

**FAMILY TYPE AND SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN
EMOHUA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE.**

¹Obindah, Fortune (PhD) and ²Gloria Matthews (PhD)

**^{1&2}Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of
Education. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State,
Nigeria**

Email: obindahfortune2018@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Personal experience shows an increase in the cases of maladjusted students in the secondary school especially in areas of truancy, examination malpractice, school drop-out, fighting and other school violence and offences. This phenomenon seems to have some direct connection and link with the kind of family background or family structure that these students come from hence, this study is to explore the influence of family structure on school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etche Local Government Area. The design used in this study is causal-comparative or what may be referred to as ex-post-facto design. The population for the study was made up of 2,362 primary four pupils in the 48 public primary schools in Etche Local Government Area in Rivers State. The sample size for the study is 236 primary four pupils representing 10% of the entire population. Two instruments were used for study namely: Home Environmental Inventory (H.E.I). The Cronbach Alpha technique was used in determining the internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. The data collected by administering the research instruments was analyzed in line with research questions and hypotheses. The researcher used mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The hypotheses was answered using t-test. The result of the hypotheses tested reveal that the various family types include separated/intact, polygamous/monogamous families. This shows that family structure does not really have any significant influence on the school adjustment of pupils in Etche local Government Area. Based on the result it was recommended that parents should make more efforts to show interest in their children by creating a conducive environmental for study and academic work.

Keywords: Family, Maladjustment, School, Maladjusted Students

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school children struggle to acclimatize to their surroundings, whether at home or at school. For instance, choices on whether to attend courses or not, how to handle the demands of classmates and the classroom environment, whether to remain in school or drop out, and other issues are all adjustments. An individual's response to the expectations and constraints placed on them by their social environment is seen as adjustment. In order for an organism to adapt to or survive a change in its environment, that organism must also change.

The relationship between a person and his environment is called adjustment. The facts of the event and one's own traits both affect how one adapts in a given scenario (Arkoff in Mangal, 2007). In other words, adjustment involves the interaction of both personal and environmental elements. A person is said to be adjusted if they can deal with themselves and their surroundings.

When both the individual's wants and the environment's claims are completely met, the situation is said to be in adjustment. If not, the organism in such an environment will not function properly either among itself or inside it (Haars, 1980). According to the study, making adjustments is how people respond to shifting circumstances. An person does not exist in a vacuum, which explains why. They are surrounded by other people daily. Knowing that change is the one constant in life, events, circumstances, and surroundings all undergo change, which has an equal and opposite effect on an individual's life. To live in life, one must always adapt to changing circumstances.

Therefore, school adjustment refers to a student's capacity to successfully manage the internal and external demands and pressures that the school environment places on him, such as attending classes, paying attention in subject lessons, completing assignments, refraining from cheating on exams, earning good grades and receiving high marks, and refraining from dropping out of school. A student's adjustment to school may be social, intellectual, emotional, or psychological. A kid who is emotionally well-adjusted is in touch with his feelings, has a stable emotion, and does not display behaviours like anxiety, fighting, or violence. He also has strong self-esteem and has internalised control over his emotions.

Psychologically, pupils who are in good mental health have excellent self-concept. They have excellent self- and other-concepts. They are able to favourably affect their surroundings and are skilled at handling disappointments and losses. They are renowned for their intellectual prowess as well. If a pupil does not display withdrawing or other anti-social behaviours, he is socially well adjusted. On the other hand, school adjustment problems could manifest in the form of maladaptive behaviours such as fighting, truancy, bullying, examination malpractice, school violence, cultism, school drop-outs, to mention but a few. In the course of teaching, the researcher observed that students exhibit different adaptive or maladaptive behaviours, as earlier cited. These adaptive (adjustive) or maladaptive (maladjusted) behaviours appear to have a link or connection with the families they come from, and by implication, the family structure. The world as we know is made up of families. A family is a bio-social group (Oтите and Ogionwo in Adani 2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Families vary in sizes and compositions, in their expectations of parents and children's behaviour, in personality and coping strategies of their members (Woellet, 1991). Poor parent-child relationship which may be seen in broken or disturbed families has been related to several school adjustment problems (Coyne, 1976; Feldman and Oxford, 1980). Such poor parent-child relationship may also be seen in families that are separated, divorced or single. Hetherington (1993), and Steinberg (1987), believe that children whose parents have experienced divorce or separation may have signs of social, psychological, cognitive and school adjustment problems, hence may be susceptible to the effects of anti-social peer pressure and may engage in higher rates of deviant behaviours. Therefore, divorce or separation of parents, even if it is amicable, tears apart the fundamental unit of the society, and plays an important role in the development of delinquent behaviours of which school maladjustment is one of them. But with over twenty years of these studies cited, would the result be same? Only the present study will tell. Hence, the extent to which family structure or type influences school adjustment of secondary school students is still in doubt and requires very urgent attention.

According to Jean (2010) school adjustment refers to the effort made by an individual to cope with the standard, values, needs, norms of a society in order to be accepted. It involves conformity to societal direct and indirect demands so that one can fit as best as one can to societal expectations. Plato stated that 'man is a social animal', as such we live in a society where we form opinion about others and others hold opinion about us.

Obinna (2015) opined that school adjustment is the attainment of balance in social relationships aided by the appropriate application of social skill. A different way to think about adjustment is as a process through which teenagers learn to overcome and conquer life's difficulties (Steinberg, 2000).

According to Belkin (2015), the rise in single paternity is due to an increase in non-marital births and divorce rates since 2002, both of which have boosted the number of single parents of both sexes. Peer research studies on the factors influencing the rise in single fatherhood in the United States tend to concur with O'Brien's (2013) assertion that it is also a reflection of the evolving role of dads in general.

A rising divorce rate over the past 50 years, together with an increase in the number of parents who choose not to wed, and the expanding acceptability of dads as the major "care providers,"

according to Caroline Kitchener, are among factors that have contributed to the growth of the single dad. To her, "this picture of fathers left alone with children sparked an anti-suffrage campaign a century ago," She also credited "the U.S. Judicial system and its suffocating requirements for child custody proceedings" for the growth of lone dads in the US, which is almost universal. The American judicial system used to virtually invariably make decisions "in the best interest of the kid" until lately (slang for, in favour of the mother).

Furthermore, is the fact that more men are beginning to think this is "an irrefutable reality" that they can make a difference in their children's life make them better parents, according to Kitchener (2014)? Kitchener (2014) is prone to dissent. She claims that because males typically lack parental training, they are more readily discouraged than lone mothers. Women frequently learn to tuck their dolls into bed at night as they grow up, while young males are rarely taught to care for others. Due to their lack of experience, solitary fathers may start to question their suitability for the job (p58).

According to Edet (2007), adjustment issues, such as shyness, anxiety, and other restrained behavior, are substantially more common among children who have lost a parent through death or divorce. Children who have lost a parent through divorce have much greater behavioral issues. According to the aforementioned study, children from married and widowed households had a considerably lower risk of delinquency than those from divorced homes.

According to Denga and Denga (2007), "women whose husbands mistreated them, by beating and driving them from their matrimonial homes... usually end up in their mother's abode, because if children of the battered mother take sides with her, the father vehemently drives them away with their mother. So far as the man does not receive support from the children even when he is wrong, they are to face rejection, neglect, and abandonment." They claim that this tendency "brings immense suffering on kids and their moms, who may not be financially sound but have having to take care of the whole training of the kids."

Children who are raised by single parents—whether they are male or female—experience different affects. The explanation given by Denga and Denga (2007) is that as children imitate what they witness firsthand as they get older, children of single parents who experience divorce or separation would have psychological and social repercussions. Long-term, a child's behavior, which affects his or her self-concept and social development, is "the product of the environment." Sometimes the kid is negatively impacted by the current social, economic, and cultural conditions, which causes them to turn from good to bad. (P. 84, Denga & Denga, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Personal experience shows an increase in the cases of maladjusted students in the secondary school especially in areas of truancy, examination malpractice, school drop-out, fighting and other school violence and offences. Parents, teachers and the general public are all worried about this ugly trend. This phenomenon seems to have some direct connection and link with the kind of family background or family structure that these students come from. These family structure or types could be single, dual, monogamous, polygamous, nuclear or extended as the case may be. It could also be „divorced“, „separated“ or „intact“ family structures. With the prevalence of family crisis symptomized by an increasing divorce rate, general marital turmoil, temporal and perennial separation and domestic violence, sociologists, family welfare units and the entire society now see it as an issue of great concern as children from these homes may suffer setbacks by way of being maladjusted in school. Infact, researchers and counsellors are faced with the task, and challenged with the responsibility of exploring the extent to which these different family structure influence students adjustment in schools. It is against this background that the study asks, how does family structure influence school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etch Local Government Area.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of family structure on school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etche Local Government Area. Specifically, the study will seek to find out the following:

1. To determine the influence of divorced or separated family/intact on sc school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etch Local Government Area?
2. To ascertain the influence has monogamous/polygamous on school adjustment of primary school pupils Etch Local Government Area?

Research Question

1. What is the influence of divorced or separated family/intact on school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etche Local Government Area?
2. What influence has monogamous/polygamous on school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etch Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant mean difference between the school adjustment of pupils from divorced homes and those from intact homes.

H₀₂: There is no significant mean difference in the school adjustment of pupils from monogamous and polygamous families.

METHODOLOGY

The design used in this study is causal-comparative or what may be referred to as ex-post-facto design. The population for the study was made up of 2,362 primary four pupils in the 48 public primary schools in Etche Local Government Area in Rivers State (UBE zonal office Etche, 2022). The sample size for the study is 236 primary four pupils representing 10% of the entire population. The simple random sampling technique was used in the study which implies that each element has independent chance of being included in the sample. Two instruments were used for study namely: Home Environmental Inventory (H.E.I) adapted after Ipaye (1983) and Adjustment Problem Inventory (A.P.I) patterned after Ikeme (1989). The two instruments were developed by carefully and critically identifying possible home environmental and family structure factors that could constitute adjustment problems for secondary school adolescents. The first instrument has eight items and the second has thirty-two, making a total of forty items. On Home Environmental Inventory, the students need only indicate or tick (✓) the type of family structure they come from. Copies of the Home Environmental Inventory (H.E.I.) and Adjustment Problem Inventory (A.P.I.) questionnaires were sent to four experts in Guidance and Counselling, and Measurement and Evaluation for face validation, all from the Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni.

The Cronbach Alpha technique was used in determining the internal consistency reliability co-efficient of the Home Environmental and Adjustment Problem Inventory questionnaires. 20 copies of these were administered to 20 SS II students in Etche Local Government Area. The data generated through trial testing of instruments were used to compute the coefficient internal consistency. The reliability co-efficient of 0.84 was obtained. The researcher with the help of the class teacher distributed the questionnaires in the schools and collected same from respondents. This was done during class hours when the pupils were seated in the school hall with their teachers. To minimize mistakes on how to fill the questionnaires, pupils were shown how to respond to the questionnaires. According to the study questions and hypotheses, the information gathered by using the research instruments was assessed. To respond to study questions, the researcher utilised the mean and standard deviation. The t-test was used to evaluate the hypothesis.

RESULT AND FINDINGS

Research Question: What is the influence of divorced or separated family/intact on school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etche Local Government Area?

Table 1: Mean distribution of school adjustment of respondents on the basis of the separated and intact family structures.

S/N	Cluster	Intact Family (n= 120)		Separated Family (n= 116)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Academic	2.6064	0.19012	2.2655	.80563
2	Emotional	2.59875	0.17176	2.5000	.89926
3	Social	2.4130	0.36247	2.2930	.96205
4	Psychological	2.720	0.2638	2.6943	.81437
	Grand mean	2.5844	0.0871	2.4382	0.20026

Result of data in Table 4 shows that school adjustment of students depends on whether they are from separated or intact family. Those from separated family with 2.43 tend to show less adjustment than those from intact family structure with mean score of 2.58.

Research Question 2: What influence has monogamous/polygamous on school adjustment of primary school pupils in Etch Local Government Area?

Table 2: Mean distribution of school adjustment of respondents on the basis of the monogamous and polygamous nature of family structure

S/N	Cluster	Polygamous (n= 136)		monogamous (n= 100)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Academic	2.3582	0.85609	2.3882	.073616
2	Emotional	2.4300	1.05902	2.4600	0.79015
3	Social	2.2800	1.02970	2.2860	0.93507
4	Psychological	2.7929	0.64691	2.7829	0.64691
	Grand mean	2.4628	0.22203	2.4793	0.21464

Result of the data in table 2 shows that school adjustment of students does not depend on whether they are from monogamous or polygamous family structures. This is seen in the cluster mean of the various responses from the students which has a cluster mean of 2.46 and 2.48 for monogamous and polygamous families respectively, which his less than the criterion mean score of 2.5.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

H_{01} : There is no significant mean difference between the school adjustment of pupils from divorced homes and those from intact homes.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the difference between the means of separated and intact families structure on school adjustment of the pupils

	Family structure	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	Significance of t-value	Remark
1	Divorced family	2.4382	0.20026	1.01	1	0.276	Not
2	Intact family	2.5844	0.0871				Significant

The Table 3 reveal that the t-critical of 0.276 against t-calculated of 1.01, at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no significant influence of separated or intact family structure on school adjustment of pupils from divorced homes and those from intact homes.

H₀₂: There is no significant mean difference in the school adjustment of pupils from monogamous and polygamous families.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of test of significant influence of Polygamous and Monogamous Families types on school adjustment of the pupils

	Family structure	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	Significance of t-value	Remark
1	Polygamous	2.4628	0.22203	0.090	1	0.928	Not
2	Monogamous	2.4793	0.21464				Significant

At a significance threshold of 0.05, Table 7 shows a t-value of 0.09 as opposed to a t-critical of 0.928. The null hypothesis was retained, demonstrating that neither monogamous nor polygamous home structure significantly affects secondary school kids' school adjustment.

Discussion of Findings

The study's conclusions show that a student's ability to transition to school relies on whether their family is intact or not. In other words, the family structure of secondary school pupils is significantly impacted by separation. This result is consistent with Aneke's (2004) research on the impact of divorced families on young people's sexual behaviour. The findings of the study reveal that sexual practices were more rampant in divorced and separated homes. This is also in agreement with the findings of Olu-Silas (2007) who found that there was a significant influence of divorced home on sexual abuse as against those from intact families. On intact families, the findings of this study reveal that marital status of parents with respect to their intactness has little or no influence on students adjustment in school. This findings agrees with that of Aneke (2002) which was carried out to ascertain the influence of parental marital 67 status on adolescents' sexuality. The researcher found that there was no significant influence of parental marital status on adolescents' sexuality. The findings on the monogamous or polygamous family shows that whether a student is from monogamous or polygamous family has little or no influence on his school adjustment. This implies that school adjustment is not a function of the number of wives a student's father has. This finding is in agreement with the findings of the study carried out by Izibefien (2007) where he found that there was no significant relationship between family stability and adolescents' behaviour problems. Again, this finding is not in consonance with the result of the study carried out by Eze and Agulanna (2004) where they found that there was a relationship between family structure and conduct disorder among Nigerian secondary school students.

CONCLUSION

The result of the hypotheses tested reveal that the various family structures include separated/intact, polygamous/monogamous families. This shows that family structures does not really have any significant influence on the school adjustment of pupils in Etche local Government Area.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Parents should make more efforts to show interest in their children by creating a conducive environmental for study and academic work.

2. Parents should also ensure that their children receive proper home training, encouragement and parental care. This will help the child to adjust into the academic setting without difficulties.
3. School authorities and teachers should make effort to provide conducive learning environment for the adolescents. Such a situation will enable the child to settle down or make proper adjustments.
4. There is need for a functional guidance and counselling unit for the various schools in Etche local government area. This will help guide the students to develop their character as well as their academic life.

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