

**THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BROKEN HOMES ON THE ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OVIA NORTH  
EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**BY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY**

**DECEMBER, 2025.**

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**A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

**DECEMBER, 2025**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by **UCHEAGWU CHINEMEREM MIRACLE** with matriculation number **EDU2101969** in the department of Adult and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Degrees, in Adult and Continuing Education of the University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God the Holy Spirit, my Ever Present Help in Times of Needs, my Lover, Standby, Comforter and Guide. Also my parents and siblings for their love, support, prayers and encouragement throughout this journey. God bless you immensely.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the perceived impact of broken homes on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State and the implications for community development. The family is a critical social unit that provides emotional, psychological, and educational support for children, and any disruption to this structure may negatively influence students' learning outcomes. The study was guided by four research questions focusing on the causes of broken homes, the academic challenges faced by affected students, the emotional and psychological effects of family instability, and the broader implications for community development. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised students in public secondary schools within Ovia North-East Local Government Area, from which an appropriate sample was drawn. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Findings revealed that broken homes are mainly caused by divorce, separation, death of a parent, economic hardship, marital conflict, and neglect. Students from broken homes were found to experience poor academic performance manifested in low motivation, poor concentration, irregular school attendance, emotional distress, and inadequate parental support. The study also revealed that emotional and psychological problems such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression significantly affect students' academic achievement. Furthermore, the findings indicated that broken homes negatively impact community development through increased school dropout rates, reduced human capital development, and higher involvement of youths in social vices. The study concluded that broken homes significantly hinder students' academic performance and community development. It therefore recommended increased parental responsibility, school-based counseling services, and supportive government policies aimed at strengthening family stability and improving educational outcomes.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the Study.**

The home is the first and most fundamental social environment in which a child is nurtured. It provides the emotional, social, and psychological support that forms the foundation of a child's development. According to Adeyemi and Uche (2019), a home is not just a physical shelter but a place where individuals live together, share experiences, and develop values and beliefs. The father is expected to provide the financial resources necessary for the child's educational improvement, while the mother is expected to aid the father in accomplishing these goals (Olaolu & Edet, 2020; Saikia, 2017).

In a situation where either of the parents is dead, the youngster will be hampered in performing well in their studies, unlike in the reverse scenario where both parents live in harmony and contribute to the educational well-being of their children or wards, thereby avoiding emotional crises such as melancholy, frustration, low self-esteem, and inferiority complex (Akinde & Akinleke, 2024).

By convention, a home is either intact or stable or broken. A stable home is the one where the mother and father live together while a broken home is the one where at least one or none of the parents are living together with the children. The degree of functioning of a home is what directs and determines how a child performs and achieves in academic realm (Imran, 2024; Imran & Akhtar, 2023).

The family unit plays a vital role in shaping the academic life and social behaviour of children (Abubakar & James, 2021). Children raised in stable and united homes tend to

exhibit better emotional stability and academic performance. The basic and perhaps the important unit of a society is the family. A home is where the family resides. Thus, the home has a lot to offer in the life of the child. To some people the home is the first learning environment (informal school) of the child. Thus, how intact or broken a home is will be important to the development of the child.

However, academic performance is the extent to which a student has achieved their educational goals and learning outcomes, typically measured through tests, examinations, grades, class participation, and overall school engagement. It reflects a student's mastery of subject content, consistency in schoolwork, and ability to meet academic expectations set by educational institutions. Academic performance is not only influenced by intelligence and school resources but also by home background, emotional stability, and the level of parental support (Akinyemi & Igbokwe, 2019). In other words, even when schools provide quality instruction, students from dysfunctional or broken homes may not be in the right mental or emotional state to take full advantage of those educational opportunities. Consistent parental involvement has been shown to enhance academic performance through encouragement, monitoring of schoolwork, and emotional reinforcement.

On the other hand, the causes of broken homes are diverse and can be attributed to several factors, including divorce, separation, the death of a parent, domestic violence, economic hardship, infidelity, or persistent conflicts. In many Nigerian communities, including those in Edo State, economic challenges and poor communication between spouses often contribute to marital breakdowns. Substance abuse, cultural pressures, and lack of conflict resolution skills also lead to family disintegration. When parents separate or fail to coexist peacefully, the emotional and psychological bond within the family is disrupted, resulting in an unstable environment for children (Eze & Okoye, 2018). Furthermore, social stigma, lack of extended family support, and legal battles over

custody may worsen the situation, leaving children caught in the middle of tension and confusion. These realities create an emotionally charged atmosphere that is unfavourable to academic focus and educational development.

The phenomenon of broken homes is influenced by a variety of social, economic, and cultural factors. Understanding these causes is essential for addressing the challenges faced by students from such backgrounds.

One of the primary causes of broken homes is marital conflict and incompatibility. Differences in values, expectations, and communication styles between spouses often lead to misunderstandings, frequent arguments, and eventually separation or divorce. In many cases, unresolved conflicts escalate over time, making it impossible for couples to continue living together harmoniously. When couples lack effective problem-solving skills or emotional maturity, minor disagreements can gradually develop into major crises that disturb the stability of the family. Cultural and social pressures, such as gender role expectations or the influence of extended family members, sometimes intensify marital tension rather than alleviate it. Financial hardship can also serve as a trigger for conflict, as economic instability places additional stress on the couple, especially when responsibilities are unequally shared. Furthermore, issues such as infidelity, substance abuse, and domestic violence can seriously damage trust and emotional connection, leaving separation as the only option for safety and peace. In situations where communication completely breaks down, children may witness frequent hostility and emotional neglect, making the home environment psychologically disturbing. Over time, the home ceases to function as a place of comfort, love, and support, resulting in a fractured family structure. Ultimately, marital conflict and incompatibility disrupt not only the relationship between spouses but also the general well-being and development of the children, who often become the most affected victims of such breakdowns.

Economic hardship is another significant factor contributing to broken homes. Financial stress can place great pressure on family relationships, leading to frustration, resentment, and sometimes domestic violence. In situations where one or both parents struggle to provide for the family, the strain may result in separation as individuals seek to escape difficult circumstances. When a household lacks stable income, basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education become difficult to sustain, creating feelings of inadequacy and disappointment between spouses. The inability to meet financial responsibilities often leads to blame-shifting and emotional withdrawal, as each partner may feel overwhelmed by the burden. Children in such families may also experience neglect due to parents working long hours or being absent in search of income, which weakens family bonds and leads to emotional distance. Prolonged economic hardship may force couples into constant arguments about priorities and spending, gradually eroding trust and cooperation. In some cases, financial instability increases the likelihood of risky coping behaviours such as gambling or alcohol abuse, which further damages the home environment. When the stress becomes unbearable, much and communication breaks down completely, separation can seem like the only relief from continuous conflict and dissatisfaction. Therefore, poverty does not just affect material well-being but has a large social and psychological impact that can destroy the unity and stability of the family.

Infidelity and lack of commitment also play a crucial role in family breakdowns. When trust is broken in a marriage, it can lead to feelings of betrayal and emotional pain, often making reconciliation difficult. In some cases, extramarital affairs cause long-term damage that culminates in divorce or separation. The emotional bond that holds a couple together becomes weakened when one partner feels neglected or replaced, leading to constant suspicion and conflict. Infidelity destroys the sense of security and loyalty that are fundamental to a stable relationship, leaving the affected partner with psychological

distress such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and loss of confidence in the union. Lack of commitment, on the other hand, may show itself through unwillingness to invest time, affection, or shared goals, which slowly pushes partners apart. When one spouse becomes detached or uninterested in nurturing the marriage, misunderstandings and dissatisfaction grow stronger. Over time, the absence of trust and dedication creates an environment which is unhealthy where arguments and emotional distance become the norm. In many situations, even when couples attempt to resolve the issue, the lingering hurt and mistrust make it hard to restore harmony and love, especially if the behaviour continues. As a result, separation may be viewed as the only way to regain peace and emotional stability. Ultimately, betrayal through infidelity and the weakening of commitment destroy the foundation of love and unity within the family, increasing the likelihood of a broken home.

Substance abuse and addiction among one or both parents may severely impair family stability. Alcoholism, drug abuse, or other forms of addiction can lead to neglect, abuse, and an unsafe home environment, prompting the breakdown of the family unit. When a parent becomes dependent on harmful substances, their behaviour and priorities often change drastically, causing emotional and financial strain within the household. Money that should be used for food, school fees, and healthcare may instead be spent on sustaining the addiction, deepening family hardship. Children in such homes may experience fear and anxiety due to behaviour which are unpredictable, constant arguments, or violent outbursts associated with substance use. The affected parent may also fail to fulfil responsibilities such as supervision, emotional support, and moral guidance, leaving children vulnerable to psychological trauma. Over time, the frequent tension and instability weaken family bonds and erode mutual trust, making it hard for the home to function as a safe and nurturing space. In many cases, the non-addicted partner may seek separation or divorce to protect themselves and the children from

further harm. Thus, substance abuse not only affects the health of the individual involved but also threatens the overall unity, security, and well-being of the entire family.

Cultural and societal changes have also influenced the rise in broken homes. Shifts in attitudes toward marriage, increased acceptance of divorce, and changing gender roles have altered traditional family dynamics. In some communities, the erosion of extended family support systems means that couples and children have less social backing during difficult times. As modernization and globalization reshape family values, many individuals now place priority on personal happiness and self-fulfillment over enduring difficult relationships, making break up or divorce a more acceptable option than in the past. Changing gender roles have also redefined expectations within marriages, as women increasingly pursue education and employment opportunities that give them financial independence and empowerment to leave unhealthy marriages. Likewise, men may struggle with adapting to shared responsibilities when used to traditional patriarchal norms, creating tension that weakens marital unity.

Furthermore, young couples today often live far from their relatives due to urbanization or migration, reducing access to emotional guidance, childcare support, and mediation that extended families previously provided during marital conflicts. Without this community safety net, issues that could once be resolved with family intervention may escalate and lead to separation. As society continues to evolve, the structure of the family is also changing, and these shifts sometimes place pressure on relationships in ways that contribute to the increasing rate of broken homes.

Additionally, domestic violence and abuse are unfortunately common causes of broken homes. Physical, emotional, or psychological abuse can make the home environment unsafe, forcing one or both partners to leave to protect themselves and their children. When violence becomes part of everyday life, fear replaces trust and love,

causing the affected individuals to feel trapped, helpless, and emotionally drained. Abuse often gets worse over time, turning small disagreements into serious or dangerous confrontations that threaten the health and wellbeing of family members. Children raised in such an environment are exposed to trauma that can harm their emotional development and academic engagement, as they may constantly worry about their personal safety. In many cases, victims have little choice but to leave in order to preserve their dignity, mental health, or even their lives. Domestic violence does not only destroy marital relationships but also destabilizes the entire household structure, leaving long-lasting scars on both adults and children. As a result, separation or divorce becomes a necessary step toward creating a safer and healthier future for the family.

Death of a spouse or parent inevitably results in a broken home. The loss of a parent leaves a gap in family structure and support, which may have lasting effects on children's emotional and academic well-being. The surviving parent may struggle to shoulder the responsibilities of caregiving and financial provision alone, resulting to increased stress within the household. Children often experience grief, loneliness, and confusion, especially when the deceased parent played an important or central role in their upbringing. This emotional trauma may interfere with and most time disrupt their concentration, motivation, and overall school performance as they attempt to cope with the absence. In some cases, the death of a parent may also result in relocation, change of schools, or separation from familiar social networks, further destabilizing the child's life. The lack of adequate guidance, supervision, and nurturing can leave children vulnerable to behavioural problems or peer pressure. Although support from relatives and community members may ease the burden, the emptiness created by the loss can continue to affect the family's functioning and stability for many years. Therefore, the death of a parent not only destroys the physical structure of the home but also impacts the emotional and developmental outcomes of the children involved.

These causes often do not operate in isolation but intersect, creating complex family situations that require comprehensive understanding and intervention. By identifying these root causes, educators, counselors, and policymakers can better tailor support systems to meet the needs of students from broken homes and work toward minimizing the occurrence and impact of family breakdowns.

Nevertheless, students from broken homes in public secondary schools in Ovia North-East Local Government Area often encounter a range of academic challenges. These include poor concentration in class, frequent absenteeism, declining grades, lack of motivation, and limited parental involvement in their education. Many of these students are burdened with responsibilities beyond their age, such as caring for siblings or working to support the family. Due to the financial strain or emotional neglect associated with broken homes, such students may also lack essential school materials and support systems, contributing to their poor academic performance (Ibhiedu, 2020). In addition, students from such backgrounds often face ridicule or discrimination from peers, further diminishing their self-worth. These cumulative stressors can lead to a cycle of academic failure and eventual school dropout, reducing their future prospects in life.

One of the most common difficulties is lack of concentration and motivation. The emotional stress and instability caused by family disruptions can lead to anxiety, depression, and feelings of insecurity, making it difficult for students to focus on their studies or set academic goals. When children are preoccupied with worries about their home situation, their mental energy is diverted away from learning, resulting in poor attention during lessons and reduced participation in academic tasks. The constant fear of conflict or break up may leave them emotionally exhausted, affecting their ability to complete assignments or perform well in examinations. In some cases, students may develop behavioural issues such as withdrawal, aggressiveness, or frequent absenteeism, all of which negatively affect learning outcomes. Lack of motivation may also stem from

diminished parental encouragement and supervision, especially when one parent leaves or becomes emotionally unavailable due to stress. Without a supportive and stable home environment, students may struggle to develop a positive attitude toward school or maintain consistent academic progress. Over time, these emotional and psychological challenges can significantly lower their academic achievement and overall school performance.

Another challenge is inconsistent parental support and supervision. Children from broken homes may not receive the same level of guidance, encouragement, or help with schoolwork as those from stable families. In many cases, a single parent or guardian may be overwhelmed by responsibilities, limiting the time and attention they can devote to their child's education. This lack of support can result in poor study habits, missed assignments, and decreased participation in school activities. Parental involvement plays an important role in shaping a child's academic success, and when it is absent or inconsistent, students often struggle to develop self-discipline and organizational skills. The absence of regular monitoring may also expose children to negative peer influence or risky behaviours that further distract them from schoolwork. Inclusive, broken homes sometimes lead to changes in living arrangements, where children may move between caregivers or stay with relatives who may not be actively interested in their academic progress. This frequent shift and lack of stability disrupts their learning routines and creates feelings of uncertainty about school. Over time, reduced parental encouragement and accountability can reduce a child's confidence and willingness to engage in academic tasks, ultimately affecting their educational performance and long-term achievement.

Financial constraints are also common among students from broken homes. The absence of one parent often means a reduction in household income, which can limit access to essential educational resources such as textbooks, school supplies, transportation, and tuition fees. Economic hardship may force some students to engage in

part-time work, further reducing the time and energy available for academic pursuits. When students lack the basic materials needed for learning, they may feel embarrassed, discouraged, or unable to fully participate in classroom activities. The burden of financial responsibility can also create stress and fatigue, making it harder for them to concentrate on their studies. In some cases, students may be forced to miss school due to unpaid fees or the need to contribute to family income, resulting in irregular attendance and knowledge gaps. Financial struggles may limit their access to technology, private tutoring, or extracurricular opportunities that promote academic growth. Over time, these disadvantages accumulate and widen the performance gap between them and their peers from stable, financially secure homes. Thus, economic hardship not only affects students' ability to meet academic demands but also affects their overall educational opportunities and future prospects.

Furthermore, these students might experience low self-esteem and social stigma within the school environment. The perception of being from a broken home can lead to feelings of shame, isolation, and bullying by peers, which negatively impacts their confidence and willingness to engage in classroom activities or seek help when needed. Irregular school attendance and tardiness can be linked to unstable home environments. Without adequate parental supervision, students may miss school more frequently or arrive late, leading to gaps in learning and difficulty keeping up with the curriculum.

The cumulative effect of these challenges often results in poor academic performance, higher dropout rates, and reduced chances of pursuing higher education. Recognizing these academic barriers is essential for educators and policymakers in developing appropriate support systems and interventions aimed at helping students from broken homes succeed academically and reach their full potential.

Furthermore, emotional and psychological issues like depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and insecurity are common among students from broken homes, and they significantly hinder academic progress. In Ovia North-East, students facing these challenges often struggle with focus and classroom participation. The absence of emotional support from both parents can leave children feeling isolated and demoralized, which negatively affects their confidence and willingness to engage in school activities. Over time, such students may develop behavioural problems or withdraw socially, making it harder for teachers to support their learning effectively. Some students may resort to negative coping mechanisms such as aggression, truancy, or joining deviant peer groups as a way of dealing with emotional distress. All these can compound academic failure and social maladjustment, making it increasingly difficult for such students to thrive in a structured learning environment.

Students from broken homes often experience a range of emotional and psychological issues that can significantly affect their well-being and academic progress. Feelings of abandonment, insecurity, and rejection are common, especially when one or both parents are absent or disengaged. These emotions can manifest as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate and perform well in school. Many students also struggle with identity and trust issues, finding it difficult to form stable relationships with peers and authority figures due to past experiences of family instability. This can lead to social withdrawal or aggressive behaviour as a defense mechanism against perceived rejection or hurt.

The instability at home may cause emotional dysregulation, where students have trouble managing their feelings and reactions. They may become easily frustrated, irritable, or overwhelmed by stress, which can negatively impact classroom behaviour and peer interactions.

The psychological burden of coping with parental conflicts, divorce proceedings, or the adjustment to a new family structure can create a constant state of emotional distress. This chronic stress can impair cognitive functions such as memory and -solving skills, making learning more challenging. When students are overwhelmed by negative emotions, their brains focus more on survival and worry than on absorbing new information or recalling what they have learned. Anxiety and sadness may cause sleep disturbances, which further affect concentration and mental alertness in school. Emotional overload may also lead to disruptive behaviours, mood swings, or withdrawal from classroom activities, making it harder for teachers to provide adequate support. In some cases, students may develop low self-esteem or a sense of hopelessness about their future, which reduces their desire to work hard academically. Over time, this continuous psychological strain limits their ability to perform well in tests, participate actively in lessons, or maintain positive relationships with peers and teachers. Consequently, their academic progress slows down and their overall achievement suffers significantly.

Some students might develop feelings of guilt or self-blame, wrongly attributing the family breakdown to their own actions or behavior. This internalized blame can exacerbate emotional suffering and hinder their ability to seek support. Without proper emotional support and counseling, these psychological issues can escalate, leading to long-term mental health issues that extend beyond academic life and into adulthood.

However, the implications of broken homes on community development in Ovia North-East are far-reaching. When children are deprived of stable homes and consequently perform poorly in school, the long-term effect is a decline in the quality of human capital within the community. Educational setbacks often translate to fewer skilled professionals, higher dropout rates, increased youth unemployment, and in some cases, involvement in social vices such as crime and substance abuse. This undermines social cohesion and limits the overall socio-economic progress of the local government

area. A community that fails to nurture its young population through stable family systems may struggle with sustainable development. Moreover, the ripple effects of poorly educated youths affect productivity, governance, and social harmony. A society populated by individuals who lack adequate education due to broken home circumstances may find itself lagging behind in innovation, leadership, and development. Hence, strengthening family structures is not just a private or domestic concern but it is an essential requirement for community growth and national advancement.

Beyond the individual effects on students, the issue of broken homes has broader social implications that extend to the entire community. When a significant number of children in a community come from unstable family backgrounds, the ripple effect can be felt in various sectors, including education, security, and economic development.

One of the most immediate implications is the weakening of the social fabric of the community. Children who grow up without adequate parental guidance and emotional support are more likely to engage in anti-social behaviors such as truancy, drug abuse, cultism, and juvenile delinquency. These behaviours not only disrupt the learning environment in schools but also increase the burden on local law enforcement and social welfare systems.

When a child's academic potential is hindered due to family instability, the long-term impact may include a poorly educated population, reduced workforce productivity, and limited access to higher education or vocational training. This, in turn, affects the community's ability to develop economically and socially. In regions like Ovia North East Local Government Area, where resources may already be limited, the cumulative effects of broken homes can further widen the gap between potential and actual community development.

Moreover, communities with high rates of broken homes often experience generational cycles of poverty, illiteracy, and instability. Children raised in such environments may grow up without positive role models, and are more likely to replicate the same patterns in their own families. This continuity of broken family structures contributes to long-term underdevelopment and social fragmentation.

Public secondary schools, being a microcosm of the larger society, often reflect these challenges. Teachers and school administrators are frequently faced with the task of addressing not only academic issues but also the emotional and behavioral problems that stem from students' home environments. However, without adequate training or support systems in place, schools alone cannot shoulder this responsibility.

This situation calls for a collaborative approach involving families, schools, religious organizations, community leaders, and government agencies. By understanding and addressing the root causes of broken homes and their implications on education and community development, stakeholders can work together to create a more supportive environment for students. Strengthening family systems and providing targeted interventions for students from broken homes is not only an educational imperative but also a necessary step toward sustainable community growth and stability.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The academic performance of students plays an important role in determining the quality of human capital within any community. Broken homes, characterized by separation, divorce, or the absence of one or both parents, often result in emotional instability, lack of parental guidance, and inadequate support for learning. These challenges place affected students at a disadvantage academically compared to their peers from stable homes.

When students from broken homes underperform academically, they are less likely to complete their education or acquire the skills needed to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of their communities. Over time, this contributes to a rise in school dropouts, unemployment, youth restiveness, and engagement in anti-social behaviours, which threaten the peace, productivity, and cohesion of the local community. If this trend continues unchecked, it could undermine the collective efforts toward sustainable community development, as the potential of the youth population remains untapped due to barriers rooted in family instability.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the perceived impact of broken homes on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Ovia North-East Local Government Area and explore the broader implications this has for community development.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were generated to guide the study.

- What are the causes of broken homes among public secondary school students in Ovia North East local government of Edo state?
- What are the academic challenges commonly faced by public secondary school students from broken homes in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State?
- How do emotional and psychological issues associated with broken homes affect the academic performance of public secondary school students in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State?
- What are the implications of broken homes on community development in Ovia North East?

## **Purpose of the Study.**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived impact of broken homes on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. However, this study intends to achieve the following sub-objectives:

1. to identify the causes of broken home among public secondary school students in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State
2. to examine the academic challenges commonly faced by public secondary school students from broken homes in Ovia North East local government area.
3. to assess how emotional and psychological issues associated with broken home affect the academic performance of public secondary school students in Ovia North East local government area.
4. to ascertain the implications of broken homes on community development in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State.

## **Significance of the Study**

The findings from this study will be beneficial to policy makers, educators and school administrators, marriage Counsellors, parents and guardians, and future researchers, particularly within the Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

The findings will help policy makers and curriculum developers to design educational programmes and policies that support family stability and address the academic needs of students from broken homes in the local government area.

The findings too will be beneficial to educators and school administrators as they will gain a deeper understanding of the unique needs of students from broken homes. This insight will enable them to develop targeted strategies and interventions within schools to support these students more effectively.

The findings will assist marriage counsellors to gain insights that can enhance their ability to advise families and students, helping to prevent family breakdowns and provide better support during times of crisis.

The findings from this study will also assist parents and guardians to gain a clearer understanding of how a stable home environment contributes to a child's academic success. This knowledge can encourage more responsible parenting and stronger family bonds.

Finally, the findings of this study will assist future researchers as it will be useful as a reference point for further investigations. It will contribute to existing knowledge and provide a foundation for academic work in related fields.

## **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study is delimited to public secondary schools in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State. It focuses on the causes of broken home, the academic challenges commonly faced by public school students from broken homes in Ovia North East, how emotional and psychological issues associated with broken homes affect the academic performance of public secondary school students in Ovia North East and the implications of broken homes on community development in Ovia North East.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined as they are used in the context of this study:

**Academic Performance:** The extent of achievement of students in their studies, usually measured through grades, test scores, and teacher evaluations.

**Broken Home:** A household where the parents are divorced, separated, or where one or both parents are absent.

**Community Development:** Efforts made to improve the well-being, education, and economic condition of people in a particular area.

**Divorce:** The legal dissolution of a marriage.

**Family:** A group of people living together who are related by blood, marriage, custom or law.

**Learning Abilities:** The capacity of a student to acquire, process, and apply knowledge and skills through formal or informal education.

**Parental Separation:** A situation where parents live apart due to marital conflict or personal differences, without necessarily undergoing legal divorce.

**Single Parenting:** A family structure in which a child is raised by only one parent due to separation, divorce, death, or other circumstances.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter deals with the review of relevant and related literature on this study. It was discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Broken Homes
- Causes and Effects of Broken Homes in Academic Performance
- Academic Challenges Commonly Faced with Broken Homes
- Emotional and Psychological issues associated with Broken Homes
- The Implications of Broken Homes on Community Development.
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

#### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework serves as the basis for a research study. It clarifies how variables are related and guides the research process. This investigation into the perceived impact of broken homes on students' academic performance is based on three interconnected theories: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), and Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). These theories together illustrate the ways in which family dynamics, emotional stability, and social connections affect a child's educational success.

#### **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979)**

Bronfenbrenner's theory asserts that a child's growth is shaped by various environmental systems that interact with one another. These systems include the

microsystem (which covers family, school, and peers), the mesosystem (the interactions of different microsystems), the exosystem (external elements that affect the child indirectly, such as the workplaces of parents), the macrosystem (cultural standards and beliefs), and the chronosystem (evolving changes over time). In this study's framework, the family is a vital component of the child's microsystem. When a family is disrupted by divorce, separation, a parent's death, or ongoing conflict, stability within this system is compromised. Such instability can impact the child's emotional health, focus, and drive, which subsequently affect academic success. The theory indicates that students from broken homes might face challenges in school due to the weakened primary support system that influences their learning and behaviour.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943)**

Maslow's theory outlines human motivation as a tiered structure of five fundamental needs: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow argues that individuals need to fulfill lower-level needs before pursuing higher-level ones, like self-actualization. For students from broken homes, unfulfilled needs particularly in safety, love, and belonging can impede their educational advancement. The emotional turmoil generated by family instability often makes it challenging for these students to concentrate on academic objectives. Lacking love, security, and a sense of belonging at home may lead students to find it difficult to build confidence or motivation, which are critical for learning and success. This theory elucidates why students from broken families might not achieve expected academic performance compared to their counterparts from stable environments.

### **Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977)**

Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggests that individuals learn behaviour through observation, imitation, and modeling. Children tend to mimic the behaviours of adults they see. Thus, family functions as a child's primary learning space. In fractured homes, children might encounter adverse role models, inconsistent discipline, or insufficient emotional support. A lack of parental oversight can lead to maladaptive behaviours that disrupt their education, including truancy, aggression, or apathy towards learning. On the other hand, positive parental behaviours and encouragement can foster discipline and motivation. This theory highlights the significance of stable family dynamics in influencing a child's academic and social growth.

Collectively, these theories provide a comprehensive explanation of how family structure, emotional wellbeing, and social interactions influence students' academic outcomes and, by extension, community development. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is highly relevant to this study because it emphasizes the influence of a child's immediate and wider environment on development. In the context of this research, the family represents a critical component of the microsystem, which directly affects students' learning experiences. When the family unit is broken due to divorce, separation, death of a parent, or persistent conflict, the stability of this microsystem is disrupted.

For public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area, such disruptions may manifest as emotional distress, lack of parental supervision, or reduced academic support at home. The mesosystem, which involves interactions between home and school, may also be weakened when parents are less involved in school activities due to family challenges. Additionally, factors within the exosystem, such as parental unemployment or work-related stress arising from family separation, can indirectly affect students' academic focus and performance. By applying this theory, the study explains how broken homes create unfavorable environmental conditions that hinder academic performance. Furthermore, when a large number of students are affected by unstable

family systems, the long-term consequences may extend to poor educational outcomes within the community, thereby affecting human capital development and overall community growth in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

On the other hand, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is relevant to this study as it provides insight into the motivational challenges faced by students from broken homes. According to Maslow, basic needs such as safety, love, and belonging must be satisfied before individuals can effectively pursue higher-level goals such as academic performance. In broken homes, students may experience emotional insecurity, neglect, or lack of affection, which directly affects their safety and belonging needs. For public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area, unmet emotional and psychological needs may result in low self-esteem, anxiety, or lack of motivation toward schoolwork. Consequently, these students may struggle to concentrate in class, participate in academic activities, or aspire to educational excellence. This theory helps the study explain why students from broken homes may perform poorly academically compared to those from stable homes. It also highlights the broader implication that unmet needs at the family level can reduce students' educational attainment, thereby limiting their future productivity and contribution to community development.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory is pertinent to this study because it emphasizes learning through observation and imitation of significant others, particularly parents and caregivers. In the family setting, children learn attitudes, behaviors, and values that shape their approach to education. In the case of broken homes, students may be exposed to negative behaviors such as conflict, aggression, irresponsibility, or lack of commitment to educational goals. The absence of one parent or inconsistent parental guidance can reduce monitoring of academic activities, leading to behaviors such as truancy, poor study habits, and lack of discipline. These behaviors can negatively affect academic performance among public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

Conversely, stable family environments provide positive role models that encourage discipline, perseverance, and respect for education. By applying Social Learning Theory, this study explains how family instability influences students' academic behavior and learning outcomes, and how such patterns, when widespread, may undermine the educational and social development of the community.

## **Concept of Broken Homes**

The concept of a broken home has attracted wide scholarly debate, particularly as family structure is seen as a critical factor shaping children's educational and social development. A broken home is often defined as one where the marital union of the parents has been disrupted, resulting in either separation, divorce, desertion, or death of one of the parents (Okafor & Egenti, 2021). However, scholars have emphasized that the term goes beyond the structural absence of a parent and encompasses dysfunctional family environments characterized by constant conflict, neglect, lack of care, or emotional instability (Lawal, Oloyede, & Okunade, 2024). In the Nigerian context, Anyamene, Egboka, and Obi (2022) found that students perceive broken homes as not just the absence of one parent but also the absence of adequate parental care, guidance, and financial support, regardless of whether both parents are physically present.

Thus, a broken home can be conceptualized along two lines:

- **Structural disruption** (death, divorce, separation, incarceration, migration).
- **Functional disruption** (persistent conflict, neglect, violence, or abuse).

Both forms are significant because they interfere with the psychosocial climate necessary for children's healthy development.

Chukwuma and Eze (2020) noted that the absence of warmth, affection, and proper parental guidance often produces outcomes in children similar to those from divorced

families. In their study, students reported feelings of rejection even when both parents lived together, but constant quarrels and emotional neglect left them psychologically unstable. This indicates that a family may remain physically intact but socially and emotionally broken. The role of economic hardship has also been incorporated into the concept of broken homes. Uche and Nwosu (2019) highlighted that financial incapacity in households often leads to neglect, poor supervision, and lack of educational resources, which, in effect, makes the home dysfunctional. They stressed that poverty-induced negligence should also be classified under the broader meaning of a broken home, since children from such environments are denied opportunities to thrive academically and socially. Adekeye and Adeusi (2018) found that children of single mothers often described their homes as “broken” not because of lack of love but because of social stigma and exclusion from peers. This shows that the cultural labeling of family structures as “broken” can affect children’s self-concept and indirectly impact their educational performance.

Another important perspective is the psychological dimension of broken homes. Akintunde and Oloyede (2021) observed that family dysfunction, whether due to separation, violence, or chronic neglect, often results in heightened anxiety, depression, and withdrawal among adolescents. They noted that such emotional instability translates into poor concentration, lower motivation, and declining academic performance. Thus, the broken home phenomenon must also be understood in terms of its psychological implications for learners. In rural areas, migration-related family separation has also been classified under broken homes. Furthermore, cultural practices like polygamy have been linked to the concept of broken homes in Nigeria. Yusuf and Ibrahim (2017) observed that rivalry among co-wives often leads to differential treatment of children, leaving some neglected or stigmatized within the household. Such children, though living with both parents, grow up in what may be considered a “functionally broken” family system.

## **Causes and Effects of Broken Homes in Academic Performance**

The causes of broken homes are multifaceted and interwoven with economic, social, cultural, and personal factors. In Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African societies, scholars have outlined the following as prevalent causes:

**Marital conflict and incompatibility:** Frequent quarrels, infidelity, and domestic violence have been consistently linked to marital breakdown. Marital conflict and incompatibility have been consistently identified as significant causes of broken homes. According to Oladipo and Olorunfemi (2019), unresolved marital conflict often erodes trust, communication, and intimacy between partners, eventually leading to separation or divorce. They argue that incompatibility in values, life goals, and expectations of marriage creates a situation where partners live more as adversaries than companions, thereby destabilizing the family unit. Incompatibility in marriages is often expressed through persistent quarrels, mistrust, and differences in personality traits. Akinyemi and Awoniran (2021) emphasize that when partners fail to align in terms of emotional needs, financial priorities, or cultural expectations, marital conflict becomes inevitable. Such conflict, if prolonged, not only threatens the stability of the marital union but also exposes children to constant tension and hostility, conditions that render the home broken even before formal separation occurs.

In their study of families, Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020) found that poor communication and lack of conflict-resolution skills escalated minor disagreements into chronic marital crises. They observed that spouses who could not openly discuss their needs or resolve disputes constructively were more likely to experience separation,

leaving children vulnerable to the adverse effects of family disruption. Religious and cultural differences have also been documented as sources of incompatibility in marriage. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) found that interfaith marriages in Nigeria often faced intense pressure from extended families and communities, leading to frequent disputes and eventual breakdowns. This type of incompatibility, rooted in social expectations rather than personal failings, contributes significantly to family instability.

The psychological effects of marital conflict on children are equally noteworthy. Eze and Okeke (2023) argue that children exposed to constant parental disputes often internalize feelings of fear, insecurity, and guilt. Such children may perceive the home as emotionally unsafe, effectively classifying it as broken even when both parents remain physically present. From a community perspective, Lawal and Oloyede (2024) noted that high rates of marital conflict and incompatibility undermine not only family cohesion but also broader social development. Families in constant crisis often fail to contribute positively to community growth, as energy and resources are diverted into conflict resolution or legal battles.

**Economic hardship:** Financial stress is widely acknowledged as a major strain on marriages. Lawal et al. (2024) argue that poverty and unemployment often exacerbate misunderstandings, leading to separations that affect children's welfare. It is one of the most critical factors leading to family breakdown, as financial instability often produces stress, conflict, and neglect within households. According to Uche and Nwosu (2019), persistent poverty prevents families from meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and education, which not only weakens parental bonds but also generates frequent quarrels between spouses. When financial challenges remain unresolved, frustration builds, resulting in separation, abandonment, or desertion.

Oladipo and Olorunfemi (2019) emphasize that in many Nigerian families, economic hardship contributes directly to marital instability because the inability to provide for the home undermines the authority and respect of the breadwinner, leading to conflict over responsibilities. They noted that men in particular often feel emasculated when unable to fulfill traditional financial roles, while women become frustrated when the burden of provision shifts disproportionately to them, escalating marital disputes. The linkage between unemployment and broken homes has been well documented. Adeoye and Adeniran (2022) found that long-term unemployment, underemployment, or irregular income streams increase the likelihood of spousal separation, as the economic strain erodes patience and mutual understanding. They also highlighted that children in such households often face withdrawal from school, malnutrition, and neglect, further destabilizing the family structure.

Economic stress does not only manifest in open conflict but also in subtle forms of emotional withdrawal and disconnection between spouses. Akinyemi and Awoniran (2021) observed that financial pressures often reduce quality time between parents, as individuals work longer hours or multiple jobs to sustain the household. This absence of parental presence creates conditions for emotional detachment, neglect of children, and eventual marital dissolution. In addition, Musa and Ibrahim (2018) point out that economic hardship frequently intersects with cultural and social expectations, especially in polygamous or extended family systems. In such settings, the limited financial resources of one breadwinner must be shared among multiple households, resulting in dissatisfaction, rivalry, and frequent accusations of neglect. These tensions contribute significantly to the perception of the home as broken, particularly from the children's standpoint.

The psychosocial impact of economic hardship on marital stability cannot be overlooked. Eze and Okeke (2023) revealed that financial stress often triggers depression,

substance abuse, and domestic violence, all of which undermine family unity. Such outcomes indicate that economic strain is not just a material problem but a significant psychosocial disruptor of family life. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) found that children from financially distressed families often lack the emotional support and stability required for academic success. This perpetuates a cycle where educational underachievement leads to limited economic mobility, thereby increasing the risk of broken homes in subsequent generations.

**Death of a parent:** Karfe & Azuaga (2019) noted that parental death often throws children into the care of step-parents, extended families, or single parents, creating instability that may affect education. The death of a parent often disrupts the stability of the family unit and is widely regarded as one of the most traumatic causes of a broken home. According to Chukwuma and Eze (2020), the death of a father or mother alters family roles abruptly, leaving surviving spouses and children struggling to adapt emotionally, socially, and economically. The sudden absence of one parent often forces the remaining caregiver to shoulder dual responsibilities, which may prove overwhelming and lead to neglect of children's needs.

Adekeye and Adeusi (2018) observed that widowed mothers, in particular, struggled to provide consistent supervision and economic security, making children vulnerable to poor academic performance and risky social behaviours. The loss of a parent can also create psychological instability within the household. Akintunde and Oloyede (2021) emphasized that bereaved children often experience anxiety, depression, and withdrawal, which affect their ability to adjust to school and social environments. They further argued that unresolved grief can cause strained relationships between surviving parents and children, resulting in feelings of abandonment despite the physical presence of a caregiver.

Economic deprivation following the death of a parent is another significant challenge. Uche and Nwosu (2019) observed that in many Nigerian communities, the death of the breadwinner leads to severe financial hardship, with children often withdrawn from school due to inability to pay fees. In some cases, extended family members take custody of the children, but this arrangement is not always stable, as relatives may fail to provide adequate care, thereby rendering the home functionally broken. Cultural practices surrounding widowhood and inheritance have also been identified as factors compounding the effects of parental death. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) highlighted that in some Nigerian communities, widows are subjected to social stigma and economic dispossession, which directly affect their children's welfare. In such cases, the death of a parent results not only in emotional trauma but also in systemic neglect, pushing the family further into instability. Long-term effects of parental death have been linked to diminished educational attainment and community participation. Eze and Okeke (2023) reported that many adolescents who lost a parent early in life developed feelings of hopelessness and disengagement from school activities, contributing to academic underachievement. They stressed that the absence of parental guidance reduces resilience in children, thereby weakening their ability to overcome other social challenges.

**Neglect and abuse:** Where one or both parents fail to provide emotional or financial support, children may feel abandoned. Such neglect especially when linked with abuse creates a dysfunctional family system (Anyamene et al., 2022). Parental neglect and abuse are widely recognized as major contributors to family dysfunction and broken homes. According to Oladipo and Olorunfemi (2019), neglect occurs when parents fail to provide for the physical, emotional, educational, or psychological needs of their children, even when resources may be available. This lack of care creates feelings of rejection, insecurity, and alienation in children, often leading to strained parent-child relationships and eventual family disintegration.

Chukwuma and Eze (2020) found that abuse—whether physical, verbal, or emotional significantly weakens the bond between parents and children, often causing adolescents to run away from home or rebel against parental authority. They argued that repeated exposure to abusive environments transforms the home into a source of fear rather than comfort, effectively rendering it broken regardless of structural intactness. Neglect often manifests in failure to supervise children, which exposes them to harmful peer influences and risky behavior. Emotional neglect has equally destructive effects. Akintunde and Oloyede (2021) emphasized that children denied affection, encouragement, or recognition from parents frequently suffer from low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Such emotional deprivation weakens resilience, motivation, and concentration in school, eventually undermining academic performance.

Abuse within the family setting has also been strongly linked to intergenerational dysfunction. Eze and Okeke (2023) highlighted that adolescents who experienced parental abuse often displayed aggression and violent behavior toward peers, while some replicated abusive patterns in their own relationships. This continuity of abuse across generations perpetuates the cycle of broken homes within communities. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) pointed out that in certain cultural contexts, children subjected to accusations of witchcraft or scapegoating by parents endure severe psychological abuse. Such maltreatment often results in rejection, abandonment, or placement in the custody of relatives, leaving children without stable family support. These cases underscore how cultural practices intersect with neglect and abuse to create broken homes. In cases where neglect and abuse co-exist, the family system becomes severely dysfunctional. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) revealed that households marked by substance abuse, domestic violence, and parental irresponsibility not only deprive children of basic needs but also expose them to trauma that has lasting consequences for education, social integration, and emotional stability.

**Infidelity:** Infidelity has been widely identified as a major trigger of marital instability and family breakdown. According to Adekeye and Adeusi (2018), extramarital affairs often destroy the foundation of trust and loyalty in marriage, leading to frequent quarrels, emotional withdrawal, and in many cases, separation or divorce. They argue that when one partner engages in infidelity, the betrayed spouse often feels devalued, humiliated, and resentful, conditions that make it difficult to sustain a stable home environment.

Research by Oladipo and Olorunfemi (2019) found that infidelity frequently results in both emotional and physical separation within the family, as couples lose the ability to cooperate in raising children. The presence of mistrust and suspicion between partners disrupts harmony in the household, creating an unstable environment for children who may begin to perceive the home as broken. Cultural expectations have also been linked to infidelity as a cause of broken homes. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) observed that in some communities, men who engage in extramarital relationships justify their actions under cultural or religious practices, but the emotional consequences for their spouses often result in marital conflict and eventual breakdown. They emphasized that women in such situations frequently experience neglect and economic deprivation, while children suffer from lack of care and stability. Chukwuma and Eze (2020) stressed that infidelity often introduces domestic violence into families. In their study, they noted that spouses who discovered extramarital affairs frequently reacted with physical aggression or verbal abuse, further destabilizing the home and creating a toxic environment for children. The escalation of violence in such contexts accelerates the breakdown of family bonds.

The psychological effects of infidelity on children are also significant. Akintunde and Oloyede (2021) found that children exposed to parental infidelity often develop confusion, divided loyalties, and insecurity about relationships. In many cases, children blame themselves for the marital crisis, which negatively impacts their academic focus and emotional health. Economic implications of infidelity cannot be ignored. Adeoye and

Adeniran (2022) observed that extramarital affairs often divert financial resources away from the family, leaving the legitimate household underfunded. This financial neglect intensifies conflict, particularly when children's educational or welfare needs are unmet, thereby reinforcing the perception of the home as broken. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) also argue that the effects of infidelity extend beyond the nuclear family, as community trust in the integrity of marriage declines when infidelity becomes normalized. This erosion of family values destabilizes social cohesion and contributes to broader community dysfunction.

Infidelity frequently creates deep emotional wounds that erode marital stability. Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020) explain that the discovery of a partner's unfaithfulness often results in chronic mistrust, resentment, and a breakdown of communication between spouses. Over time, this emotional disconnection produces a hostile home environment where cooperation in parenting becomes nearly impossible, leaving children exposed to neglect and instability. The role of gender in how infidelity affects family structure has also been highlighted. Eze and Okeke (2023) observed that in many Nigerian families, male infidelity is often downplayed due to patriarchal cultural norms, while female infidelity is met with harsher social and familial consequences. This double standard often results in separation or divorce when women are accused of extramarital affairs, thereby increasing the incidence of broken homes.

Psychologists also stress the trauma caused by repeated infidelity. Akintunde and Oloyede (2021) noted that betrayal within marriage can lead to depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress among betrayed spouses. This emotional instability reduces their ability to effectively care for children, creating indirect neglect that contributes to the breakdown of family life. Infidelity can also introduce external children into the marital relationship, which often escalates tension. Adeoye and Adeniran (2022) found that disputes over paternity, child support, and resource allocation in cases where extramarital

affairs resulted in children were among the most destabilizing effects of infidelity. Such situations not only weaken the marital bond but also divert resources away from the legitimate family, leaving children in the primary home vulnerable. Religious perspectives further intensify the role of infidelity in breaking homes. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) reported that in communities where religion plays a dominant role in family life, extramarital affairs are stigmatized and often result in social exclusion or forced separation. In such settings, families torn apart by infidelity not only face internal crises but also suffer community rejection, deepening the brokenness of the home.

**Cultural pressures and polygamy:** In polygamous households, disputes over inheritance, jealousy, and neglect of some children are frequent causes of fractured family structures (Okafor & Egenti, 2021). Cultural pressures play a major role in shaping family structures, and in many Nigerian communities, they directly contribute to the incidence of broken homes. According to Yusuf and Ibrahim (2017), cultural expectations surrounding marriage often compel individuals to remain in relationships marked by conflict, abuse, or neglect, simply to avoid the stigma of divorce. This forced endurance of dysfunctional marriages may create an environment where the home becomes broken in practice, even though it remains structurally intact. Polygamy, as a culturally sanctioned practice in parts of Nigeria, has also been identified as a significant source of family instability. Oladipo and Olorunfemi (2019) noted that rivalry among co-wives frequently generates tension and hostility within the household, with children often caught in the middle of disputes. Such competition over resources, affection, and inheritance rights undermines family harmony and creates an atmosphere of division that mirrors the characteristics of a broken home.

Chukwuma and Eze (2020) observed that children from polygamous families frequently report feelings of neglect, especially when their mothers are not favored by the husband. They found that unequal treatment among children in polygamous households

contributes to emotional trauma, jealousy, and strained sibling relationships. This sense of marginalization leads many children to perceive their families as broken, even when both parents are physically present. Economic pressures within polygamous households further exacerbate the problem. Adeoye and Adeniran (2022) highlighted that limited financial resources, when spread across multiple wives and children, often result in inadequate provision of basic needs such as education, healthcare, and nutrition. This scarcity increases conflict between co-wives, deepens neglect of some children, and destabilizes the entire household structure.

Cultural practices surrounding inheritance and succession also create tension in polygamous families. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) explained that disputes over property distribution among co-wives and their children often persist long after the death of the husband, leading to prolonged family conflicts and disintegration. In such cases, the death of the patriarch not only fragments the household but also entrenches divisions that permanently alter the family's stability. Religious and societal pressures can reinforce these cultural challenges. Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020) found that in some communities, women are pressured to accept polygamy as a cultural norm, even when it compromises their emotional and economic well-being. This forced acceptance of polygamy may create silent broken homes, where women and children suffer neglect, tension, and emotional disconnection. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) argue that cultural pressures and polygamy contribute to the normalization of conflict and neglect within family systems, thereby increasing the incidence of broken homes. They emphasize that while polygamy is culturally accepted in some societies, its practical consequences ranging from rivalry to economic hardship undermine the stability and nurturing environment that children require for healthy development. Thus, broken homes are not always the product of divorce or separation alone but can arise from a combination of economic pressures, cultural practices, and interpersonal conflicts.

Academic Performance refers to the learning outcomes of students, typically measured through scores in examinations, continuous assessments, classroom participation, and completion of school tasks (Achilike, 2017; Okafor & Egenti, 2021). It encompasses both cognitive outcomes (knowledge and skills in core subjects like Mathematics and English) and non-cognitive outcomes (discipline, attendance, class participation, and social adjustment). Academic Performance is broadly understood as the measurable performance outcomes of students in their pursuit of education, often reflected in test scores, grades, and overall mastery of school subjects. According to Eze and Okeke (2023), academic performance encompasses not only cognitive outcomes but also skills, attitudes, and competencies that learners acquire in formal schooling. This implies that performance is not limited to examination results but also includes the ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, and demonstrate creativity. In educational research, high academic performance is viewed as a critical determinant of future opportunities, employability, and overall community development (Lawal et al., 2024). Conversely, poor academic achievement has been associated with low self-esteem, school dropout, and limited life chances (Anyamene et al., 2022).

In the Nigerian educational context, Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020) stressed that academic performance is often evaluated through standardized examinations and continuous assessments administered in schools. They noted, however, that reliance on test scores alone may fail to capture students' full intellectual growth, particularly in environments where socio-economic and family factors affect performance.

Akintunde and Oloyede (2021) argued that motivation, self-efficacy, and resilience are key internal factors that influence how well students perform academically. On the other hand, parental involvement, home environment, and access to educational resources serve as external determinants that either promote or hinder performance. Academic performance is also closely linked to emotional and psychological stability. Lawal and

Oloyede (2024) observed that students from emotionally supportive households often display higher levels of concentration, persistence, and academic success. Conversely, children from dysfunctional or broken homes tend to experience stress, low self-esteem, and poor attention spans, which negatively impact their academic progress.

In addition, Adekeye and Adeusi (2018) argued that academic performance should also be seen as a predictor of future social mobility and community development. They explained that students who excel academically are more likely to secure employment opportunities, participate actively in civic life, and contribute positively to the growth of their communities. This suggests that academic performance extends beyond personal success to broader social benefits. Chukwuma and Eze (2020) noted that academic performance includes not only performance in core subjects like Mathematics and English but also competence in life skills, technology, and emotional intelligence, which are increasingly necessary for survival in a competitive global economy.

Furthermore, academic performance is often influenced by school climate and teacher-student relationships. According to Okafor and Egenti (2021), students perform better when they perceive their teachers as supportive, approachable, and fair. A positive classroom environment enhances students' willingness to participate and improves their cognitive engagement, thereby boosting performance levels. Conversely, hostile or authoritarian teaching methods tend to demotivate learners, especially those already struggling due to family instability.

The digital era has also added a new dimension to the understanding of academic performance. Olamide and Ajayi (2021) observed that access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) contributes significantly to students' learning outcomes. They argued that in contexts where students have limited access to the internet, laptops, or e-learning resources, their academic performance tends to lag behind peers with greater exposure to digital tools. This indicates that performance today must be

understood not only in terms of traditional academic metrics but also in relation to technological competence.

Gender has been identified as another factor influencing patterns of academic performance. Musa and Ibrahim (2018) found that in some Nigerian communities, socio-cultural beliefs and stereotypes continue to restrict girls' educational opportunities, leading to lower academic outcomes compared to boys. However, recent evidence shows that when given equal opportunities, female students often outperform their male counterparts, particularly in language-related subjects (Karfe & Azuaga, 2019). These findings reinforce the idea that achievement gaps are largely a product of social conditioning rather than inherent ability.

Health and nutrition also play critical roles in shaping academic performance. Adebajo and Olowu (2022) noted that students suffering from malnutrition, chronic illness, or poor mental health often exhibit lower levels of concentration, energy, and retention capacity, which ultimately impairs academic success. Schools in low-income communities are disproportionately affected, as children often attend classes hungry or without access to adequate healthcare, further widening the achievement gap. Peer influence has been identified as a strong determinant of academic performance. Egboka and Obi (2022) reported that students who associate with peers who are academically motivated tend to adopt similar study habits, while those influenced by delinquent peer groups are more likely to perform poorly in school. Peer pressure, therefore, operates as both a risk and protective factor, depending on the nature of peer associations. Broken homes are frequently associated with low performance levels. Okafor & Egenti (2021) highlighted that students from broken homes perform poorly in their performance checklist assessments compared to peers from stable families.

## **Academic Challenges Commonly Faced by Students from Broken Homes**

**Poor concentration and classroom participation:** Emotional stress often prevents children from focusing on lessons. Poor concentration and low levels of classroom participation are among the most common academic challenges faced by students, particularly those from disadvantaged or broken home backgrounds. According to Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020), children from homes marked by conflict, neglect, or instability often experience heightened stress and anxiety, which interferes with their ability to focus on classroom tasks. This lack of focus leads to missed instructions, incomplete assignments, and lower academic outcomes over time.

Emotional disturbances are strongly associated with concentration problems. Eze and Okeke (2023) observed that students who experience emotional neglect or parental conflict often display restlessness, daydreaming, or withdrawal during lessons. Such students may appear physically present but are mentally disengaged, which negatively impacts both their individual performance and the overall learning atmosphere in the classroom. Classroom participation requires confidence and a sense of belonging, which many students from broken or unstable homes lack. Adeoye and Adeniran (2022) reported that children exposed to harsh parental criticism or neglect frequently suffer from low self-esteem, making them hesitant to contribute during classroom discussions. This reluctance to speak up deprives them of opportunities to clarify misunderstandings and to develop essential communication skills.

Cognitive and health-related factors also contribute to poor concentration. Adebajo and Olowu (2022) highlighted that malnutrition, inadequate sleep, and untreated health conditions such as vision or hearing problems significantly reduce students' capacity to pay attention in class. In many rural and low-income communities, these issues remain

unaddressed, further disadvantaging learners academically. Teacher-related factors also play a critical role in classroom engagement. Okafor and Egenti (2021) emphasized that students are more likely to concentrate and participate when teachers use interactive teaching strategies, positive reinforcement, and inclusive approaches. Conversely, authoritarian or punitive teaching methods discourage participation, particularly among students who are already emotionally vulnerable due to broken home experiences. In many cases, poor concentration and classroom disengagement result in a progressive decline in performance. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) noted that students who consistently fail to engage in class often develop knowledge gaps, which accumulate over time and lead to chronic underperformance. This creates a vicious cycle: poor concentration leads to poor performance, which reduces motivation, thereby worsening disengagement.

Poor concentration and low classroom participation represent complex academic challenges with roots in family instability, emotional difficulties, socio-economic disadvantage, and school-related factors. If left unaddressed, these challenges limit students' learning potential, reduce their chances of academic success, and hinder their long-term contributions to community development. Effective interventions, therefore, must include not only classroom strategies but also broader support systems that address family, health, and psychological needs (Adeoye & Adeniran, 2022; Lawal & Oloyede, 2024).

**Irregular school attendance:** Achilike (2017) noted that students from unstable families frequently miss school, either because of financial problems, lack of monitoring, or the need to take on domestic responsibilities. Irregular school attendance is a major academic challenge that significantly affects students' learning outcomes. According to Egboka and Obi (2022), absenteeism reduces students' exposure to instructional content, limits their opportunity to practice skills, and increases the likelihood of falling behind in

coursework. When attendance is inconsistent, knowledge gaps accumulate, making it difficult for learners to keep up with the curriculum.

Family instability is one of the leading causes of irregular school attendance. Adeoye and Adeniran (2022) noted that children from broken homes often skip school either because of inadequate parental supervision or because they are forced to take up domestic or economic responsibilities in the absence of one or both parents. This disruption in routine prevents consistent participation in the learning process. Economic hardship also contributes to absenteeism. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) reported that students from low-income households are more likely to miss classes due to an inability to pay school fees, purchase uniforms, or afford transportation. In some cases, these students are withdrawn from school altogether to support their families through petty trading, farm work, or other menial jobs, which further interrupts their education. Health-related challenges exacerbate irregular attendance. Adebajo and Olowu (2022) observed that children from disadvantaged backgrounds often suffer from malnutrition and untreated illnesses that keep them away from school. In rural areas, lack of access to healthcare facilities makes it difficult for sick students to recover quickly, leading to extended periods of absenteeism.

Psychological and emotional instability further reduces consistent school attendance. Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020) explained that children who experience parental conflict, neglect, or abuse often avoid school due to stress, embarrassment, or lack of concentration. In extreme cases, such students develop school phobia, where the very idea of attending school triggers anxiety and avoidance. Over time, irregular attendance leads to serious academic consequences. Eze and Okeke (2023) stressed that chronic absenteeism is strongly correlated with lower test scores, grade repetition, and early school dropout. Students who miss classes consistently lose continuity in learning, which

diminishes their ability to perform well in assessments and reduces their prospects for further education.

Irregular school attendance is a multifaceted academic challenge influenced by family instability, poverty, and health issues. Its consequences are far-reaching, ranging from poor academic performance to increased dropout rates. Addressing absenteeism requires coordinated efforts involving families, schools, and communities to ensure that students receive the supervision, motivation, and support necessary for consistent school participation (Egboka & Obi, 2022; Lawal & Oloyede, 2024).

**Low motivation and academic performance:** One of the strongest predictors of low motivation among students is family instability. Lawal and Oloyede (2024) observed that children from broken homes often lack the encouragement, reinforcement, and parental involvement necessary to sustain interest in their education. In such cases, the absence of consistent guidance reduces students' confidence in their academic ability, causing them to withdraw effort and display poor performance. Socio-economic conditions also shape students' levels of motivation. Adeoye and Adeniran (2022) found that children from low-income families often struggle to maintain interest in school when basic educational resources such as textbooks, writing materials, or digital tools are unavailable. The inability to compete with peers from more privileged backgrounds can foster feelings of inadequacy, which dampens motivation and reduces academic performance.

Low motivation is a critical academic challenge that has a direct and profound effect on students' academic performance. According to Akintunde and Oloyede (2021), motivation serves as the driving force that influences students' willingness to engage in learning activities, persist in the face of difficulty, and achieve desired outcomes. When

motivation is low, students are more likely to display disengagement, procrastination, and poor academic results.

Psychological well-being is another critical factor. Nwankwo and Ugwu (2020) highlighted that students experiencing depression, stress, or trauma, often due to parental conflict or neglect, are less motivated to learn. Their emotional energy is consumed by coping with family or personal difficulties, leaving little room for concentration or active learning. This emotional burden manifests in reduced classroom participation and declining grades. Teacher-related factors can also either boost or diminish motivation. Okafor and Egenti (2021) noted that teachers who employ engaging teaching methods, provide constructive feedback, and recognize student effort contribute positively to students' academic drive. On the contrary, teachers who rely on authoritarian methods, excessive punishment, or neglect discourage students, particularly those already facing challenges at home, from exerting effort in their studies.

Low motivation also manifests in behavioural patterns such as skipping assignments, avoiding challenging tasks, and showing indifference toward learning outcomes. Adebajo and Olowu (2022) explained that such behaviors accumulate into consistent underperformance, grade repetition, and, in extreme cases, school dropout. Without proper interventions, low motivation becomes a self-reinforcing cycle, where poor performance further reduces students' willingness to try. Cultural and societal expectations may further complicate motivation levels. Low motivation is a multidimensional challenge that undermines students' academic performance by weakening persistence, focus, and effort in learning activities. It is influenced by family background, socio-economic conditions, psychological stability, school environment, peer networks, and cultural expectations. If left unaddressed, low motivation perpetuates cycles of underperformance and dropout, ultimately limiting not only individual success

but also the human resource potential needed for community development (Akintunde & Oloyede, 2021; Lawal & Oloyede, 2024).

**The high risk of drop out and repetition:** The phenomenon of high dropout and repetition rates among public senior secondary school students in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State is produced by interacting social, economic, and institutional pressures, many of which are amplified for learners from broken homes. Family dissolution commonly produces sudden reductions in household income and a reallocation of scarce resources away from schooling (uniforms, exam and PTA fees, transport), making withdrawal or irregular attendance more likely, irregular attendance, in turn, reduces curriculum mastery and raises the risk of failure and grade repetition. National and sub-national education analyses identify poverty and household economic insecurity as consistent predictors of secondary-level non-completion in Nigeria, and these effects are amplified where public schools have residual out-of-pocket costs (UNICEF, 2023; Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).

Economic strain from broken homes therefore operates as a proximate channel to dropout and repetition: caregivers facing single-parent incomes or interrupted remittances often ask children to contribute to household survival (trading, petty work) or simply cannot sustain recurrent school costs, producing chronic absenteeism and eventual withdrawal (World Bank, 2017; UNICEF, 2023). Where governments or schools do not provide targeted subsidies or fee waivers, students from fractured families are disproportionately represented among those who leave school early (Adeleke, 2024). Household instability also increases domestic and caregiving responsibilities — especially for girls — which create “time poverty” that undermines study time, punctuality, and class participation. Empirical work in Ovia North-East and surrounding Edo communities documents long travel distances to school and substantial domestic

burdens; combined, these raise the effective cost of staying in school for children from broken homes and elevate repetition risk (Okoh, 2017; Eregare & Odiase, 2017).

Psychosocial consequences of family breakdown — anxiety, depression, behavioural difficulties and loss of motivation — are powerful but often under-recognized drivers of both repetition and dropout. Students who experience conflict at home or repeated moves commonly show concentration difficulties and higher absenteeism, which translate into lower exam performance and higher repetition rates. Where school counselling and mental-health services are weak or absent, as is typical in many under-resourced public schools, these learners receive little remediation and are more likely either to be retained (repetition) or to drop out altogether (Olawale, 2024; UNICEF, 2023). Broken-home households are also more likely to be exposed to secondary risks that directly precipitate school leaving: teenage pregnancy, early marriage, child labour and delinquency. Local studies in Edo State repeatedly identify teenage pregnancy and poverty as primary reasons for female student withdrawal; family fragmentation and lack of supervision are commonly cited root causes (Omoruyi, 2023). Supply-side school factors interact with broken-home dynamics to magnify dropout and repetition. Schools that lack early-warning systems, remedial programmes, flexible re-entry pathways and diagnostic assessments will tend to retain struggling learners through repetition rather than support and accelerate them; conversely, rigid promotion policies and weak EMIS (education management information systems) allow chronic absenteeism to go unaddressed until failure is unavoidable. Research into internal efficiency and repetition in Edo and comparable Nigerian states highlights how resource constraints, uneven teacher capacity, and limited remedial services correlate with higher repetition and wastage rates in public senior secondary schools (Adeleke, 2024; Eboh, 2023).

Community and structural contexts further compound household vulnerabilities. Local labour-market shocks, caregiver migration, and community stigma toward divorced

or single parents reduce social support available to vulnerable children and increase the likelihood that they will be withdrawn from school to work or care for siblings. Case studies from Ovia North-East show that long distances to school, uneven school distribution and weak school resources raise the direct and indirect costs of schooling for vulnerable households, increasing dropout and repetition—especially among students from broken homes who cannot marshal alternative supports (Okoh, 2017; Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). Evidence-based policy and school-level responses point to multi-pronged solutions to reduce dropout and unnecessary repetition among students affected by broken homes. Effective measures documented in the literature include: targeted cash transfers or fee waivers to mitigate acute household poverty; school-based psychosocial counselling and teacher training to identify and support at-risk learners; remedial and catch-up programmes designed for irregular attenders; improved EMIS and early-warning systems to flag chronic absenteeism; and community engagement strategies that reduce stigma and facilitate re-entry for pregnant or out-of-school girls. Evaluations of cash transfer programmes in Nigeria and fragile contexts show positive effects on enrolment and retention (especially for girls), while recent reviews emphasise the critical role of integrated psychosocial support and remedial learning in lowering repetition and strengthening completion rates (World Bank, 2017; UNICEF, 2023; Olawale, 2024).

**Social adjustment difficulties:** Anyamene et al. (2022) observed that some students reported feelings of isolation, rejection, or stigmatization from peers due to their broken home background, which indirectly affects learning.

Social adjustment difficulties remain a common challenge faced by secondary school students, particularly those from broken homes, as they struggle to cope with both academic and psychosocial demands. These difficulties manifest in problems with peer relationships, inability to conform to school rules, emotional instability, and challenges in

balancing personal life with academic responsibilities (Okeke, 2019). Students from disrupted family backgrounds often lack proper parental guidance and emotional support, which hampers their ability to integrate effectively into school and community environments (Uwaifo, 2017). The absence of a stable home structure frequently leads to feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and withdrawal from social interactions (Eze, 2018). Such emotional strain affects concentration in the classroom, reduces participation in group activities, and may lead to maladaptive behaviours like truancy and aggression (Ogunyemi, 2020). Social adjustment problems also result in academic underperformance because students facing psychological stress find it difficult to focus on learning (Adebayo, 2021). Peer influence plays a crucial role in the social adjustment process. While positive peer relationships can enhance self-confidence and motivation, negative peer pressure may result in antisocial behaviours such as cultism, drug abuse, and absenteeism (Ifeyanyi, 2019). Broken homes particularly predispose students to negative peer groups, as they often seek belonging outside their unstable family environment (Odo, 2018).

Teachers also report that students with social adjustment difficulties are harder to engage in classroom activities, exhibit disruptive behaviours, and are less likely to seek academic help when needed (Nwosu, 2022). Social adjustment difficulties significantly hinder both the academic success and personal development of students, especially those from broken homes. These difficulties manifest in poor peer relations, low self-esteem, indiscipline, and susceptibility to negative peer pressure, all of which negatively affect learning outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts among parents, teachers, counselors, and the community to provide emotional support, guidance, and positive role models that foster healthy adjustment in school and society.

### **Emotional and Psychological Issues Associated with Broken Homes.**

Children from broken homes are among the most vulnerable groups in the school system because the absence of stable parental care often produces lasting emotional and psychological consequences. These challenges affect their learning ability, peer relationships, and general adjustment to school life. The key issues include:

## **EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

Children from separated or divorced families frequently experience anxiety, depression, fear, and insecurity. Such distress often manifests in psychosomatic symptoms like headaches, insomnia, and fatigue (Adekeye, 2019), reducing students' concentration during lessons. Furthermore, emotional instability can lead to frequent absenteeism as students avoid school environments that demand focus they cannot sustain (Ogunlade, 2020). The constant psychological burden of unresolved family conflict weakens resilience, resulting in a lack of persistence in tackling academic tasks (Aliyu, 2020). Over time, emotional distress builds into chronic underperformance, as affected learners lack the calmness needed for effective study and performance. Eze and Nwachukwu (2022) observed that the emotional stress experienced by students from broken homes often leads to low self-esteem and diminished academic motivation. When learners are preoccupied with sadness or feelings of rejection, they struggle to pay attention or recall information taught in class. Similarly, Bassey and Udo (2023) note that emotional tension caused by family instability disrupts cognitive functions such as memory retention, comprehension, and problem-solving skills—all of which are vital for academic success.

According to Ibrahim and Adamu (2021), students from homes characterized by separation or divorce often show behavioural withdrawal and a lack of interest in extracurricular activities, further isolating them from peer support that might buffer emotional pain. This isolation worsens their academic difficulties, as the absence of

emotional security prevents them from forming healthy relationships with teachers and classmates. Chukwu (2020) adds that such students may appear distracted or disengaged in class, not because they lack intelligence, but because emotional turbulence consumes their mental energy. In a related study, Olatunji and Bello (2024) emphasized that emotional distress resulting from broken homes can create a long-term sense of instability, leading to inconsistent academic performance. They assert that when children live in uncertainty moving between parents or caregivers they experience divided attention and fragmented routines, both of which undermine academic discipline. In severe cases, some students may develop antisocial behaviours or withdrawal tendencies as coping mechanisms, which further isolate them from academic engagement. Ultimately, the emotional distress associated with broken homes does not only reduce students' ability to focus but also affects their overall psychological readiness to learn. Without proper counselling and emotional support, such learners remain at risk of declining academic outcomes and diminished future potential (Usman & Okonkwo, 2023; Nnamani et al., 2017).

### **Inferiority Complex and Low Self-Esteem**

A recurring issue among students from broken homes is low self-esteem. Lawal et al. (2024) argued that such students often see themselves as “less privileged” when compared to peers from intact families, leading to self-isolation and reduced classroom engagement. This perception of inferiority frequently stems from internalized stigma or feelings of rejection that develop when children witness parental separation or experience neglect. Over time, these emotions shape how they view their self-worth, especially in academic and social contexts. Self-esteem is directly tied to academic confidence, and when it is low, students may feel incapable of achieving success (Olayinka, 2023). This sense of inadequacy prevents them from taking part in competitions, leadership positions, or even answering questions in class. Ede and Adejumo (2021) note that low self-esteem

acts as a silent barrier to classroom participation, as affected students often fear embarrassment or judgment from teachers and peers. They may deliberately avoid activities that could expose their perceived weaknesses, which further limits opportunities for academic growth.

In many cases, students internalize failure and adopt what psychologists call “learned helplessness,” a belief that no matter the effort, success is unattainable (Okorie, 2019). This psychological pattern is particularly harmful because it reinforces passivity and discourages students from investing time and energy into their studies. Ojo and Bamidele (2022) observed that such learners often underperform not because they lack ability, but because they have accepted the false belief that they are destined to fail. This negative self-perception creates a vicious cycle of poor performance, self-doubt, and further underperformance. Ogunyemi and Balogun (2020) found that students with low self-worth are more likely to experience tension during tests, affecting their ability to recall information and perform under pressure. Emotional instability associated with low self-esteem also diminishes concentration, creativity, and perseverance essential qualities for academic excellence.

Furthermore, Ibrahim and Yusuf (2021) assert that the social stigma surrounding children from broken homes can exacerbate feelings of inferiority, particularly in cultures where family stability is highly valued. When peers or teachers treat such students with pity or subtle discrimination, it reinforces their sense of being different or inadequate. As a result, they may withdraw from peer groups, limit social interactions, and gradually disengage from school activities that could otherwise boost their confidence. In essence, inferiority complex and low self-esteem create invisible psychological walls that block students from realizing their full potential. Unless addressed through counselling, mentorship, and positive reinforcement, these challenges can have long-term implications

for academic performance and personal development (Lawal et al., 2024; Olayinka, 2023; Ojo & Bamidele, 2022).

## **Behavioural Problems**

Broken homes are often characterized by conflict, neglect, or inconsistent discipline, which students replicate through negative behaviours. Ogunyemi (2020) reported that children exposed to unresolved family quarrels often display aggression, hostility, and disrespect for authority in school. These behaviours disrupt the learning environment and reduce instructional time for both the affected student and their peers. Such students often struggle with self-control and emotional regulation because they lack stable parental models for managing anger and frustration. As Adewale and Okafor (2021) noted, when children grow up witnessing domestic conflict, they tend to normalize aggression and may use defiance or violence as coping mechanisms within the school setting. Ifeanyi (2019) added that some children from unstable homes resort to deviant peer groups for validation, leading to truancy, drug use, or cult activities. This association with delinquent peers provides a false sense of belonging that often reinforces antisocial behaviour.

According to Chinonso and Ibrahim (2023), peer influence becomes particularly strong among adolescents who lack parental supervision or emotional support, making them susceptible to behaviours that conflict with academic and moral expectations. Over time, these students develop reputations as troublemakers, which affects how teachers perceive and treat them in class. Teachers typically identify such students as disruptive, resulting in frequent disciplinary measures that further alienate them from the classroom (Nwosu, 2022). The repeated punishment cycle not only diminishes students' motivation to learn but also fosters resentment toward authority figures. Olayemi and Bassey (2020) found that repeated disciplinary sanctions often reinforce feelings of rejection and

exclusion among such students, leading to a withdrawal from positive academic engagement. In some cases, these students internalize the “problem child” label and live up to that identity, perpetuating a cycle of indiscipline and academic failure. Over time, repeated behavioural issues increase the risk of suspension or expulsion, cutting short academic careers. Ajayi and Eze (2024) observed that behavioural maladjustments such as truancy, disrespect, and aggression are among the top predictors of school dropout in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly among students from unstable family backgrounds. When students are excluded from school, even temporarily, they miss crucial learning experiences, which further widens the performance gap.

Moreover, behavioural maladjustments also strain peer relationships, leaving students socially isolated and academically unsupported (Odo, 2018). Okon and Udoh (2021) explained that social isolation reduces collaboration, peer learning, and emotional encouragement, which are essential components of a healthy learning environment. Students who feel rejected by peers may seek comfort outside the school system, engaging in risky or antisocial activities that further jeopardize their education. In essence, behavioural problems among students from broken homes reflect a deeper struggle with emotional imbalance and unmet psychological needs. Without adequate counselling, mentorship, and parental intervention, these behavioural challenges can evolve into chronic patterns that hinder both personal growth and academic performance (Ogunyemi, 2020; Nwosu, 2022; Ajayi & Eze, 2024).

### **Lack of Emotional Support**

One of the most devastating consequences of broken homes is the lack of consistent emotional support. Anyamene et al. (2022) observed that many secondary school students complained of loneliness, despair, and the absence of encouragement from parents. Emotional support is a critical buffer against academic stress, and its absence leaves

students vulnerable to discouragement and disengagement (Uwaifo, 2017). According to Eze and Ogbu (2021), students who lack parental warmth often develop feelings of neglect and abandonment, which manifest in low academic motivation and increased anxiety. Adeyemi (2020) emphasized that students with poor emotional support often lack coping mechanisms to manage examination stress or academic setbacks. They may interpret failure as personal inadequacy rather than a learning opportunity. Ogunleye and Nnadi (2023) further explained that emotional deprivation in childhood affects self-regulation and persistence, leading to low resilience when facing academic pressure. In many cases, such students depend solely on peers who may mislead them, exposing them to risky behaviours rather than positive academic practices (Nwankwo, 2021).

Without parental affirmation and guidance, children struggle to develop resilience, self-discipline, and motivation, all of which are fundamental to academic success. Okorie and Musa (2024) asserted that emotional support from parents provides students with a sense of security and belonging, which fosters concentration and commitment to learning. Conversely, emotional neglect generates psychological distress that undermines both cognitive performance and interpersonal relationships in school. The emotional and psychological difficulties experienced by students from broken homes ranging from distress, low self-esteem, behavioural problems, to lack of support—pose serious threats to their academic success. Emotional instability reduces concentration and memory; low self-esteem discourages active participation; behavioural problems disrupt learning; and inadequate emotional support deprives them of the encouragement needed to succeed (Anyamene et al., 2022; Adeyemi, 2020; Nwankwo, 2021).

These interwoven challenges explain why many students from broken homes underperform, repeat classes, or drop out altogether. Addressing these issues requires schools to strengthen counselling services, create peer mentorship programs, and engage communities in providing psychosocial support. Onyema and Adekunle (2022) suggested

that school-based emotional interventions and parent outreach programs can mitigate the negative effects of family instability. Only through holistic interventions can students from broken homes be empowered to overcome emotional setbacks and achieve their academic potential.

## **The Implications of Broken Homes on Community Development**

The negative consequences of broken homes extend beyond the individual student to the wider community. Several implications can be identified:

**Erosion of human capital:** Students who underachieve academically are less likely to acquire the skills needed for productive employment. Over time, this weakens the labour force of the community (Lawal et al., 2024). Broken homes do not only affect the children and parents directly involved, their ripple effects extend to the wider community. One of the most damaging implications for community development is the erosion of human capital. Human capital is the sum of knowledge, skills, health, creativity, and productivity that individuals contribute to the growth and progress of their community. When broken homes undermine the proper nurturing of children, they weaken this vital resource, leaving the community with long-term deficits (Okafor & Egenti, 2021; Akinyemi, 2024). Children from broken homes often experience emotional distress, poor supervision, and reduced access to educational and moral guidance. These setbacks frequently result in lower academic performance, higher school dropout rates, and diminished motivation to acquire useful skills. Over time, such children may grow into adults with fewer qualifications, limited employability, and reduced capacity to contribute meaningfully to community development. This creates a gradual decline in the quality and quantity of human capital available to the community (UNESCO, 2019; Olawale, 2019).

Another way broken homes erode human capital is through the rise of delinquency and social deviance among affected children. Without strong parental support, many children from such homes turn to peer groups for validation, which can expose them to crime, drug abuse, or other anti-social behaviors. This not only reduces their own productivity but also creates insecurity in the community, discouraging investment and growth. Thus, the human resource base of the community weakens, and its social fabric becomes strained (UNDP, 2021; Adeyanju, 2023).

From a health perspective, broken homes may expose children to psychological stress and trauma that have long-term effects on mental and physical well-being. High rates of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem among children from broken families reduce their capacity to succeed academically or professionally. Communities, therefore, lose out on healthy, confident individuals who could have driven development initiatives. Instead, they are left with higher health costs, lower workforce participation, and a weakened pool of leaders and innovators (UNICEF, 2021; Eze, 2025). The erosion of human capital caused by broken homes also affects governance and leadership in the community. Children who grow up without stable family structures may struggle with discipline, responsibility, and ethical values. When such individuals later take up leadership roles, they may lack the moral compass and resilience necessary for effective governance. This weakens the ability of the community to plan, implement, and sustain development programmes (Adebayo, 2022; Akinyemi, 2024).

**Increased social vices:** Broken homes often lead to poor supervision, increasing the risk of delinquency, substance abuse, and crime. Communities then bear the cost of policing and rehabilitation (Karfe & Azuaga, 2019).

Broken homes are a major social concern because they often create conditions that increase the prevalence of social vices within a community. Social vices refer to harmful

behaviours and practices such as crime, drug abuse, prostitution, internet fraud, cultism, violence, and juvenile delinquency that undermine the moral fabric and stability of society. When family structures collapse, children and young people are more vulnerable to negative influences, which in turn negatively affect community development (Okafor & Egenti, 2021). One of the primary ways broken homes contribute to social vices is through the lack of adequate parental supervision and moral guidance. Children from stable families often receive discipline, emotional support, and consistent monitoring that guide their behaviour. However, in broken homes, the absence of one parent or strained relationships between parents can leave children unsupervised and emotionally neglected. This vacuum increases the likelihood of seeking validation and belonging from peer groups, many of which may engage in deviant behavior such as drug abuse, cultism, or petty crime (Olawale, 2019; Adebayo, 2022).

Poverty is another factor that links broken homes to the rise of social vices. Single-parent households often face financial hardships, making it difficult to provide for children's needs. When basic necessities such as food, clothing, and educational materials are lacking, young people may resort to theft, prostitution, or fraud as coping mechanisms. This not only exposes them to risks of arrest, stigmatization, and poor health outcomes but also contributes to the community's insecurity and underdevelopment (UNDP, 2021; Adeyanju, 2023). Broken homes often expose children to emotional and psychological trauma, which can manifest in aggression, rebellion, and anti-social behaviors. Such children are more likely to engage in violence, join gangs, or adopt destructive coping strategies such as alcohol and substance abuse. Communities where these behaviours become widespread experience reduced peace, weakened social bonds, and increased costs of policing and rehabilitation (World Bank, 2020; Eze, 2025). The rise of social vices due to broken homes also hinders community development by discouraging investment and disrupting social order. Investors and development agencies tend to avoid

communities where crime, violence, and social instability are prevalent. This creates a vicious cycle in which limited economic opportunities further drive young people into vices, thereby worsening poverty and insecurity (ILO, 2022; Akinyemi, 2024).

**Cycle of poverty:** Poor educational outcomes perpetuate poverty, as individuals with limited qualifications struggle to access economic opportunities. This intergenerational cycle limits community development. The cycle of poverty refers to the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next due to structural disadvantages and lack of opportunities. Broken homes often serve as a breeding ground for this cycle because children raised in unstable families are less likely to access the resources, stability, and support needed to break free from poverty (Okafor & Egenti, 2021).

Financial hardship is common in single-parent households where one income earner bears the responsibility of meeting the family's needs. As a result, children from broken homes may lack adequate food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. These deprivations limit their ability to focus on education or skill development, thereby reducing their chances of securing well-paid jobs in the future. This situation perpetuates low income and economic insecurity, trapping families and communities in continuous poverty (UNICEF, 2021; Adebayo, 2022). Education, which is often described as the most reliable pathway out of poverty, is heavily affected by broken homes. Children from such backgrounds face higher risks of school dropout, repetition, and poor performance because of emotional distress and financial struggles. Without adequate education or vocational training, these children are unable to compete in the labor market, leaving them vulnerable to low-wage employment or chronic unemployment. Consequently, the community loses out on human capital needed for sustainable growth and remains locked in cycles of underdevelopment (World Bank, 2020; Olawale, 2019).

The cycle of poverty also manifests in limited social mobility. Children from broken homes often grow up in neighborhoods with fewer opportunities, weak infrastructure, and high exposure to crime or negative peer influence. This environment makes it difficult for them to break away from the poverty that has defined their family background. In turn, they may establish families that also struggle with economic instability, thereby transmitting poverty to the next generation (UNDP, 2021; Adeyanju, 2023). Furthermore, the cycle of poverty generated by broken homes places a burden on community development. A community with a high concentration of poor families will struggle with low tax revenue, weak social services, and poor infrastructure. Limited resources mean fewer investments in schools, hospitals, and skill-development initiatives, which further deepens inequality and stagnation (ILO, 2022; Akinyemi, 2024).

**Strain on public services:** Schools and community organizations must devote more resources to counseling, remedial classes, and support programs for vulnerable students, stretching already limited resources (Okafor & Egenti, 2021). Broken homes contribute significantly to the strain on public services within communities. When family structures collapse, the responsibilities of care, protection, and guidance that should ordinarily be provided within the household are shifted onto government institutions and social service systems. This creates a heavy burden on already limited public resources and undermines the efficiency of community development efforts (Okafor & Egenti, 2021).

One of the most affected sectors is education. Children from broken homes are more likely to struggle academically, display behavioural problems, or require special attention due to emotional instability. This increases pressure on teachers, counselors, and school administrators, who must devote additional time and resources to support these children. Overcrowding in classrooms and lack of adequate funding for remedial programs further stretch public education systems, weakening the overall quality of instruction (UNESCO, 2019; Olawale, 2019). Similarly, healthcare services are strained by the impact of broken

homes. Children raised in unstable households often experience higher levels of psychological stress, malnutrition, and exposure to risky behaviors such as drug abuse or early sexual activity. These factors increase demand for medical, psychological, and rehabilitation services, placing additional costs on public healthcare systems that are already underfunded in many communities (World Bank, 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

Welfare and social protection programmes also bear the weight of broken homes. Single-parent families frequently require government assistance to meet basic needs such as food, housing, and childcare. This increased dependency expands the number of beneficiaries under social welfare schemes, often exceeding budgetary allocations. When more households rely on public aid, fewer resources remain available for long-term community development initiatives like infrastructure, job creation, and technological innovation (UNDP, 2021; Adebayo, 2022). In addition, broken homes contribute to insecurity and crime, which place a heavy strain on law enforcement and judicial systems. Communities with high rates of family breakdown often record higher incidences of juvenile delinquency, theft, violence, and drug-related crimes. The need for policing, correctional services, and legal interventions increases, diverting public funds from developmental projects to security management (Adeyanju, 2023; Akinyemi, 2024).

The long-term effect of this strain is that public services become overstretched and underperforming. Instead of functioning as enablers of development, they are trapped in cycles of crisis management. Schools underperform, hospitals remain congested, welfare programs become unsustainable, and law enforcement is overwhelmed. This weakens community resilience and stalls collective growth (Eze, 2025). Thus, the issue of broken homes is not only an educational concern but also a developmental challenge that affects the entire society.

## **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The literature reviewed offers a comprehensive view of the impact that broken homes have on students' academic success and, consequently, on the development of communities. The definition of a broken home has shifted from being solely about structural issues like parental separation, divorce, or death to also including functional failures such as ongoing conflict, neglect, and lack of emotional support (Okafor & Egenti, 2021; Lawal, Oloyede, & Okunade, 2024). Researchers agree that a home's value is not only determined by its physical structure but also by the quality of relationships, care, and stability it provides for children. Thus, families that might seem intact physically can still create a "functionally broken" atmosphere if they lack harmony and affection, which can hinder children's development.

The literature identifies a range of factors contributing to broken homes, including marital strife, financial difficulties, infidelity, cultural expectations like polygamy, and the death of a partner (Oladipo & Olorunfemi, 2019; Adeoye & Adeniran, 2022). Financial instability is highlighted as a key factor, with studies showing that poverty often increases tensions between couples, leading to neglect and emotional withdrawal. Likewise, infidelity and domestic abuse damage trust and affection within marriages, fostering harmful family dynamics. In polygamous families, competition among co-wives and unequal resource allocation can generate neglect and animosity among children, further leading to dysfunctional family environments (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2017). When defining academic performance, the literature describes it as encompassing both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions demonstrated through students' understanding of subjects, levels of participation, discipline, and problem-solving skills (Eze & Okeke, 2023; Lawal et al., 2024).

Academic success arises from a blend of internal factors such as motivation, self-belief, and emotional stability and external influences like parental engagement, socio-economic status, and the school atmosphere (Akintunde & Oloyede, 2021). Research consistently

indicates that children from stable homes tend to achieve higher academically due to the emotional security, regular oversight, and adequate educational resources they receive. Conversely, children from broken homes encounter various interconnected academic difficulties, including lack of focus, inconsistent school attendance, diminished motivation, social adjustment issues, and behavioral problems (Nwankwo & Ugwu, 2020; Eze & Okeke, 2023). These students often experience emotional distress and low self-esteem, which can result in disengagement, absenteeism, and poor academic performance. Furthermore, insufficient emotional and financial support from parents can lead to poor study habits and inconsistent school attendance (Anyamene et al., 2022). Psychological challenges like anxiety, depression, and a sense of helplessness can further hinder students' ability to manage academic stress, while behavioral issues—such as aggression and absenteeism—can disrupt learning and affect relationships with teachers (Ogunyemi, 2020; Ifeanyi, 2019).

Research conducted in 2022 showed that students from unstable family environments frequently report feelings of neglect, anger, and a sense of inferiority, which impede their learning processes. The literature also highlights the wider effects of family breakdowns on community growth. Disruptions in family structures lead to a decline in human capital by limiting the educational success and productivity of those impacted (Akinyemi, 2024; UNESCO, 2019). Additionally, broken homes are linked to a rise in social problems like substance abuse, gang activity, and youth crime, which threaten community harmony and security (Olawale, 2019; Adeyanju, 2023). Moreover, the cycle of poverty continues as children from unstable households are more prone to leave school early or remain in low-paying jobs, which restricts their ability to contribute toward sustainable development (World Bank, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). The challenges of caring for at-risk children and addressing social issues from family strife further burden public services, including education, healthcare, and social welfare (UNDP, 2021; Eze, 2025). Given the area's

socio-economic variety and educational difficulties, a localized study is essential for gathering context-specific data on how family instability influences students in public secondary schools. Thus, this study aims to address this research gap by exploring the perceived impact of broken homes on academic performance and assessing its implication for community development. This effort will not only enhance the current body of knowledge but also provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders seeking to enhance educational results in the area.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is designed to examine in details the procedures and methods that was employed in collecting data for this study. They are treated under the following sub-headings.

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instruction
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather data from a relatively large population at a specific point in time with the aim of describing existing conditions, opinions, perceptions, and relationships among variables. In this study, the descriptive survey method facilitated the collection of data on how students, teachers, and counsellors perceive the influence of broken homes on academic performance in public senior secondary schools within Ovia North East Local Government Area. The design also enabled the use of standardized questionnaires to obtain reliable and comparable information from respondents.

## **Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised all students in public senior secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. According to records from the local education authority (as at the 2024/2025 academic session), the area has several public senior secondary schools with an estimated population of about 4,000 students. This population is considered suitable because it includes students from diverse family backgrounds, making it possible to compare perceptions of students from broken homes and those from stable homes.

## **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample of 400 students was selected to participate in the study. The sample size was considered adequate for generalization as it falls within the acceptable range for survey research. A combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques was employed. First, the public senior secondary schools in the local government area were stratified based on their locations (urban and semi-urban). From each stratum, two schools were selected using simple random sampling. Within each selected school, students were grouped into SS1, SS2, and SS3, after which simple random sampling was used to select the required number of respondents proportionately. This method ensured fair representation of students across classes and family backgrounds.

## **Research Instrument**

The main instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: “Broken Homes and Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire (BHSAPQ)”.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher, drawing from existing literature, the objectives of Section A focus on Demographic information (personal information) such as age, gender, and class level. Section B comprises of items measuring students' perceptions of the influence of broken homes study. The instrument was based on a four-point Likert scale ranging from: *Strongly Agree (SA)*, *Agree (A)*, *Disagree (D)*, to *Strongly Disagree (SD)*.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The research instruments were validated using the expert judgement approach. In this view, copies of the draft instrument were given to my project supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin for items selection and wording. After which their suggestions were taken into consideration before the final copy of the instrument was designed and made use of.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the questionnaire was established through the test–retest method. The instrument was administered to 20 students in a public secondary school outside the study area. After an interval of two weeks, the same questionnaire was re-administered to the same group. Scores from both administrations were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of 0.75. This value indicated that the instrument was reliable and internally consistent for the study.

## **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher will administer the questionnaires. Attempt will be made to give the respondents explanations to the questions as this will enable them respond to the questions as objective as possible. The questionnaires will be collected after ensuring that they have been completed.

## **Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the collected data. This would involve the use of frequency count, percentage and mean score analysis. A criterion mean of 2.50 will be set for accurate decision making.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected for the study titled “The perceived impact of broken homes on the academic performance of public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State: Implications for community development.” Data were obtained from 400 respondents using a structured questionnaire.

The data were analyzed using mean scores. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision-making. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted, while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was rejected.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents used for the study. The variables considered include sex, age, and class level of the respondents.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
(%)		
Male	200	50.0
Female	200	50.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 1 shows that male and female respondents were equally represented in the study. This balanced distribution suggests that the findings of the study are not biased toward any gender and reflect the perceptions of both male and female students in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age**

<b>Age Range (Years)</b> <b>(%)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
12–14 years	80	20.0
15–17 years	220	55.0
18 years and above	100	25.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 2 reveals that the majority of respondents were within the age range of 15–17 years. This age group represents typical senior secondary school students, indicating that respondents were developmentally mature enough to understand family situations and provide meaningful responses regarding the impact of broken homes on academic performance.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Class Level**

<b>Class Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
SS1	130	32.5
SS2	140	35.0
SS3	130	32.5

Total	400	100.0
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Table 3 shows that students from SS1, SS2, and SS3 were fairly represented. This ensures that perceptions across all senior secondary school levels were adequately captured, thereby strengthening the reliability of the study findings.

## Research Question One

**What are the perceived causes of broken homes among students in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?**

**Table 4: Mean Responses on Causes of Broken Homes**

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Parental arguments and frequent fights	3.02	Accepted
2	Cheating or marital unfaithfulness	3.37	Accepted
3	Financial problems in the family	2.71	Accepted
4	Poor communication between parents	3.34	Accepted
5	Alcohol or drug abuse by parents	3.68	Accepted
6	Early or unprepared marriage	3.48	Accepted
Grand Mean = 3.27			

The grand mean of 3.27 indicates that respondents strongly agreed that the listed factors are major causes of broken homes. Alcohol or drug abuse and early or unprepared marriage recorded the highest mean scores, suggesting that behavioural and maturity-related issues are perceived as the strongest contributors to family breakdown. Financial problems, although accepted, recorded a comparatively lower mean, indicating that

students perceive emotional and behavioural problems as more damaging to family stability than economic hardship.

## Research Question Two

**What are the academic challenges commonly faced by public secondary school students from broken homes in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?**

**Table 5: Mean Responses on Academic Challenges**

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
7	Difficulty concentrating on schoolwork	2.81	Accepted
8	Family situation affects academic performance	2.54	Accepted
9	Frequent absence from school due to home issues	2.00	Rejected
10	Lack of academic support at home	3.54	Accepted
11	Difficulty completing homework regularly	2.93	Accepted
Grand Mean = 2.76			

The grand mean of 2.76 reveals that students from broken homes experience significant academic challenges. Lack of academic support at home emerged as the most critical issue, followed by difficulty completing homework and concentrating on schoolwork. However, absenteeism was rejected, indicating that most students continue attending school despite challenges at home. This suggests that the primary academic impact of broken homes lies in reduced academic support and motivation rather than school attendance.

### Research Question Three

**How do emotional and psychological issues associated with broken homes affect the academic performance of public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?**

**Table 6: Mean Responses on Emotional and Psychological Effects**

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
12	Constant feeling of stress or worry	2.06	Rejected
13	Home problems reduce classroom participation	3.03	Accepted
14	Reduced self-confidence due to home issues	3.09	Accepted
15	Emotional stress reduces motivation to study	3.18	Accepted
16	Home problems lead to misbehaviour in school	2.69	Accepted
Grand Mean = 2.81			

The grand mean of 2.81 indicates that emotional and psychological issues arising from broken homes negatively affect students' academic performance. Reduced motivation and self-confidence were the most significant emotional effects. Although constant stress was rejected, the accepted items show that emotional instability still disrupts learning through reduced participation, misbehaviour, and lack of academic motivation.

## Research Question Four

**What are the implications of broken homes on community development in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?**

**Table 7: Mean Responses on Implications for Community Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
17	Increased likelihood of negative youth behaviours	3.30	Accepted
18	Poor academic performance slows community development	2.95	Accepted
19	Broken homes contribute to crime and insecurity	3.56	Accepted
20	Family instability reduces the number of educated youths	3.42	Accepted
21	Increased pressure on community support services	3.27	Accepted

Grand Mean = 3.30

The grand mean of 3.30 shows strong agreement that broken homes have serious implications for community development. Respondents perceived broken homes as contributing to crime, negative youth behaviours, and reduced educational attainment. These outcomes threaten human capital development and place additional pressure on community support systems.

## Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that broken homes have a significant perceived impact on students' academic performance and community development in

Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Across the four research questions, students report strong awareness of the ways in which family instability affects their daily lives, their psychological state, academic functioning, and the development of their wider community. The study revealed that behavioural and relational factors—such as substance abuse, marital unfaithfulness, poor communication, and early marriage—are the major perceived causes of broken homes. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the family as a critical microsystem influencing a child’s development. Hetherington and Kelly (2002) similarly argue that persistent conflict, communication breakdown, and parental misconduct significantly increase the likelihood of separation, supporting the respondents’ perception that relational problems are more decisive than economic difficulties. Financial stress, although significant for some, was not universally seen as the major cause. This suggests that students view broken homes as more strongly linked to interpersonal failings than to economic hardship—a view also echoed in Adeyemo and Oyinloye (2012), who noted that family functioning depends more on relational quality than socioeconomic status.

Academically, students from broken homes were found to experience challenges primarily in the areas of academic support, concentration, and homework completion. The lack of parental guidance and supervision reduces students’ ability to maintain consistent study habits, thereby affecting academic performance. This finding supports Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory, as unmet emotional and security needs hinder students’ motivation to achieve academically. The overwhelming agreement that home conditions negatively affect homework completion and study consistency highlights the central role of the environment in academic success. Students who do not receive encouragement, supervision, or appropriate study conditions are less able to concentrate and maintain strong academic performance. This also aligns with Sun and Lo

(2009), who found that lack of parental guidance and household instability weakens students' academic motivation and study habits.

Emotionally and psychologically, the study showed that broken homes reduce students' self-confidence, motivation, and classroom participation. These emotional effects serve as mediating factors between family instability and academic outcomes. For instance, low motivation can lead to incomplete assignments, while reduced confidence can limit participation during lessons. Although students did not perceive themselves as constantly stressed, the emotional disruptions identified are sufficient to negatively influence learning and behaviour, consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory. This also supports Amato's (2000) position that children from unstable homes often encounter emotional hurdles that manifest in schooling, behaviour, and overall academic engagement.

Finally, the study established that broken homes have far-reaching implications for community development. Reduced academic achievement, increased negative behaviours, and higher crime tendencies limit the development of educated and productive youths, thereby slowing socio-economic progress in the community. These findings confirm that broken homes are not only a family issue but also a significant community development concern. The perceived implications for community development were substantial. Students recognized that broken homes contribute to negative behaviours, crime, and reduced educational attainment, all of which hinder community growth. Their responses show an awareness that family stability is not just a private issue but a public one with long term societal consequences. They perceive broken homes as weakening the human capital base, increasing dependency on social services, and limiting the community's ability to progress academically, socially, and economically. Oladimeji (2015) similarly emphasized that broken homes reduce the quality of future citizens, thereby affecting

community development and social cohesion echoing the concerns voiced by students in this study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter deals with the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the analysis of data collected and interpretation of findings and recommendations offered based on findings made.

#### Summary

This study investigated The Perceived Impact of Broken Homes on the Academic Performance of Public Secondary Schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State: The Implications for Community Development. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. They are:

What are the causes of broken homes among public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?

What are the academic challenges commonly faced by public secondary school students from broken homes in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?

How do emotional and psychological issues associated with broken homes affect the academic performance of public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?

What are the implications of broken homes on community development of Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which was suitable for collecting data from a large population at a single point in time. A sample of Four Hundred (400) respondents within the area of the study which represent ten percent (10%) of Four

Thousand (4,000) students from public senior secondary school was selected using a combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques to ensure representation across class levels (SS1–SS3).

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Broken Home and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (BHSAPQ). The questionnaire was made up of section 'A' and 'B'. While section 'A' contained the demographic information of the respondents, section 'B' was meant to elicit data on the various research questions raised on matters considered important to the success of this study. The reliability and validity of the instrument were determined. The validity of the instrument was determined by the project supervisor and two other lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test- retest procedure and the value obtained was through Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient reliability index of 0.75. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This includes frequency counts, percentages and mean analysis. And a criterion mean of 2.50 was used for accurate decision making.

## **Conclusion**

Following the analysis of data collected and discussion of the results, the following conclusion were drawn from the major findings of this study.

The findings revealed that the primary perceived causes of broken homes included substance abuse, infidelity, persistent parental quarrels, poor communication, early or unprepared marriage, and financial difficulties. The majority of respondents strongly believed that behavioural and relational factors were more influential than economic factors. This suggests that family instability is perceived to arise more from interpersonal problems between parents than from external pressures alone.

The findings showed that students from broken homes face significant academic obstacles. These include: inadequate academic support at home, difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, inconsistent study routines, and inability to complete homework regularly. Despite these challenges, many students did not report frequent absenteeism and some did not believe that their home situation always led to poor academic achievement. This points to the presence of resilience and coping strategies among a portion of the affected students.

The analysis further revealed that family instability affects students internally, leading to reduced motivation, lower self-confidence, emotional stress, and limited class participation. Many students admitted that family problems preoccupied their minds, making it difficult to concentrate during lessons or maintain active involvement in classroom discussions. Although not all students described themselves as constantly stressed, most experienced emotional disturbances significant enough to affect their academic behaviour.

Finally, it was found that students overwhelmingly perceived broken homes as having negative implications for community development. They believed that family instability contributes to youth involvement in negative behaviours, increased crime, reduced number of educated youths, and growing pressure on community support services. This indicates a deep awareness among young people that family issues extend beyond the household and shape the social and economic wellbeing of the community at large. The study revealed that the effects of broken homes are extensive, influencing not only students' academic lives but also their emotional wellbeing, behaviour, and the general development of the community.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to help mitigate the effects of broken homes on students and promote stable communities.

Parents should be encouraged to seek counselling during marital difficulties rather than resorting hastily to separation or divorce. Faith-based organizations, community leaders, and NGOs should facilitate marriage counselling, family therapy, and conflict resolution programmes aimed at promoting harmony and understanding among couples.

Schools should establish intervention programmes such as: after-school tutoring, study groups or homework clubs, teacher–student mentoring programmes. These supports will help students overcome the academic disadvantages caused by unstable home environments.

Every public secondary school should have functional counselling units staffed with trained counsellors who can: Identify early signs of emotional distress, provide one-on-one counselling, offer motivational sessions, teach coping strategies and study skills, and collaborate with parents or guardians for follow-up.

Teachers should be trained to observe and report changes in behaviour, academic performance, or emotional wellbeing that may indicate problems at home. Such early detection will enable the school to intervene before the problems escalate.

Schools should cultivate strong communication with parents or guardians. Regular open days, home visits, parent–teacher meetings, and feedback systems should be encouraged to ensure that families remain involved in the student’s educational journey despite marital challenges.

Community leaders, social workers, and youth organizations should create safe spaces and programmes for youths, such as: Skill acquisition centres, Youth clubs, Moral instruction programmes, Recreational activities, and Mentorship opportunities. These platforms can help channel students' energies positively and reduce the likelihood of risky behaviour.

Government agencies should expand social welfare provisions to cater to families experiencing instability. This may include: Family rehabilitation centres, Psychosocial support services, Substance abuse treatment programmes, and Economic empowerment initiatives for struggling families.

Government should strictly implement laws and policies that protect children from violent or harmful home environments. Where necessary, the welfare of the child should take precedence in situations of severe marital conflict.

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UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BROKEN HOME

ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

STUDENTS IN OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

OF EDO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT

(BHSAPQ)

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is solely for the purpose of research. The researcher is carrying out a study on: The Perceived Impact of Broken Home on the Academic Performance of Public Secondary Schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State: Implications for Community Development. You are thereby requested to kindly help as much as possible to supply the needed information. Your response shall be treated with utmost confidence.

-----

**Ucheagwu Chinemerem Miracle**

**Researcher**

## INSTRUCTION

Please read the questions carefully and tick (✓) the option that best expresses your opinion. Please do not tick 2 numbers for one statement.

**Keys: SA – Strongly Agree | A – Agree | D – Disagree | SD – Strongly Disagree**

## SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. **Gender:**

Male       Female

2. **Age:**

12–14       15–17       18 and above

3. **Class:**

SS1     SS2     SS3

## SECTION B: MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

### Research Question 1:

#### *Causes of Broken Homes among Students*

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Many homes break up because parents often argue or fight.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Cheating or unfaithfulness between parents can cause separation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3	Financial problems or stress in the home sometimes lead to a breakup.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Poor communication between parents makes relationships unstable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Alcohol or drug abuse by a parent can tear a family apart.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Getting married too early or without proper preparation can lead to family breakdown.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Research Question 2:**

*Academic Challenges of Students from Broken Homes*

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
7	I find it hard to focus on my schoolwork because of issues at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	My academic performance is affected negatively by my family situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I sometimes miss school due to problems or responsibilities at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I do not get enough help with my studies from home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	It is difficult for me to complete homework or study regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Research Question 3:

#### *Emotional and Psychological Effects on Academic Performance*

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
12	I often feel stressed or worried because of my family background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Thinking about problems at home affects my participation in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	My self-confidence in school is affected by what happens at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Emotional stress at home makes it hard to stay motivated in my studies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Family issues sometimes cause me to behave in ways that get me into trouble in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Research Question 4:

#### *Implications of Broken Homes on Community Development*

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
17	Students from broken homes are more likely to get involved in negative behaviours in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Poor academic performance among these students slows down community development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Broken homes contribute to social problems like insecurity and crime.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20	Family instability reduces the number of well-educated youths in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	A high rate of broken homes puts more pressure on community support services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>