Examining How Broken Homes Affect the Academic Performance of Students in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of broken homes on the academic performance of Junior High School students in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana. Employing a descriptive research design, data were collected via self-administered questionnaires from a randomly selected sample of 89 students at University Junior High School. The study identified various types of broken homes, including divorced or separated parents, single-parent households, guardianship arrangements, and frequent household changes, and explored their influence on students' academic focus and achievement. Findings reveal that broken home situations often lead to emotional distress, financial worries, and reduced academic concentration, contributing to declines in performance. Parental involvement was found to be a mitigating factor, while school support resources were perceived as inadequate. Based on these findings, recommendations urge educational stakeholders to conduct systematic surveys, enhance counselling services, and foster collaborations among teachers, parents, and psychologists to support students from broken homes. Future studies should expand sample sizes, incorporate mixed methods, and explore socioeconomic and coping factors that influence academic resilience

Keywords-Broken Homes, Academic performance, Students' Academic Achievement

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The concept of a "broken home" has become increasingly prevalent in modern society, with many families experiencing some form of marital breakdown, separation, or divorce. This phenomenon has far-reaching consequences for children, particularly in terms of their academic performance. Research has shown that children from broken homes are more likely to experience academic difficulties, behavioral problems, and emotional distress compared to their peers from intact families (Amato, 2014; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2017). The chapter presents the overview of the research work. It provides a greater view of examining how broken homes affect the academic performance of students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The chapter highlights the background of the study and explain the problem of the study. The chapter also emphasizes on the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, and research questions. Finally, the significance of the study, delimitation, and organization of the study were discussed in this research work.

Background to the Study

Family structures significantly influence a socialization and educational outcomes. A broken home characterized by parental separation, divorce, single parenthood, or guardianship by relatives can disrupt stability and affect a student's emotional well-being and academic performance. Globally, children from such homes face higher risks of academic difficulties, absenteeism, and behavior challenges compared to peers from intact families (Amato; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2017). In Cape Coast Metropolis, where divorce rate surpasses national averages (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019), many students confront these challenges firsthand. Prior research has linked broken homes to diminished academic achievement, primarily due to psychological stress,

economic hardship, and inconsistent parental involvement (McLanahan & Sandefur, 2013; Jeynes, 2013). Several factors contribute to the negative impact of broken homes on academic performance. For example, children from broken homes may experience more stress and instability at home, which can affect their ability to focus and concentrate in school. Additionally, parents who are separated or divorced may be less able to provide financial support and resources for their children's education, which can limit their opportunities for academic success. Furthermore, the emotional and psychological impact of growing up in a broken home can also affect a child's self-esteem, motivation, and overall well-being, all of which can negatively impact their academic performance. Academic performance is the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects and considered as important indicator on students learning. Hence, several studies have been proven that there are different determinants of the academic performance of a student (Casinillo and Guarte, 2018; Kabre & Brown, 2013; Weintraub & Sax, 2018). However, Saikia piercing out that one of the most influencing factors on academic performance of students is their respective family background. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that students from single-parent households were more likely to repeat a grade, have lower math and reading scores, and be less likely to attend college compared to their peers from two-parent households (NCES, 2019). Another study by the Brookings Institution found that children who grow up in single-parent households are more likely to experience cognitive and academic difficulties, including lower reading and math scores, and lower high school graduation rates (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2018). However, contextualized studies examining these dynamics among Ghanaian junior high students remain limited, justifying this research

Problem Statement

While broken homes are known to affect children's learning experiences, the precise ways they influence academic performance, particularly in Cape Coast Metropolis, have not been thoroughly explored. Existing research often lacks qualitative depth and is limited in geographic scope. Given the prevalence of broken homes in the region, a focused study is needed to understand both the academic consequences and the contributing factors to inform supportive interventions. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "more than half of all children in developing countries are living in households where at least one parent has died, and one in five children are living with a single parent" (UNICEF, 2017). An argument of the parents is one of the basic causes of broken families as pointed out (Saikia, 2017).

Furthermore, money is mostly the cause of the basic cause of a couple arguments. Too much money in a person's mind can cause greediness; this will let the person forget about love towards its partner. Hence, several studies have been proven that there are different determinants of the academic performance of a student. However, Saiki (2017), piercing out that one of the most influencing factors on academic performance of students is their respective family background, and it is found out that broken homes or single-parent homes has negatively affects students' academic achievement and learning attitudes.

Despite these findings, there is a need for more research on the specific ways in which broken homes affect academic performance, as well as effective strategies for supporting students from these backgrounds. This study aims to examine the relationship between broken homes and academic performance in order to inform evidence-based interventions and policies that support the academic success of students from non-traditional family structures.
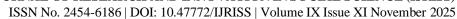
Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine how broken homes affect the academic performance of Junior High School students in Cape Coast Metropolis by identifying types of broken homes, assessing their occurrences, and exploring factors mediating their impact on learning.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of the study are to:

1.   identify the various types of broken homes among learners at Cape Coast Metropolis;

2.   examine how broken homes affect the academic performance of learners at Cape Coast Metropolis;

3.   identify the specific factors that contribute to broken homes among parents of Cape Coast Metropolis.

Research Questions

1. What are the various types of broken homes among the Junior High School students at Cape Coast Metropolis?
2. What are the occurrences of broken homes among students at Cape Coast Metropolis and its influence on the academic performance of learners?
3. What are the specific factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on academic performance?

Significance of the Study

The study informs educators, policymakers, and social workers about the challenges faced by students from broken homes, guiding the development of targeted support programs such as counselling and academic assistance. It also contributes to the academic literature on family structure and education in Ghana

Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses solely on Junior High Schools within Cape Coast Metropolis limiting its geographic scope and sample population.

Review of Related Literature

Overview

This chapter offers more provision for the study. The chapter enlighten on the review of the related literature. This literature review consists of the views and findings of different writers as documented in books, encyclopedia and other journals. The chapter also review related existing and relevant literature.

1. Definition of Broken Homes
2. Various Types of Broken Homes
3. Causes of Broken Homes on Education
4. Effects of Broken homes on Education
5. Concept of Academic Performance
6. Impact of Broken Homes on student's Academic Performance
7. The various factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on student's academic performance.

Definition of Broken Homes

In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2013), broken homes refer to family units where parents are separated, divorced, deceased, or where children are raised by guardians other than biological parents. Such family disruptions affect children's emotional, social, and academic development. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his or her reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the individual's experience at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. The broken home may be as a result of crisis, conflicts, fighting and lack of understanding between the couple, which, when left unresolved may result in temporary or permanent separation of both parents. Hence the marriage vow often made at the altar with promise to love each other "for better or for worse as long as both shall live" becomes rhetoric resulting in the destruction of the academic, psychological and moral lives of the students.

Various Types of Broken Homes on Education

A. Single-Parent Homes**:** These types of   Broken homes associated with financial constraints and reduced parental involvement. According to a study by the National Centre for Education Statistics (2019), children

who live in single-parent households are more likely to perform poorly in school and have lower academic aspirations than their peers from two-parent households. This is because single-parent households often face financial difficulties, which can lead to stress and instability at home, making it challenging for children to focus on their studies. Single-parent households lack the resources and support to provide a stable educational environment, such as access to quality educational materials, tutoring, and extracurricular activities (Horn, 2018). This can lead to a lack of confidence and motivation among children, ultimately affecting their academic performance.

B. Divorced Homes: This often linked to emotional distress and academic instability. According to a study by the American Community Survey (2019), children who live in divorced households are more likely to experience academic difficulties, including lower grades and higher dropout rates than their peers from intact families. Moreover, the stress and uncertainty that comes with living in a divorced household can lead to emotional difficulties, such as anxiety and depression, which can negatively impact a child's ability to focus on their studies (Kurdek, 2017). Furthermore, the constant relocation between two households can disrupt a child's social and emotional development, making it challenging for them to form stable relationships with peers and teachers (Amato, 2014).

C. Remarried Homes: Remarried homes can also have an adjustment challenge on a child's education, particularly if they are raised in a blended family. According to a study by the National Centre for Education Statistics (2019), children who live in remarried households are more likely to experience academic difficulties, including lower grades and higher dropout rates than their peers from intact families (p. 18). Moreover, the stress and uncertainty that comes with living in a remarried household can lead to emotional difficulties, such as anxiety and depression, which can negatively impact a child's ability to focus on their studies (Hornbacher, 2017). Furthermore, the blending of different family cultures and dynamics can lead to conflicts and power struggles within the household, making it challenging for children to adjust and feel stable (Patterson et al., 2015). Broken homes can have a significant impact on a child's education, particularly if they are raised in a remarried household. It is essential for policymakers and educators to recognize the importance of providing support to these families to ensure that children have the opportunity to reach their full academic potential.

Causes of Broken Homes on Education

There are many problems which married couples are likely to face and if care is not taken, these challenges and problems may weaken the marriage and finally break it down. Some of the problems are:
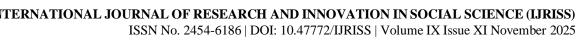
Adultery

According to Fields (2013), sexual relation outside marriage indicates a clearly divided love, incomplete
to Fields (2013), sexual relation outside marriage indicates a clearly divided love, incomplete affection and sign of unfaithfulness towards one's partner. That is why when this is detected, the offending partner often reacts strongly in an attempt to cover up his or her shame. He concluded that marital unfaithfulness either on the part of the man or the woman is a leading cause of divorce.

Lack Of Communication

Effective communication has been identified as the single most important factor in any relationship or interaction. Effective information flows correct misconception and solve many misunderstandings. When this is lacking, it causes conflicts in marriage. Keeping things to oneself end up in doing harm to both the oneself and the marriage.

Childlessness

Africans, particularly Ghanaians value childbearing in marriage very much. A delay or the inability on the part of married partners to give birth to children could bring bitterness and frustration in marriage. Therefore, when a couple live together for many years without a child and they are convinced that their marriage will be fruitless they may decide to break the marriage relationship. Interference of In-Laws Under interference or involvement in the affairs of the marriage by in-laws may affect a smooth marriage such interference may

deprive the married couples the kind of privacy and independence they may wish to enjoy. When in laws take side during misunderstanding in the marriage, they sometimes unknowingly end up interfering with the running of their homes. This often results in conflicts between the couples and may lead to breaking of the home.

Financial Constraints

It goes without saying that almost any activity or interaction involves some financial commitments. Marriage, whether in rural or urban areas, Christian, or not calls for some expense. It is a common observation that among Ghanaian living overseas, a major factors the causes separation or divorce is finance, Afful-Broni (2016). In a situation where one partner is unemployed and depends totally on the other, the stability of the marriage may be threatened. Sometimes a couple's problem may stem from how and on what to spend the family income. If one partner feels money is habitually spent on unnecessary things, he or she may be worried about the marital union. When for example, the woman sees the man is spending most of the income on lotto, drinks and frivolous gifts to outsiders while the family suffers for lack of resources, children may be underfed and their basic needs are denied them. These situations bring about unnecessary hardships on the children and consequently the wife may decide to seek her fortune where there will be greater provision for children and herself, Afful- Broni (2016)

Cruelty and Violence

Afful-Broni (2016) also states that infliction of physical, psychological or emotional pain otherwise known as wife or husband abuse is also a factor that can lead to the breakdown of marriages. Wife and husband abuse sometimes arises as a result of drug abuse, uncontrolled anger, home mismanagement and disrespect. Studies have shown that a man who grew up in an abusive home is quite likely to perpetuate this neurotic behavior. It has also been found that if no intervention is sought, the abusive man's children will most likely follow, the abuse may not be only physical, but verbal that is the use of insulting and offensive language on partner which leads to the ruin of a marriage.

Early Marriage

One factor which could contribute to the instability of marriage in the society is the refusal or inability to set a minimum age for those who enter into it. Another cause could be the unqualified excitement that some parents may have over the courtship of their teenage or underage children. Once the parents are unable to caution or offer mature advice about the dangers in early marriage, it will be difficult to stop them from going ahead to marry once pregnancy results. It is documented that marriages resulting from premarital pregnancies can be less stable than planned marriages. Such people often marry a person they otherwise would not have seriously considered as a mate at all. Most often these girls are not matured enough either physically or psychological to cope with financial, emotional, social and psychological demands of marriage and raising of children. The lack of ability to withstand the stress and strains of parenthood can eventually lead to divorce.

Effects of Broken Homes on Education

Broken homes disrupt the child's sense of stability and self-identity, leading to emotional distress, low motivation, poor academic focus, absenteeism, and sometimes delinquency (Afful Broni 2016; Ausu Datta, 2013), First and foremost, in as much as both or either of partners may have a called for situation, they are the ones who are hit by its many negative repercussions. The effects of broken homes vary. Even though the couple themselves are the ones directly hit, the children are the ones who suffer most from these unfortunate effects. A break in the home shakes the very sense of self or the identity of the children in a marriage. It may even be said that in extreme cases of physical, emotional or psychological abuse, the departure of one member of the family fundamentally alters the structure and dynamics of the home. Even when such cases eventually turn out for the good of the rest of the family, it still requires a great deal of adjustment on the part of all involved especially the child and such adjustment can come at great cost.

Apart from quality or level of intelligence that the child inherits, parental socio-economic background is another factor that has great influence and should not be underestimated. At the basic education level where almost all the schools are day-school, the pupils spend a substantial part of the day at home. The ability of the child to progress academically will depend largely on the conditions prevailing in such home, and these can largely depend on the social economic status of the parents. Various studies have shown that generally, pupils from high socioeconomic background perform better than their counter parts whose parent have lower economic status (Kozol, 2006). In the nuclear family, it is usually the parents who make the expected determination to have a firm control on the child's educational processes. Yet even in such cases, divorce or separation can greatly interfere with the children's effective learning process in school. If as result of the absence of a parent the child has to take on extra responsibilities in the home, this will obviously have negative effect on his academic performance.

The phenomenon of broken home is a great obstacle to a child's ability or motivation to succeed academically. It may disturb him emotionally, having deprived him of valuable parental security within the family (AusuDatta, 2013). The child may experience an emotional block which in turn may interfere with his ability to demonstrate evidence of the intelligence which he/she actually possesses. When children are motivated, they are inspired to reach higher. Unfortunately, children from broken homes often lack adult encouragement. This lack in turn negatively affects them in more areas then the academic. Children from broken home are sometimes underfed and this affects their health. Since good health promotes learning children from broken homes are often at greater risks than those in healthy homes. Since a good number of broken homes in Ghana often experience poverty, a child from such a background is more like to suffer want for school materials such as books, pencils or uniforms. Related to this is the needless amount of emotional strain which not only the "burdened" parent suffers, but the children in such a situation as well. Undoubtedly, children from broken homes not only face financial struggles but emotional stress.

Concept of Academic Performance

Academic performance is measured through grades, test scores, and attendance, reflecting cognitive knowledge and broader competencies such as critical thinking and motivation. Academic performance can be defined as the outcome of a student's educational endeavors, measured by various criteria such as grades, test scores, and attendance (Henson, 2014). Academic performance is a crucial aspect of education that has been extensively studied in various fields. It refers to the level of achievement or success that students exhibit in their academic pursuits. The concept of academic performance has been defined and operationalized in various ways, and its significance extends beyond mere grades or scores.

Academic performance is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the various ways in which students demonstrate their learning, skills, and knowledge across different educational settings. Academic performance is traditionally measured through various quantitative metrics, including grades, test scores, and overall GPA. According to Biggs (2013), these measures provide a snapshot of a student's ability to absorb and apply knowledge within a specific curriculum. Grades are often used as an indicator of how well students have understood and retained course material, reflecting their performance on assignments, exams, and other evaluative tasks.

However, academic performance is not solely about grades. It also encompasses qualitative aspects such as critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in practical situations (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2016). These aspects of performance are essential for a comprehensive assessment of a student's capabilities and readiness for real-world challenges. For instance, a student who consistently performs well in discussions and practical applications but struggles with standardized testing may still exhibit high levels of academic competency.

Factors influencing academic performance include individual attributes, such as cognitive abilities and motivation, as well as external factors like socio-economic status, teaching quality, and educational resources (Jensen, 2019). Motivation, for instance, plays a critical role in academic achievement, with motivated students often demonstrating higher levels of engagement and persistence (Deci & Ryan, 2015). Socio-economic

factors can also impact performance by affecting access to resources and support systems, which are crucial for academic success.

Furthermore, the definition of academic performance has evolved with the growing emphasis on holistic education. Modern educational frameworks recognize the importance of non-cognitive skills such as teamwork, communication, and emotional intelligence, which contribute to a student's overall performance and future success (Heckman & Kautz, 2013). This broader perspective acknowledges that academic performance should reflect not only cognitive knowledge but also the ability to navigate and succeed in various life contexts.

Impact of Broken Homes

1. Psychological and Emotional Impact: One of the most profound effects of living in a broken home is the psychological and emotional distress experienced by children. According to Amato and Keith (2022), children from divorced families often face increased levels of anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems compared to their peers from intact families. This emotional turmoil can detract from a student's ability to concentrate and perform well academically. For instance, students experiencing high levels of stress may struggle with motivation and engagement in school, leading to poorer academic outcomes (Fomby & Cherlin, 2017).
2. Academic Performance and Achievement**:** The academic performance of students from broken homes can be adversely affected by several factors. Research has shown that children from divorced or separated families are more likely to have lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates than their peers from intact families (McLanahan & Sandefur, 2013). This may be due, in part, to the instability and disruptions in their lives, which can lead to inconsistent school attendance and difficulties in maintaining focus on academic tasks (Kelly & Emery, 2015).
3. Socioeconomic Factors: Socioeconomic status is another critical factor influencing the academic performance of students from broken homes. Family disruptions often lead to economic hardships due to the loss of a second income and the costs associated with legal proceedings and single parenting (Wallerstein & Kelly, 2019). Economic strain can limit access to educational resources such as tutoring, extracurricular activities, and supportive learning environments, which are crucial for academic success. Studies have demonstrated that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, often exacerbated by family breakdown, face significant barriers to educational attainment (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2014).
4. Parental Involvement and Support: The level of parental involvement and support also plays a critical role in shaping students' academic outcomes. In broken homes, parental involvement may be inconsistent, with one or both parents less available to engage in their child's education (Hetherington & Kelly, 2022). The lack of a stable support system can result in decreased academic performance, as students may not receive the necessary encouragement and assistance needed for their educational development. Furthermore, conflicting parenting styles and expectations between separated parents can add to the instability and confusion experienced by the child (Amato, 2014).
5. Resilience and Coping Mechanisms: It is important to acknowledge that not all students from broken homes experience detrimental effects on their academic performance. Resilience and coping mechanisms can mitigate the negative impacts. Children who develop strong coping skills and receive adequate support from educators and extended family members can often overcome the challenges posed by family disruption (Masten, 2021). Educational institutions that provide emotional and psychological support, alongside academic assistance, can play a significant role in helping these students succeed.

The Various Factors That Contribute To The Impact Of Broken Homes On Student's Academic Performance.

The impact of broken homes on students' academic performance is a complex issue influenced by a multitude of factors. Broken homes, characterized by parental separation, divorce, or other forms of family disruption, can affect students in various ways, ranging from psychological distress to socioeconomic challenges. The following contributes to the key factors contributing to the impact of broken homes on academic performance, drawing from recent research and theoretical perspectives.

1. Psychological and Emotional Distress: Psychological and emotional distress is one of the primary factors affecting students from broken homes. Research indicates that children experiencing family disruptions often face higher levels of anxiety, depression, and behavioural issues (Kelly & Emery, 2015). This emotional turmoil can interfere with a student's cognitive functions and concentration, leading to difficulties in academic performance. For example, emotional instability can reduce a student's ability to focus on schoolwork, complete assignments, and perform well in exams (Fomby & Cherlin, 2020). The psychological impact of family disruption often manifests as stress and emotional distress, which can detract from a student's academic engagement and achievement.

2. Socioeconomic Factors: Socioeconomic status plays a significant role in the academic performance of students from broken homes. Family disruptions frequently lead to economic hardship due to the loss of a second income and additional costs associated with legal proceedings and child rearing. Economic strain can limit access to educational resources such as tutoring, extracurricular activities, and a supportive learning environment, which are crucial for academic success. Recent studies highlight that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, exacerbated by family disruption, are more likely to experience academic challenges and lower educational attainment (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Economic instability can also impact the quality of housing and neighbourhood environments, further affecting educational outcomes.

3. Parental Involvement and Support: Parental involvement and support are critical to a child's academic success, and disruptions in family structure can lead to inconsistent or reduced parental engagement. In broken homes, parental involvement may be sporadic or fragmented, particularly if parents are separated or divorced and living apart (Amato & Keith, 2022). This lack of stable support can lead to decreased academic performance, as students may not receive the necessary encouragement and assistance needed for their educational development. Moreover, conflicting parenting styles and expectations between separated parents can create additional stress and confusion for the child, further impacting their academic performance (Harden & Sykes, 2023).

4. School Environment and Teacher Support: The school environment and the level of teacher support can also influence how students from broken homes perform academically. Schools that provide a supportive and understanding environment can help mitigate the negative effects of family disruption (Hughes & Johnson, 2021). Teachers who are aware of a student's home situation and offer additional support, such as counselling and academic assistance, can play a crucial role in helping students navigate their academic challenges. Positive relationships with teachers and school staff can provide a stable and supportive context for students, helping them to overcome difficulties associated with their family situation.

5. Social and Peer Relationships: Social and peer relationships are another factor that can influence the academic performance of students from broken homes. Peer relationships can provide emotional support and a sense of belonging, which are important for academic and personal development (Wang & Degol, 2019). However, students from broken homes may face difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships due to emotional distress or behavioral issues. Negative peer interactions or social isolation can further exacerbate academic challenges and affect a student's self-esteem and motivation.

6. Resilience and Coping Mechanism: Resilience and coping mechanisms can play a crucial role in mitigating the negative impact of broken homes on academic performance. Not all students from broken homes experience significant academic difficulties; some develop effective coping strategies and show remarkable resilience (Masten, 2020). Supportive interventions from schools, communities, and extended family can enhance a child's resilience, helping them to manage stress and maintain academic performance despite family disruptions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The research methods talk about the research design, the study area, the population, the sample and sampling procedures, the data collection instrument, the data collection procedure, and as well as the data processing and analysis.

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was employed to gather data on student experiences and perceptions regarding broken homes and academic performance. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), research design involves a framework or blueprint that specifies the type of data required, the methods for data collection and analysis, the time frame for conducting the study, and the overall structure of the research project. The descriptive survey was chosen because it can be used to provide a lot of information from quite a large sample of individuals.

The Strengths of the design includes: it is capable of collecting data from a large number of respondents; and it can be developed in less time as compared to other data collection methods. The weakness of the design also includes; the respondents may not feel encouraged to provide accurate honest answers; and the respondents may not also feel comfortable providing answers that present themselves in an unfavorable manner.

Study Area

The research was conducted in Cape Coast Metropolis, Central region of Ghana. The Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly was established as a municipality by L1 1373 in 1987. In February 2007, it was elevated to a Metropolitan status by L1 1927. In 2012, the metropolis was divided into two consistencies namely Cape Coast South Sub Metropolitan Assembly and Cape Coast North Sub Metropolitan Assembly. The Cape Coast Metropolis is located along the Coast of Ghana which is in Central Region of Ghana. This area includes both urban and rural settings, with various public and private basic schools. Some of the main economic activities in Cape Coast include tourism, fishing and seafood processing, and agriculture (cocoa, coffee, rubber, and oil palm.

Population Of The Study

The population consisted of 179 JHS learners at the University JHS. A simple random sampling technique selected 89 respondents to participate. The population of the study refers to the group of individuals, animals, or objects that are being examined or measured to answer the research question. In the context of a study, the population is typically defined as a specific group of individuals that share certain characteristics or attributes, such as age, sex, location, or profession (Kumar et al., 2019). The population for the study consists of the students at the University Junior High School, Cape Coast.

Table 1 indicates the respective classes of the Junior High School level.

Table 1: Population of the Study

Population	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Form 1	55	20	75
Form 2	37	25	62
Form 3	27	15	42
Total			179

Source: Field Data, 2024

Sample And Sampling Technique

According to Malhotra, Birks, and Wills (2013), sampling is the process of selecting a representative few or units from a larger group or population, which is used as a basis for estimating certain characteristics or elements about the group or population. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) advanced that sampling can broadly be categorized into two main designs, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Whereas probability sampling design permits each element of the population to have a known and non-zero chance of

being selected to be included in the sample, non-probability sampling design does not allow each of the elements of the population to have a known chance of being selected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The simple random technique of probability sampling was adopted for this study. This technique was selected because it grants unbiasedness in the selection of any of the study units. To ensure that there were no biases in the random sampling, the Microsoft Excel random number generation tool was utilized to generate a specified set of numbers for the selection of respondents randomly. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the pupil respondents. Simple random sampling is a probability sampling procedure that gives every element in the target population and each possible sample of a given size an equal chance of being selected. This type of sampling gave all the pupils an equal chance of being selected.

Table 2: Sample

Population	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Form 1	20	15	35
Form 2	16	6	22
Form 3	18	14	32
Total			89

Source: Field Data, 2024

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires were used to gather information for the study. For this study, a self-developed questionnaire was the instrument that was adopted for the study. Both open and close-ended questions were employed in the study. According to Dudovskiy (2017), the advantages of questionnaires include increased speed of data collection, low or no cost requirements, and higher levels of objectivity compared to many alternative methods of primary data collection. However, a problem with the questionnaire is that respondents may contrive answers due to social desirability and most people would want to present a positive image of themselves and so may lie or bend the truth to look good (Sloan, 2013). Questionnaires have certain disadvantages as well, such as the selection of random answer choices by respondents without properly reading the question and the absence of the possibility for researchers to express their additional thoughts about the matter due to the absence of a relevant question.

Validity and Reliability

Validity was ensured through expert review and pretesting; reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha coefficient analyzed with SPSS version 25. According to Johnson (2018), Cronbach's alpha is commonly used to measure of internal consistency reliability. The questionnaire items will be analyzed using SPSS version 25.

Data Collection Procedures

Permissions were secured from educational authorities and school heads. Questionnaires were administered with A form from class teachers for clarity.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data that was collected from the selected public schools (Junior High Schools) were processed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, v.25). Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyzed the questionnaires and also all the results were correlated according to the research questions. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyzed the family background information and academic performance impact of the respondents because it is suitable for meaningful interpretation, conclusion, and recommendation of the data. All the research questions from question one to four were analysed using frequency counts and

percentages. The respondents (teachers) responded to the statement using a 4-Likert scale including Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study examines how broken homes affect the academic performance of students of Cape Coast Metropolis. This chapter presents the analysis of data and discussion of data concerning the respondents' background and research questions. Frequency counts and percentages were used for the analysis of the data from the questionnaire. The results and discussion were presented according to the order of the research objectives of the study to facilitate easy understanding.

Demographic Information of Respondents

This part presented the results on the respondents' background information which included their sex, and age. The results were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Table 3 shows the summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondent (students)

Variable	Subscale	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
Sex			
	Male	54	61.0
	Female	35	39.0
Age (in years)			
	Below 13years	35	39.0
	14-15years	44	49.0
	16-20years	10	11.0
		89	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 3 shows the total number of respondents (JHS Students) to their respective demographic characteristics. With the sex distribution, it was in two categories including male and female. Here, the findings indicated that the majority of students who took part in the study were males representing 54 (61.0%) while females were 35 (39.0%).

For the age distribution of the respondents, it was categories into four aspects namely, below 13 years, 14-15 years, and 16-20 years. Out of 89 respondents, the majority of the respondents (Students) ranged from 14-15years representing 44 (49.0%), 35 (39.0%) ranged from below 13 years, and from 16-20 years had 10-11 years.

Presentation and Discussion of Main Results

This part of the study presents the main findings of the study. The results are organized and discussed following the research questions. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentage were used to analysis the data.

The Various Types of Broken Homes Among the Junior High School Students at Cape Coast Metropolis

Research question one sought to find out the various types of broken homes among the Junior High School students. The items were analyzed using the frequency counts and percentages. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Type of Broken Homes among the Junior High School Students

No.		Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	1	My parents are divorced or separated.	10(11.2%)	47(52.8%)	20(22.5%)	12(13.5%)
2.	2	I live with both of my biological parents.	40(49.9%)	17(19.1%)	26(29.2%)	6(6.7%)
3.	3	I live with a single parent.	20(22.5)	8(9.0%)	30(33.7%)	31(34.9%)
4.	4	I live with a guardian (e.g., relative, family friend).	12(13.5%)	58(65.2%)	15(16.9%)	4(4.5%)
5.	5	I frequently move between different households.	31(34.8%)	21(23.6%)	15(23.6%)	22(24.7%)

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 4 indicates the various types of the broken homes among students. It was observed from Table 4 that most of the respondents agreed with the statement "My parents are divorced or separated" which is manifested with 47(52.8%). The results show that the students strongly agreed with the statement that "I live with both of my biological parents." which is manifested with this 40(49.9%).

Also, the result shows that the respondents (students) strongly disagreed with the statement that "I live with a single parent" which is evident with these values 31(34.9%). Then again, the results also indicated that the respondents (students) agreed with the statement that "I live with a guardian (e.g., relative, family friend)" which is evident with this 58(65.2%). In conclusion, the result shows that the respondents (students) strongly disagreed with the statement that "I frequently move between different households." which is evident with these values 31(34.8%).

DISCUSSION

The findings align with existing literature that broken homes contribute to emotional and financial stress, negatively impacting academic performance (Thompson & Haskins, 2014; Jeynes, 2013). Parental involvement emerges as a critical mitigating factor. The lack of perceived school supports suggests a gap in resource allocation and counselling services. Frequent household transitions and guardianship arrangements disrupts the stability important for learning.

The findings also imply that divorced or separated of parent's s one of the type of broken homes. This coincides with the statement that divorced or separated parents represent one of the most common types of broken homes, where the family structure is disrupted due to the dissolution of the marital relationship. This disruption can significantly impact children, leading to various psychological and social consequences (Amato, 2000). It was again revealed that students living with their biological parents is another aspect of broken homes influence. Living with both biological parents is often considered a stable family structure, which has been associated with positive developmental outcomes for children, including better academic achievement and emotional well-being. The finding of the study revealed that single parenting is one of the types of broken homes. This finding confirm with the study by Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan (2013), that single parenting is one of the types of broken homes, often resulting in challenges such as financial instability, emotional stress, and reduced parental involvement, which can affect child development. The finding of the study also revealed that guardians are type of broken homes. This arrangement can result from various circumstances, such as

parental absence due to death, incarceration, or abandonment, which can lead to similar emotional and developmental challenges as those seen in other broken home types (Edwards, 2016). Lastly, the study conclude that some students frequently move between different households and it is another type of broken homes. This frequent relocation can disrupt a child's sense of stability and continuity, potentially affecting their academic performance and emotional well-being.

The occurrences of broken homes among students at Cape Coast Metropolis and its influence on the academic performance of learners

Research question two sought to investigate the occurrences of broken homes among students and how its influence on academic performance of learners. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyse the items. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The occurrences of broken homes among students at Cape Coast Metropolis and its influence on the academic performance of learners

No.		Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	1	My home situation affects my ability to focus on my studies.	41(46.1%)	23(25.8%)	13(14.6%)	12(13.5%
2.	2	I often miss school due to family-related issues.	20(22.5%)	13(14.6%)	37(41.6%)	19(21.3%)
3.	3	My academic performance has declined since my family situation changed.	51(57.3%)	8(9.0%)	14(15.7%)	16(18.0%)
4.	4	I struggle to complete my homework because of challenges at home.	33(37.1%)	42(47.2%)	10(11.2%)	4(4.5%)
5.	5	I feel supported by my family in my education despite our circumstances.	47(52.8%)	18(20.2%)	8(9.0%)	16(18.0%)
6.	6	I receive help from my family or guardians with schoolwork when needed.	34(38.2%)	43(48.3%)	10(11.2%)	2(2.2%)

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 5 indicates the occurrences of broken homes among students at Cape Coast Metropolis and its influence on the academic performance of learners. It was observed from Table 5 that most of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "My home situation affects my ability to focus on my studies" which is manifested with 41(46.1%). The results show that the students disagreed with the statement that "I often miss school due to family-related issues" which is manifested with this 37(41.6%). The result shows that the respondents (students) strongly agreed with the statement that "My academic performance has declined since my family situation changed" which is evident with these values 51(57.3%).

Also, the result shows that the respondents (students) agreed with the statement that "I struggle to complete my homework because of challenges at home" which is evident with these values 42(47.2%). Then again, the results also indicated that the respondents (students) strongly agreed with the statement that "I feel supported by my family in my education despite our circumstances" which is evident with this 47(52.8%). In conclusion, the result shows that the respondents (students) strongly disagreed with the statement that "I receive help from my family or guardians with schoolwork when needed" which is evident with these values 43(48.3%).

DISCUSSION

From Table 5 above, the finding of the study indicates that home situation affects the ability to focus on studies from the students. Factors such as instability, lack of support, and emotional stress in the home environment can hinder academic performance and concentration (Thompson & Haskins, 2014)." It was again revealed that most of the students miss school due to family-related issues. For instance, parental conflict, financial instability, or caregiving responsibilities, which can disrupt their education and contribute to absenteeism. It was revealed that academic performance has declined since family situation changed. This decline is often linked to increased stress, emotional distress, and a lack of stable support systems that negatively impact students' ability to focus and succeed academically (Jeynes, 2013). The study also revealed that some students struggle to complete their homework because of challenges at home. Homework is an essential part of a student's educational experience, serving as a means to reinforce learning, develop skills, and prepare for future assessments. Many students reported that their homes were not equipped with the necessary resources, such as computers, internet connectivity, or quiet spaces, to facilitate effective learning (Ladson-Billings, 2014). The study also imply that some of the students feel supported by their family in their education despite our circumstances.

According to a study by Hanushek and Wößmann (2015), students who receive support from their families are more likely to achieve academic success. The study found that family support can have a positive effect on students' academic outcomes, even when controlling for other factors such as socioeconomic status and school quality. Lastly, the study revealed that some students receive help from their family or guardians with schoolwork when needed. This support can be crucial in helping them navigate academic challenges and improve their understanding of school subjects. Family involvement in homework offers students not only academic guidance but also emotional support, which can foster a positive attitude toward learning.

The Specific Factors That Contribute to the Impact of Broken Homes on Academic Performance

Research question three (3) sought to examine the specific factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on academic performance. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: The specific factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on academic performance.

No.		Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	1	My parent(s) are involved in my academic life (e.g., attending meetings, helping with homework).	66 (74.2%)	14 (15.7%)	6 (6.7%)	3 (3.4%)
2.	2	I often worry about financial problems at home, which distracts me from studying.	28 (31.5%)	26 (29.2%)	17 (19.1%)	18 (20.2%)
3.	3	Emotional distress from my home situation affects my concentration in class.	18 (20.2%)	56 (62.9%)	9 (10.1%)	6 (6.7%)
4.	4	I have difficulty sleeping due to worries about my family, which affects my school performance.	10 (11.3%)	18 (20.2%)	57 (64.0%)	4 (4.5%)
5.	5	I often feel isolated from my classmates because of my home situation.	13 (14.5%)	18 (20.2%)	47 (52.8%)	11 (12.4%)
6.	6	The school provides resources (e.g., after-school programs, tutoring) to help students from broken homes succeed academically.	66 (74.2%)	14 (15.7%)	7 (7.9%)	2 (2.2%)

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 6 indicates the specific factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on academic performance. It was observed from Table 5 that most of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "My parent(s) are involved in my academic life (e.g., attending meetings, helping with homework)" which is manifested with 66(74.2%). The results show that the students strongly agreed with the statement that "I often worry about financial problems at home, which distracts me from studying" which is manifested with this 28(31.5%). The result shows that the respondents (students) agreed with the statement that "Emotional distress from my home situation affects my concentration in class" which is evident with these values 56(62.9%).

Also, the result shows that the respondents (students) disagreed with the statement that "I have difficulty sleeping due to worries about my family, which affects my school performance" which is evident with these values 57(64.0%|). Then again, the results also indicated that the respondents (students) disagreed with the statement that "I often feel isolated from my classmates because of my home situation" which is evident with this 47(52.8%). In conclusion, the result shows that the respondents (students) strongly disagreed with the statement that "The school provides resources (e.g., after-school programs, tutoring) to help students from broken homes succeed academically." which is evident with these values 66(74.2%).

DISCUSSION

Table 6 indicates the finding of the study that the parent(s) are involved in their children's academic life (e.g., attending meetings, helping with homework). Parental involvement in a student's academic life, including attending meetings and helping with homework, has been shown to have significant positive effects on a student's academic success. Research highlights that when parents are actively engaged in their children's education, students often experience better academic outcomes, such as higher grades, better attendance, and increased motivation to learn. It was revealed that some students often worry about financial problems at home, which distracts me from studying. Financial stress in a household can create an environment of uncertainty and anxiety, which may impact a student's ability to concentrate on schoolwork. It was again revealed that emotional distress from the home situation affects my concentration in class.

Research shows that emotional distress impairs cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and problem-solving, making it difficult for students to focus on lessons and retain information (Raver, 2013). It was revealed the findings that some students have difficulty sleeping due to worries about my family, which affects my school performance. Experiencing difficulty sleeping due to worries about family issues can significantly impact a student's school performance. Sleep is crucial for cognitive functioning, memory consolidation, and emotional regulation, all of which are essential for effective learning and academic success. The study imply that some students often feel isolated from their classmates because of their home situation.

Research indicates that students who experience family difficulties, such as financial problems, divorce, or other stressors, may feel different from their classmates, which can result in social withdrawal and difficulty forming or maintaining friendships (Qualter et al., 2017). Lastly, it was revealed that school provides resources (e.g., after-school programs, tutoring) to help students from broken homes succeed academically. Schools often provide various resources, such as after-school programs and tutoring, to help students from broken homes succeed academically. These resources are designed to offer both academic support and emotional stability, providing students with additional opportunities to learn and thrive despite challenges they may face at home.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter covers the summary of the findings of the study. It further highlights issues such as conclusions, recommendations, and areas for further research. The recommendations are based on key findings and major conclusions arising from the study.

Summary

This study investigated how broken homes influence the academic performance of JHS students of Cape Coast Metropolis. Diverse broken home types were identified, and their prevalence was notable. Students reported academic challenges linked to home instability, emotional distress, and financial difficulties. Parental support positively influenced outcomes, whereas school-based resources were perceived as insufficient.

The study was guided by the following questions;

1. What are the various types of broken homes among the Junior High School students at Cape Coast Metropolis?
2. What are the occurrences of broken homes among students at Cape Coast Metropolis and its influence on the academic performance of learners?
3. What are the specific factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on academic performance?

Key Findings

The research revealed some findings concerning the topic under study about the examination of how broken homes affect the academic performance of students of Cape Coast Metropolis. Based on the analysis of the study, the following findings were noted

1. From research question one, it emerged that there are various types of broken homes among the Junior High School students at Cape Coast Metropolis. However, it was revealed that most of the respondents (students) representing 90% strongly agreed that their various types of broken homes among students in Junior High School.
2. From research question two, it was revealed that there are occurrences of broken homes among students at Cape Coast Metropolis and its influence on the academic performance of learners. Most of the students (70%) in the study strongly agreed that there are occurrences of broken homes that can influence the academic performance of the Junior High School students.
3. Lastly, the third research question sought to investigate the specific factors that contribute to the impact of broken homes on academic performance. It was revealed from the study that most of the students strongly agreed to the fact that there are some specific factors that contribute to the influence of broken homes on the academic performance of the students.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Based on the findings of the study as revealed in the key findings, the following conclusion are made.
2. From the findings, it can be concluded various broken homes structures affect students' academic performance, primarily by generating emotional and economic stress.
3. The prevalence of broken homes in Cape Coast Metropolis is significant and correlates with academic decline.
4. Lastly, it can be also concluded that there are various factors that influence or impact students' academic performance including emotional distress, parental involvement, financial problem, and many others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations have been made for policy and practice.

1. To understand the various types of broken homes among students, Ghana Education Service should conduct surveys and interviews with students, parents, and teachers on their concern about broken homes.
2. Teachers should gather data on how frequently students come from broken homes and the academic patterns associated with these circumstances.

3. Stakeholders should collaborate with school counsellors and psychologists to evaluate the emotional and social support needs of students. Explore how factors like peer relationships, self-esteem, and mental health influence academic performance.
4. Educational policy should prioritize resource allocation for after-school tutoring and mentorship programs targeting vulnerable students.
5. Programs promoting parental engagement in students' education should be developed and encouraged.

Area For Further Study

The following areas are recommended for further studies: the further study should consider a larger sample size that will include more schools and teachers to ensure adequate representation and generalization of research findings, employ mixed methods combining qualitative interviews and quantitative measures to capture richer insights, explore the influence of socioeconomic status, teacher support, and students' coping strategies on academic resilience in broken home contexts, longitudinal studies could evaluate the efficacy of interventions over time, and further research should consider the length of the study thus if the study occurs for more than three weeks, we anticipate that some people will be too familiar with the strategies we used and they would not be effective.

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