

Family Structural Disruption as a Predictor of Academic Success and Socio-Emotional Well-being of Public Secondary School Students in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State

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ABSTRACT A structurally disrupted or unstable family explains some events that upset the standard settings expected of in a family, which include divorce, separation, or death of either or both parents, and which are likely to predispose the children to a high risk of issues ranging between their academics, behavioural, emotional, and social life. This study thus assesses the influence of family structural disruption on the academic performance and socio-emotional wellbeing of students in a public secondary school in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and simple random sampling was utilized to select one hundred and fifty (150) students from five senior secondary schools in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State for the study. Questionnaires were used for data collection, which were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics for hypothesis testing (independent sample t-test) on SPSS 17.0 at a significance level of 0.05. The results showed that there was a significant influence of family structural disruption on the academic performance ($t= 11.70$, $p< 0.05$), the socio-emotional wellbeing ($t= 17.34$, $p< 0.05$) of public secondary school students. This study contributes to studies on students' success and wellbeing by providing information on the influence of family disruption on the students' wellbeing. The study recommended the need to enlighten the parents on the importance of home structure to the success and well-being of the children, and the implications of family structural disruption on their children, thus striving to build a happy home.

KEYWORDS: Family, Disruption, Predictor, Academic Success, Socio-Emotional, Wellbeing

I. INTRODUCTION

A structurally disrupted family is a household that is no longer whole or that has changed or been disintegrated as this study discusses (McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988). Training, mentoring, and support a child receives are the main responsibilities of parents in the home (Romitan, 2021; Pusparini *et al.*, 2022; Qistina *et al.*, 2024). They are also essential to the child's academic growth. A child's early education, socialization, personality development, and belief system are all shaped by their family, which also acts as their first point of contact with society (Taylor *et al.*, 2004; Parsons, 2014; Anyamene *et al.*, 2022; Fazal & Almas, 2024). According to Narbaeva and Musurmanova (2021) and Abdujalilova (2024), the family provides an environment that nurtures the child's overall educational, moral, social, emotional, and spiritual development. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which holds that a child's development is affected by several levels of dynamically interacting environmental systems, serves as an important basis for this investigation. The family forms a critical part of the microsystem, where direct interactions occur between the child and their

immediate environment. Stability, emotional security, and resources that support academic success and socio-emotional well-being are all provided by intact family structures. On the other hand, family structure changes like divorce, separation, or parent loss can upset this microsystem and reduce the nurturing relationships necessary for healthy development (Santrock, 2014; Slivšek et al., 2024). The mesosystem, which represents the connections between microsystems like the family and the school, is also impacted because parental disengagement can lower involvement in the child's education, making the problems worse. A child's academic performance may suffer as a result of family disruption brought on by unresolved marital conflict that results in divorce, separation, or the death of one or both parents (Anyamene et al., 2022). According to Felisilda and Torreon (2020), the family's function as a child's primary socialization agent can either help or hurt their academic development, depending on the emotional and social atmosphere in the home. The support network that children depend on for their academic, socio-emotional, and general well-being is frequently disrupted by family instability. Consequently, children from families that are structurally disrupted may face difficulties in their development and may carry emotional trauma into adulthood (Anyamene *et al.*, 2022). The home is more than just a place to live; it is a source of psychological and emotional support that influences a child's entire life (Obeta, 2014). Early learning and behaviour are greatly influenced by the family, which lays the groundwork for the educational experience (Adeboye *et al.*, 2021). A child's academic achievement and sense of self-worth can be strongly influenced by the level of family stability they experience. Children raised by both parents are less likely to suffer from intellectual and socio-emotional issues, according to Amato's (2005) investigation into the impact of family structure on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of children in the United States. Higher living standards, improved parenting techniques, closer emotional bonds with parents, and less exposure to stressful situations at home are all major contributors to this. The home environment no longer serves as an effective developmental space when it does not promote the child's physical, social, psychological, or emotional well-being. According to Egbo (2012) and Awoniyi (2019), when a family breaks up, there are frequent gaps in the child's upbringing that can lead to neglect, insufficient supervision, difficulties with social adjustment, and poor academic results. The increase in family structure disruption in modern-day Nigeria has raised concerns, especially because of the detrimental effects it has on children's education and development. Children who grow up in such circumstances frequently have problems with their emotions, behaviour, and academics (Anyamene *et al.*, 2022).

II. RELATED WORKS

The family is a component of the microsystem which is the layer of the environment with which the child interacts most directly and immediately, according to the ecological systems theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979. The ecological system highlights how children develop within a complex network of nested environmental systems (Neal and Neal, 2013; Jeager, 2017; Antony, 2022). The family's stability and structure have a significant impact on a child's socio-emotional and academic development (Taylor *et al.*, 2004; Amato, 2005). Divorce, separation, or parental death are all examples of family structure disruptions that have become more frequent in Nigeria, where the family is still a crucial social institution. These disruptions are linked to developmental difficulties for children (Akinrinade & Olatunji, 2021; Anyamene *et al.*, 2022).

Academic proficiency and psychological well-being are fostered by a stable microsystem that is defined by constant parental attention and emotional support (Santrock, 2014). Family structure changes, however, have the potential to upset this microsystem and have a detrimental

effect on the child's growth. Academic progress and emotional adjustment may be further hampered by such disruptions, which can also weaken mesosystem connections, such as those between the home and the school (Egbo, 2012). These theoretical claims are supported by a number of studies carried out in Nigeria and other African contexts. In Lagos State, teenagers from single-parent households performed noticeably worse academically and had more behavioural issues than their peers from intact families, according to Aina and Adewusi (2020). In their study of secondary school pupils in Enugu State, Okoye and Eze (2021) found that family disruption was a significant predictor of poor academic achievement and emotional trauma. These results are consistent with previous research by Amato (2005), who claimed that because of decreased parental involvement and elevated household stress, children in broken homes are more susceptible to cognitive and emotional challenges.

In addition, Omiruyi (2014) found that there is prevalence of peer group influence and studies also revealed that students from broken homes in Nigeria generally show lower academic achievement, poorer personality development, and higher dropout rates compared to peers from intact families (Yara and Tunde-Yara, 2010; Adegboye and Adegboye, 2021). Amato (2003) also linked broken homes to reduced motivation for academics. Factors contributing to poor performance include emotional distress (anxiety, depression), reduced parental involvement (less supervision, guidance), economic instability (financial hardship, limited access to educational resources), and social or behavioural issues (aggression, disobedience). These worries are supported by comparative research from comparable socio-economic contexts outside of Nigeria. Due in large part to a lack of parental supervision and socio-economic hardship, Mkhize and Sibanda (2021) demonstrated that adolescents from disturbed families attending township schools in South Africa had lower educational attainment and more emotional balance issues. Similar findings were made by Mwangi and Njoroge (2021) in Kenya, who discovered that family conflict and poverty acted as mediating factors in the relationship between children from disturbed homes and truancy, poor academic performance, and aggression. According to these regional studies, family structure has an effect on child outcomes. The compounding effects of post-pandemic socio-economic challenges on child development and family stability are highlighted in more recent literature. According to Okonkwo *et al.* (2023), COVID-19-related economic shocks in low-income communities in Nigeria exacerbated family fragmentation, which caused learning loss and increased emotional distress in teenagers. In a similar vein, Adediran and Oyedele (2023) discovered that in peri-urban areas, family disruption and its detrimental effects on children's education were more common due to economic instability that followed the pandemic.

The literature identifies significant gaps despite of these contributions. First, smaller or mid-sized communities like Ondo West LGA receive little attention in Nigerian studies, which mostly concentrate on major urban centers like Lagos or Enugu. Second, a lot of research tends to focus only on academic or socio-emotional results instead of looking at how both are impacted at the same time by family structural disruption. Third, not many studies specifically incorporate these results into a comprehensive developmental framework using a theoretical framework such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. By concentrating on Ondo West LGA and examining academic achievement and socio-emotional well-being as connected consequences of family structural disruption, this study aims to close these gaps. A nuanced understanding of how instability in the microsystem (family) and related systems (school, community) shape student development and how to identify intervention pathways is made possible by grounding the analysis in Bronfenbrenner's framework.

The family structure is an integral part of a child's academic and socio-emotional development. There appears to be an increase in the rate of family structural disruption, such as divorce,

separation, and absence of one or both parents in the study area which has brought concerns about their influence on students' academic success and well-being. Existing studies have examined issues relating to family background and student outcomes, but limited attention has been given to the influence of family structural instability on students of public secondary schools, specifically on both their academic performance and socio-emotional development. Moreover, previous works often address these outcomes separately without extensively finding out their joint inter-relationship to family structure. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the interconnectedness between family structural disruption and the academic and emotional well-being of public secondary school students in the study area.

This study aims to assess the effect of family structural disruption on the academic success and socio-emotional well-being of public secondary school students in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- i. Examine the causes of family structural disruption
- ii. Assess the effect of family structural disruption on the academic success of public secondary school students
- iii. Investigate the impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.
- iv. Determine the possible solutions to curb the increase in the occurrences of family structural disruption.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

- (a). What are the prevailing causes of family structural disruption among households in Ondo West LGA?
- (b). Does family structural disruption have any effect on the academic success of public secondary school students?
- (c). Are there impacts of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being?
- (d). What are the possible solutions to curb the increasing occurrences of family structural disruption?

Research Hypotheses

- (a). Null hypothesis One (H_01): There are no significant causes of family structural disruption among households in Ondo West LGA.
- (b). Alternative hypothesis One (H_{A1}): There is a significant cause of family structural disruption among households in Ondo West LGA.
- (c). Null hypothesis Two (H_02): There is no significant effect that family structural disruption has on the academic success of public secondary school students
- (d). Alternative hypothesis Two (H_{A2}): There is a significant effect that family structural disruption has on the academic success of public secondary school students
- (e). Null hypothesis Three (H_03): There is no significant impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.
- (f). Alternative hypothesis Three (H_{A3}): There is significant impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.
- (g). Null hypothesis Four (H_04): There are no significant possible solutions to the occurrence of family structural disruption in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State.
- (h). Alternative hypothesis Four (H_{A4}): There are significant possible solutions to the occurrence of family structural disruption in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State.

Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study with the aim of investigating the perceived influence of family structural disruption on the academic success and socio-emotional well-being of public secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area (LGA), Ondo State. This design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to collect and analyze data on students' experiences across different family structures in a natural setting without manipulation of variables.

Target Population and Sampling Technique

The target population for the study consisted of students in five selected public secondary schools within Ondo West LGA. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across key demographic variables, including gender, age group (12-19 years), and family structure (intact, single-parent, disrupted families). The schools served as the initial strata, from which students who fall within the stated categories were randomly selected.

Sampling Size

A total of 150 students participated in the study. The sample size was determined based on practical considerations of time and resource availability, but its adequacy was supported by Roscoe (1975)'s rule of thumb acceptable level for sample size determination as cited by Hill, (1998), Sekaran (2006), Sekaran and Bougie (2010) and Kiriinya *et al.* (2014). According to Roscoe (1975), a sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate for most research.

Research Instrument and Validation

For data collection, a structured questionnaire titled Family Structure and Student Development Questionnaire (FSSDQ) was utilized. The instrument was designed to capture data on the demographic characteristics of respondents; academic success, and socio-emotional well-being in line with the research focus. The questionnaires were closed-ended and measured on a four-point Likert scale, with response options being Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). For the sake of validation, the instrument was subjected to expert review to establish its face and content validity, while ensuring that all items were clear, relevant, culturally appropriate, and fulfilled the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and percentages) to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the research questions. In addition to this, inferential statistics (Independent Sample t-test) was employed for hypothesis testing at 95% confidence interval using SPSS Statistics 17.0.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the hypothesis testing with t-test are as shown below:

Null hypothesis One (H0I): There are no significant causes of family structural disruption among households in Ondo West LGA.

Alternative hypothesis One (HA1): There is a significant cause of family structural disruption among households in Ondo West LGA.

Table 1: Result for hypothesis 1 on the causes of family structural disruption among households

Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	F	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Agree (X ₁)	5	108.60	8.264	8	0.000	12.857	0.000 (Sig.)
Disagree (X ₂)	5	41.40	8.264				

Result in Table 1 shows a high calculated t-value being 12.857 which is suggestive of a strong statistical difference between the two groups of responses received to the research question one items (Agree and Disagreed groups). The mean score for "Agree responses" is substantially higher than that for "Disagree responses," which is suggestive of the fact that a substantial gap exists between the two groups in their responses. The p-value (0.000) indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the two groups of responses, implying that it was not likely an occurrence that have happened by chance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected implying that there is a significant cause of family structural disruption among households in Ondo West LGA at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Null hypothesis Two (Ho2): There is no significant effect that family structural disruption has on the academic success of public secondary school students

Alternative hypothesis Two (HA2): There is a significant effect that family structural disruption has on the academic success of public secondary school students

Table 2: Result for hypothesis 2 on the effect of family structural disruption on students' academic success

Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	F	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Agree (X ₁)	5	113.40	10.383	8	0.000	11.696	0.000 (Sig.)
Disagree (X ₂)	5	36.60	10.383				

Table 2 shows the results of the t-test done. The result for hypothesis 2 in Table 2 showed there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the two response groups (agree and disagree groups), given the p-value of 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there is a significant effect that family structural disruption has on the academic success of public secondary school.

Null hypothesis Three (Ho3): There is no significant impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.

Alternative hypothesis Three (HA3): There is significant impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.

Table 3: Result for hypothesis 3 on the impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.

Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	F	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Agree (X ₁)	5	110.20	6.420	8	0.000	17.342	0.000 (Sig.)
Disagree (X ₂)	5	39.80	6.420				

Table 3 reveals there is statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) with respect to the responses from the agree and disagree groups. The p-value (0.000) indicates the rejection of

the null hypothesis which means that there is a significant impact of family structural disruption on students' socio-emotional well-being.

Null hypothesis Four (Ho4): There are no significant possible solutions to the occurrence of family structural disruption in Ondo West LGA, Ondo state.

Alternative hypothesis Four (HA4): There are significant possible solutions to the occurrence of family structural disruption in Ondo West LGA, Ondo state.

Table 4: Result for hypothesis 4 on the possible solutions to the occurrence of family structural disruption in Ondo West LGA, Ondo state

Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	F	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Agree (X ₁)	5	113.80	8.786	8	0.090	13.964	0.000 (Sig.)
Disagree (X ₂)	5	36.20	8.786				

The result of hypothesis 4 in Table 4 showed that there are significant possible solutions to the occurrence of family structural disruption in Ondo West LGA, Ondo state, given the obtained p value of 0.000. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted at $p < 0.05$. Thus, the solutions if adhered to can significantly help to reduce the menace of the family disruption that is ravaging homes today.

Discussion of Findings

From the results, significant causes of family structural disruption were revealed. This includes, lack of love and submission between husband and wife, financial incapability especially from the husband can lead to family structural disruption, lack of communication, forgiveness, trust and respect can unsettle the home. This corroborates with the study of Eweniyi (2010) who identified lack of communication as one of the causes of separation in a marriage. One of the partners in most cases the woman, may not dare to say exactly what he/she feels until anger forces hidden feelings and attitudes to the surface. This finding also revealed that there is significant influence of family structural disruption on the academic performance and socio-emotional well-being of students in the study area. Students from disrupted family have limited access to study materials which can hinder their academic progress and they are at higher risk of dropping out of the school due to lack of collective or adequate support by parents (Akinde and Akinleke, 2024). Students from divorced parents suffer academic and emotional challenges and they usually perform poorly in their academic activities (Adriana, 2024). Yara and Tunde (2010) and Chidiezie-Chineke (2024) confirmed that parental death has significant influence on pupils' academic performance since the pupils lacked necessary psychological and financial support to enhance their learning ability. Douglas (2011) stated that in most unstable homes, the children are generally at disadvantage because they are usually deprived academically, emotionally, psychologically, economically, socially and culturally.

The students from dysfunctional or broken homes may also experience social maladjustment and emotional disturbances leading to depression, anxiety, anger, frustration, poor self-esteem, and so on (Mutekwe and Mutekwe, 2013; Augustine, 2024). They may also have low self-esteem among their mates in the class because of their family's condition. Furthermore, such students may have poor social lifestyle and may have difficulty in forming healthy social relationships with their peers and teachers (Motamedi, 2020). There may also be development of unhealthy lifestyles such as smoking, drinking alcohol, using illegal drugs, and keeping bad friends. This is in line with Kapambwe (2001) who found that students from disrupted family have emotional problem which in turn lead to poor academic performance in school because

they are unable to turn their energies and attention in the direction of learning. In line with this, Maimuna (2018) and Abbas (2010) noted that it disrupts family lifestyle, economic stability, and causes emotional and psychological trauma. Children from broken homes often lack adequate parental attention, face challenges like stress, anxiety, and are at higher risk of social vices. Academically, these students generally show lower academic performance due to emotional instability, lack of parental supervision, and reduced support (Amato, 2001; Schults, 2006; Adeyemi, 2010).

V. CONCLUSION

This study determined the influence of structurally disrupted family on the academic success and socio-emotional well-being of secondary school students in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that family structural disruption can be caused by things like lack of love and trust, poor communication, financial hardships and has a significant impact on students' academic performance and socio-emotional well-being by lowering student's academic performance and compromising their socio-emotional well-being. These findings lend credence to the significant impact of stable families on students' academic and emotional growth. This study contributes to prior findings in educational psychology by adding to the knowledge of the place of family structure on students' academic performance and their socio-emotional well-being. Also, the study has important implications for people in education, research, and policy making. The study highlights the need for targeted policies, supportive school programmes, and strengthened counselling services in schools to assist students from disrupted families. It also calls for curriculum designs that promote resilience and emotional well-being of the students if we desire to have students with good academic records, while encouraging further research on long-term impacts of family disruption on student outcomes.

Since the family structure has been noted to be an important determinant of the child's academic and socio-emotional well-being, it is important that there should be counselling and intervention programmes for the married couples to reduce incidences of breakdown of the family structure, so that a higher rate of children will grow up with both parents and children with strong academic and socio-emotional well-being will be found in our schools at different levels.

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