Parents' & pupils' questionnaires, 2018)

Responses in Table 2 show that the respondents are aware that pupils from broken homes face a lot of problems. When asked if they were aware that pupils from broken homes face a lot of problems; all the 60 respondents representing 100% indicated "yes" with "No" response.

On the issue of types of general problems faced by pupils from broken homes; majority (30 out of 60) of the respondents representing 50.0% mentioned academic problems; 13 respondents representing 21.7% indicated financial problems; 10 respondents representing 16.7% stated psychological problems; 5 respondents representing 8.3% indicated physical problems; whereas only 2 respondents representing 3.3% also mentioned cultural problems.

When asked the specific problems faced by school pupils from broken homes, the responses given by the entire 60 respondents were analysed qualitatively and are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Specific Problems Faced By Pupils from Broken Homes

No.	Specific problems faced by pupils from broken homes
1.	Poor academic performance.
2.	Truancy.
3.	Drug addiction.
4.	Criminal activities.
5.	Streetism.
6.	Teenage pregnancy.
7.	Emotional, behavioural and social problems.
8.	School drop-out
9.	Low self-esteem.
10.	Discontentment in schools.
11.	Insecurity.
12.	Early engagement in sexual activities.
13.	Lack of confidence.

Source (From Parents' & pupils' questionnaires, 2018)

Responses in Table 3 show that pupils from broken homes encounter several specific problems. Some of the identified specific problems faced by pupils from broken homes include poor academic performance; school drop-out, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, early engagement in sexual activities, teenage pregnancy, insecurity, truancy, drug addiction, streetism, behavioural and social problems and criminal activities (crime).

Research Question 3: What are the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of Basic school pupils in the Assin-South District?

In answering research question 3, parents' and pupils' responses to questions on the effects of broken homes on the academic performance of pupils were analysed and are presented in Tables 4 & 5 below:

Table 4: Parents' Responses on Effects of Broken Home on Pupils' Performance

No	Effects of broken homes on performance	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
1.	Do you think broken home issue has affected your ward's or child's educational progress and development?	12	80	3	20	15	100
2.	Has the issue of broken home impacted negatively on your child's academic performance?	14	93.3	1	6.7	15	100

Source (From Parents' & pupils' questionnaires, 2018)

Parents responses in Table 4, indicates that broken home has negative effect on Basic school pupils' academic performance. When asked whether broken home has impacted negatively on the child's educational progress and development; 12 parents representing 80% indicated "Yes" while only 3 parents representing 20% indicated "No".

On the issue of whether broken home has impacted negatively on your child's academic performance; as many as 14 parents representing 93.3% responded "Yes" while only 1 parent representing 6.7% indicated "No" to the same statement.

Table 5: Pupils' Responses on Effects of Broken Homes on Pupils' Academic Performance

No	Effects of broken homes on performance	Yes		No		Total	%
		F	%	F	%		
1.	Do you think broken home has negative effects on your academic performance?	45	100	0	0	45	100
2.	If yes, explain further:.....						

Source (From Parents' & pupils' questionnaires, 2018)

Again, pupils' responses in Table 5, indicates that broken home has negative effect on pupils' academic performance in schools. When asked whether broken home has negative effect on their academic performance; all the 45 pupils representing 100% indicated "Yes" confirming that indeed broken home actually has negative impact on the pupils' academic performance.

When they were asked to explain further why broken home has impacted negatively on their academic performance, some of the responses are captured below;

"For years in this school, I always placed 1st to 3rd position in class. However, after the divorce of my parents last 2 years, my performance is going down. Last (second) term, I placed 6th and this (3rd) term, I placed 15th. In fact, broken home is not good and it has negatively affected my performance in school (Kofi).

Another JHS 3 girl communicated the sentiments of the pupils in the words below;

“At first either my father or mother attends PTA meetings; sits by me while I am learning; discusses school work; assists with homework and ensures homework is done. However, after the divorce of my parents, my father alone did not have enough time for me and my siblings”. In fact, this divorce is affecting my performance in school” (Jemima).

All the pupils interviewed unanimously agreed that parental involvement is associated positively with pupils’ academic performance in schools.

The observation made from Tables 4 & 5 and the responses of the respondents clearly showed that broken homes had negative effect on the pupils’ academic performance in schools.

Discussion of the Results

The results of this study showed that there were several factors that cause broken homes among Basic school pupils in this study. The four (4) most serious factors that cause broken homes include divorce; forced or early marriage; death and sexual incompatibility. Other causal factors of broken homes identified in this study include poverty; parental (relatives) influence; ill- health and infertility; separation; high expectations in marriage; lack of marriage counselling; prolonged absence of either or both parents; wrong basis of marriage and desertion. This finding lends credence to the results of some pioneer researchers (e.g. Colcord, 1919; Polanen, 1990; Yahaya, 2012) that broken homes are caused by several factors.

The study also revealed that all the 60 respondents representing 100% were aware that pupils from broken homes faced a lot of problems and the two (2) major general problems faced by school pupils from broken homes were academic problems and financial problems. Other general problems identified were psychological problems; physical problems and cultural problems. It was also observed that poor academic performance; school drop-out, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, early engagement in sexual activities, teenage pregnancy, insecurity, truancy, drug addiction, streetism, behavioural and social problems, and criminal activities were some of the specific problems faced by school pupils from broken homes. The findings are in agreement with the results of some researchers (e.g. Aremu & Sokan, 2003; Yahaya, 2012; Saikia, 2017) that pupils from broken homes face a lot of problems or challenges.

The result of the study also revealed that almost all the parents agreed that broken home had impacted negatively on the pupils’ educational progress and development in schools. Again, all the 45 pupils representing 100% unanimously agreed that the issue of broken home had impacted negatively on their academic performance. This finding is in agreement with the results of (Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990; Amato, 1991; Salami & Alawode, 2000) that broken homes negatively affect pupils’ academic performance in schools.

V. Conclusions

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- 1) It can be concluded that there were several factors that cause broken homes among Basic school pupils. The four (4) most serious factors that cause broken homes include forced or early marriage; divorce; death and sexual incompatibility. Other causal factors of broken homes identified include parental or relatives influence; ill- health and infertility; poverty; separation; high expectations in marriage; prolonged absence of either or both parents; wrong basis of marriage and desertion.
- 2) It can be concluded that the general problems faced by pupils from broken homes include academic; financial; psychological; physical and cultural problems; with academic and financial problems identified as the 2 major general problems faced by pupils from broken homes.
- 3) It can be concluded that the most specific problems faced by pupils from broken homes include poor academic performance, early engagement in sexual activities, school drop-out, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, teenage pregnancy, insecurity, truancy, streetism, behavioural and social problems, drug addiction and criminal activities (crime).
- 4) Finally, it can be concluded that broken home had impacted negatively on the pupils’ academic performance as well as educational progress and development in Basic schools in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and conclusions drawn in this study, it is recommended that:-

- 1) Stakeholders in education should adopt innovative strategies to help solve the numerous problems faced by Basic school pupils from broken homes so as to help them perform better academically and also behave well in schools.
- 2) Stakeholders in education should establish guidance and counselling services centres in all the Ghanaian Basic schools so as to guide and counsel pupils from broken homes on the need to improve on their low esteem and poor academic performance.
- 3) Parents from broken homes should devote some part of their time to assist their wards at home with regards to their homework and assignments; attend PTA meetings and discussion of school work.

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