

## **INFLUENCE OF FAMILY STRUCTURES AND PARENTING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NG'OMBENI-WAA ZONE, KWALE COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Family structures have changed tremendously over the last 50 years, several variations on the intact nuclear family which was regarded highly by the society as being the ideal family in which to bring up children, have been created. For instance, today we have the single parent family, the extended family, childless family, step families and grandparent families. Some of these families are as a result of the rising cases of divorce and separation, yet the family is the most important social structure that provides social and economic security to its members especially children. The objectives were: to examine the influence of broken family structure on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools, to establish the influence of nuclear family structures on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in and to find out the nature of parental involvement in the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Ng'ombeni Zone. The study employed a descriptive survey design that utilized both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The sample population included 300 pupils, 32 teachers, 32 head teachers, and 1 Quality Assurance and Standards Officer from Ng'ombeni Waa Zone, in Kwale County. The study research instruments for collecting information include structured questionnaires and interview schedules.

Reliability of instruments was established using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Data analysis were done using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Qualitative data were analyzed on the basis of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study. The findings established that pupils from single-parent households or those experiencing family disruptions such as divorce or separation tend to exhibit lower academic achievement. The study concludes that pupils from broken family structures often face more challenges in their academic performance compared to those from intact families. The emotional and psychological stress associated with broken families can adversely affect children's focus, behavior, and overall academic achievement. The study recommends that Ministry of Education should implement robust counseling services within schools to provide necessary emotional and psychological support for pupils from broken families. These programs may help mitigate the negative impacts on academic performance by offering a stable and supportive environment.

**Keywords:** Broken Family Structure, Nuclear Family Structure and Academic Performance of Pupils.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Traditionally, the nuclear family was deemed an ideal family structure and held in high esteem by the society, divorce and separation was unheard of, but today, things have transformed as many men and women are getting empowered. Therefore, the nuclear family is believed to provide stability, opportunities, strength and financial ease from two parents. According to 2010 U.S. Census data, nuclear family is threatened due to divorce and separation. Consequently, many family structures have emerged for example, the single parent family, childless family and the grand parent family.

According to Meleen (2019), a family can be nuclear, extended, step/blended, single parent, adopted and foster. The academic performance of a child mainly depends on the type of family structure that the child belongs to. The role played by parents is very crucial in the academic outcome of their children.

A study conducted in America by United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2011) posited that family structure type has an effect on academic success of children. Moreover, the kind of family structure to a greater extent determines outcomes such as: graduation rate, high school dropout rate and age at first pregnancy. Similarly, studies comparing the prevalence of family setting on academic attainment in United States and Sweden showed that in both countries, children from homes where parents were separated did not perform well. It has also been realized that children from these families which were once nuclear and broke due to divorce or separation, earn lower grades than their peers from stable homes (Burbelwa, 2014).

In Korea, Lee and Chung (2004) established that marital relationship from which Korean adolescent students came from were significantly linked to their school adjustment. Parents in a strained marriage are likely to be affected by conflicts with their spouses. Consequently, they fail to invest their time and energy in children which worsens their contribution in their children's affairs.

Children suffer greatly when their homes are disrupted by separation, divorce, or the death of one or both parents. Children who do not leave with both parents may question their own worth and suffer from unwarranted confusion, guilt, or anguish. Children may struggle to understand the reasons behind their parents' divorce. Children from non-intact homes struggle to establish a sense of security because experience has taught them that what appeared stable and good crumbled and left them empty (Azumah, Samuel & Nachinaab, 2018).

The students' emotional, psychological, economic, and social well-being is heavily influenced by their family environment. Musili (2015) discovered that parent/family participation and parenting methods had an impact on students' academic outcomes when researching how home context influences academic excellence in the Kitui West sub county. Moreover, Muthoni (2013) established a strong correlation between students' learning outcomes and educational level, family size, and marital status. The study further observed that marital status does not

significantly explain students' academic achievement; nevertheless, the type of family (conflictive or cohesive) influenced academic performance

Kwale is a county which has not been performing well in national exams, both secondary and primary according to the Kenya examination ratings. Ng'ombeni Waa Zone particularly has not been posting good academic results. There was need to find out how the home environment and participation of parents contribute to the learning outcomes of pupils in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic excellence is an important parameter in measuring a child's ability. School environment and family have powerful effect on the academic success of the students. Nevertheless, a change in cultural trends has led to the prevalence of non-traditional families where children increasingly live in single-parent households headed by either father or mother due to separation and parental death. The upcoming family structures may have an impact on learning outcomes of students because children depend on both parents for emotional and material support. Ng'ombeni Zone is one among many areas affected by marital conflicts and family breakdown. However, there is little documented data on the zone on preponderance of non-intact families and how it influences learning outcomes. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to establish the contribution of the family structures and parenting on the academic standards of pupils in public primary schools in Ng'ombeni zone, Kwale County, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To examine the contribution of broken family structure on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Ng'ombeni Zone.
- ii. To establish the role of nuclear family structure on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Ng'ombeni Zone.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study delves into theories providing anchorage for the study before analyzing empirical studies carried out with the aim of establishing gaps in research that motivated the conducting of the study. It also presents a clearly thought out conceptual framework of independent and dependent variables.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Social Cognitive Theory**

The study utilized Bandura's (2002) Social Cognitive Theory that contends that human development is influenced in part by environmental agents. Family structure is an environmental agent that impacts on human development and therefore student achievement. Social Cognitive Theory is the proponent of psychologists who emphasize environment, behaviour and cognition as key factors in development. Family structure is an environmental factor that prevails on development of adolescents and their academic achievement. Children

living with both parents tend to have greater academic achievement and are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems in school. Their parents are more involved in their learning and have higher expectations for them. On the other hand, peers living in single parent families, with cohabiting parents and married families with stepfathers are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, engage in delinquent activities, have problems getting along with their teachers, doing homework, concentrating in school and more likely to have lower grade point averages. The key tenets of this theory posit that learning is both cognitive and behavioural, occurs through vicarious reinforcement, and involves observation and making conclusions as well as subsequent decisions. Further, the learner is influenced through the concept of reciprocal determination, cognition, environment and behavior. This theory is significant because it can be applicable in managing classrooms where teachers uses positive and negative reinforcement to motivate learners to perform certain behaviors. They also support intrinsic motivation through rewards to help students cultivate confidence, self-efficacy and a love for learning. The learners can also learn by cooperation through peer teaching. They tend to listen to their peers than adults and as such retain more and improve on academic outcome.

## **Empirical Literature Review**

### **Contribution of Broken Families on Academic Performance of Pupils**

Torren and Felisida (2020) conducted a study in Philippines to assess the impact of broken family on pupils' academic success and behavioural development in the public elementary school. They had a total of 300 respondents from broken families that participated in the study. They used descriptive survey research method design to gauge the pupils' understanding with regards to the subject and modified questionnaires and observation in getting data from the field. It was revealed that age, sex, number of siblings, grade level and person the learner stays with has no direct influence to the pupils' behavioural development. Nevertheless, academic achievement of the pupils depends on their character development. The study concluded that the attitude and behavior of learners has an impact on their academic success. The study done in Philippines dwelt on behavioural changes unlike the current study sought to relate the effect of being raised in broken families on academic performance.

Similarly, Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) found a link between family setting and school misbehavior among adolescents while examining over 2,000 cases from the second wave of the National Survey of Children. They carried out a longitudinal study based on a probability sample of U.S. households with children age 12 to 16. They compared children living in non-traditional families with those living in an intact family. The parents too responded to questions about whether the child had ever been expelled or suspended or if the parent had ever been called into the school because of a child's discipline problems. Both boys and girls in families where the mother had divorced and remarried had the highest rates of misbehavior (approximately three times higher than the rate for adolescents from intact families). The current study does not focus on behavior patterns but looks at academic performance.

In the United Kingdom, a study by Johnson and Roberts (2017) focused on impact of broken families on academic performance. The study included a sample size of 1,500 students from

diverse backgrounds. The findings revealed that children from broken families, particularly those experiencing high levels of parental conflict, tended to perform lower academically compared to their peers from intact families. The study highlighted that emotional distress and reduced parental support were significant factors contributing to this academic underachievement. Moreover, the research indicated that boys were more adversely affected than girls, pointing to a potential gender difference in how family disruption impacts academic outcomes.

In Kazakh, Kussainov et al (2014) studied family background as a determinant of students' academic success. The study was to determine how child upbringing in a particular family influences the child's success. They used questionnaires to get data from 723 grade 8 and 9 students from a Kazakh and a Russian school from each of the 7 districts of Almaty. The questionnaire covered subject preferences, the arrangement of learning activities at home, self-esteem and values, students' family environment, education opportunities and academic achievement. It was revealed that family background, social status, occupation, parents' level of education had no significant impact on students' academic achievement. There was minimal difference according to performance by students from intact and non-intact families. The current study focused on how parenting and home environment affects learning outcomes of pupils in Kenya.

A study that aimed to unearth the effects of problems facing children from broken homes on learning outcomes among senior high students was conducted in Indonesia by Casinillo and Abrantes (2020). The study used a descriptive correlation design. They used questionnaires to get data from 168 students selected through purposive sampling for the response of the challenge encountered in a broken home. Another 268 students from two parent homes identified through simple random sampling were used to show comparison. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the different variables and Spearman correlation was undertaken to identify the significant relationship between variables. The results expressed that there is insignificant variation between the results of students from one parent homes and two parent homes. They also established that problems faced by students from one parent homes do not affect their studies. Using Spearman Rho Correlation Coefficient, a highly significant relationship between challenges experienced by the students and their academic performance was established. They considered their problems as motivation to work. The current study will employ descriptive survey design in assessing the contribution of non-intact families on pupils' learning outcome in Ng'ombeni zone, in Kenya. The current study was carried out in primary schools and not high schools as in the above research.

In Ghana, a study conducted by Boateng (2018) explored the academic performance among pupils from broken families. Using a sample size of 800 pupils from primary and junior high schools, the study found that those from broken homes scored significantly lower in mathematics and reading assessments compared to students from intact families. The research identified several contributing factors, including economic hardship, lack of parental involvement, and psychological stress. Furthermore, the study noted that the extended family

often plays a crucial role in mitigating some of the adverse effects, although it was not always sufficient to completely counteract the negative impacts on academic performance.

Omuruyi (2014) conducted a research on the effects of broken homes on academic performance and personality development of the adolescents in Lagos State Metropolis. He tested three null hypotheses. The study sample was composed of 200 adolescents drawn from four public senior secondary schools in Kosote Local Government Area of Lagos State. The data collected using questionnaires were analyzed using both independent t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical Methods. The results demonstrated that there's a strong relationship between single parenting and academic performance of adolescents.

In South Africa, Ngubane and Dlamini (2019) studied on influence of broken families on academic achievement in both urban and rural settings. This study involved a sample of 1,200 students from various schools across the country. The findings indicated a clear correlation between family structure and academic success, with students from broken families generally performing worse in school. Contributing factors identified included economic instability, lack of parental supervision, and emotional distress. The study also highlighted the role of socio-economic status, noting that children from wealthier broken families fared better academically than those from poorer backgrounds, suggesting that financial resources can mitigate some of the negative effects of family disruption.

Another research was conducted in Kenya whose purpose was to ascertain the influence of family background on children's academics in Limuru Zone, Kiambu County. The objectives were to assess the population of children from broken families in Limuru Zone, identify factors contributing to separation of spouses and examine relationship between disintegrated family and pre-primary school learning of boys and girls. The Humanistic Theory by Abraham Maslow was used in the study. The study utilized descriptive survey design. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data and using inferential data, hypothesis was tested at a level of significance of 0.05. The study found that a good number of parents had separated between 1 year and 3 years. It also demonstrated that pre-school children were adversely affected by their parents' separation/divorce. The mean difference of boys and girls from unstable backgrounds showed minimal variation in performance. Whereas the study was performed in Limuru, the current study was conducted in Kwale County. The current study was guided by social cognitive theory and done at primary level.

### **Nuclear Family Structure and Academic Performance**

Gabriel (2013) posits that the type of family that a child is raised from either monogamous, polygamous, divorced parents, remarried parents, single parents or step parents usually has an impact on a child's academic performance. The nuclear family is regarded highly by society as being ideal in raising children. The children in nuclear family receive a lot of support from two parents and generally have more opportunities. According to US data, almost 70% of children live in nuclear families and statistics have shown that children from these families appear to do better in a number of cognitive, emotional and behavioral needs.



In United Kingdom, a significant study by Smith and Brown (2016) focused on role of nuclear family structure on academic performance of learners in high school. The study utilized a sample size of 2,000 students from various socio-economic backgrounds. The study found that children from nuclear families generally exhibited higher academic performance compared to those from single-parent or extended family structures. The research attributed this to factors such as stable home environments, consistent parental involvement in education, and higher socio-economic status often associated with nuclear families. Moreover, the study highlighted that the presence of both parents allowed for more effective monitoring of homework and school activities, contributing to better educational outcomes.

A research was conducted in Pakistan to ascertain the effects of extended and nuclear family system on achievements of students of intermediate level. The intention of the study was to determine if nuclear family organization contributes positively on the academic achievements of intermediate students or not. The sample size consisted of Year 1 and Year 2 students. Both male and female from joint and nuclear family systems from age group of 16-18 years were included in the study. The result proofed the hypothesis that contribution of nuclear family in supporting the academic standards is more than joint family system (Parveen et al, 2013).

In Ghana, a study by Mensah (2019) examined the influence of nuclear family setup on pupils' academic performance of primary learners. With a sample size of 1,000 pupils from both urban and rural areas, the findings revealed that children from nuclear families outperformed their peers from other family structures in core subjects like mathematics and English. The study pointed out that nuclear families in Ghana tend to provide a more supportive and stable environment, with both parents often playing active roles in their children's education. Additionally, the research suggested that nuclear families were more likely to invest in educational resources and extracurricular activities, further enhancing academic performance. Similarly, Ella (2015) studied the relation of family size and family type on academic performance of students in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria. They used two null hypotheses that were conceptualized and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A total of 200 students from six public schools were used for the study. They employed survey research design and used questionnaires to collect data that was analyzed using ANOVA. The results showed that family size and family type plays a key role on academic performance of secondary school students. The current study will use research questions and not hypotheses in seeking for information on how broken families impact on learners' performance. Moreover, the current study looked at the how parental participation impacts on learners' academic performance.

In South Africa, the research by Ndlovu and Van Wyk (2020) investigated the academic performance of students from nuclear families compared to those from non-nuclear families. The study included a sample size of 1,500 students from various regions, both urban and rural. The findings indicated that students from nuclear families had higher academic achievement levels, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The study identified key contributing factors such as parental involvement, economic stability, and the provision of a conducive learning environment at home. Furthermore, the research highlighted that the emotional and



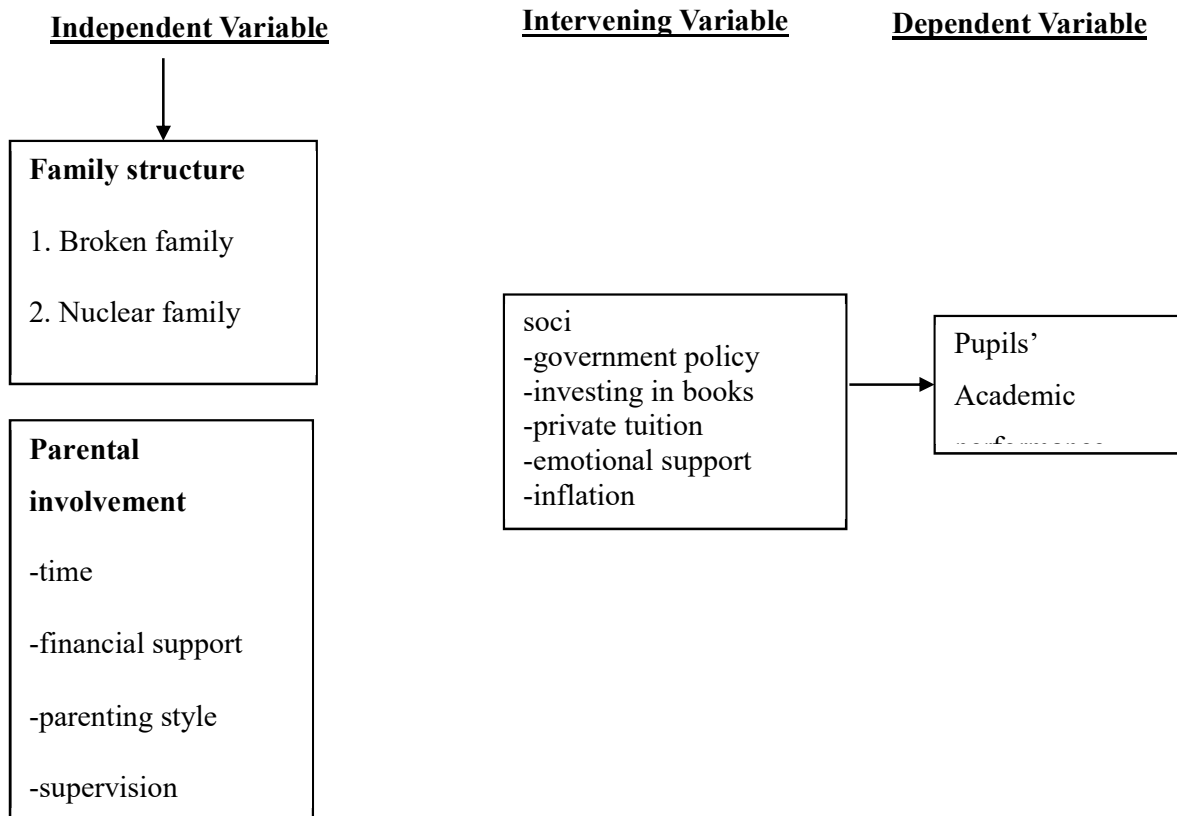
psychological support provided by both parents in a nuclear family setting played a crucial role in fostering academic success.

Lubanga (2021) looked at how family structure contributes to the academic performance of secondary school children in Uganda, a case of Goma division, Mukono district. The study objectives were: to establish the various types of family structure, identify how parents participate in their children's education and find out family structure challenges that hinder children from performing well academically. The study revealed that nuclear family structure was dominant followed by single and step family. Nevertheless, parents from these families participate differently in their pupil's education with parents in intact families having higher involvement compared to non-intact families.

In Kenya, Nato (2016) did a research on how family structure impacts on the learning outcomes among secondary school students in Bungoma East sub county. The study aimed at finding out how the nuclear family and single parent family type influences the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. The study used Bronfenbrenner's principles of ecological theory of child on child development. He used descriptive research design and mixed methodology to establish the degree to which variation in family structure and learning setting influences students' academic performance. A sample size of 323 respondents was used and inferential statistics was used to analyze and determine relationships between family structure and academic performance. The result showed that learners from nuclear family performed better due to economic support, family support, and parental motivation. Single parent family background attributed good performance of learners with small percentage. The study fails to look at the challenges that children from broken families experience that affects their performance. The current study aimed to address this gap.

### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The figure shows the interplay between the independent variables, intervening and dependent variables of the study.



## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research study adopted a descriptive research design. This involves collecting data that describe events, organizing, tabulating and describing the data. Descriptive studies bring out the variables by answering who, what, and how questions (Babbie, 2002). The study was conducted in Ng'ombeni Waa Zone in Kwale County, Kenya. Ng'ombeni Waa Zone was chosen because data from the County Director of Education indicates that out of the 14 zones in the county, Ng'ombeni Waa zone was number 13 out of 14 with a mean of 227 slightly above Mkongani zone with a mean of 225 out of 500. There is need therefore to look into the factors contributing to poor learning outcomes.

The entire population that the researcher is interested consisted of 32 head teachers, 32 class teachers, 1500 class 6 pupils from 32 public day primary schools and 1 Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (ZQASO), Ng'ombeni Zone. Head teachers play a pivotal role in school management, policy implementation, and decision-making processes. ZQASOs are responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and ensuring the quality of education in their respective zones, making their insight crucial for understanding the systemic factors that influence pupils' academic performance. The target population covers the total number of public primary schools in Ng'ombeni Zone. The candidate class has been chosen because it's easier to observe the academic curve and make judgment on learners' performance based on the trend. The researcher used adequate number of elements from the population, so that the study of the sample and the understanding of its properties could make it possible to generalize such properties or characteristics to the entire population.

The sample size was 16 schools which is 50% of the target population. Saturated sampling was employed to select 32 head teachers 32 class teachers and 1 ZQASO. Purposeful was used to select 16 public primary schools based on academic performance. The study employed simple random sampling in selecting 20 students from each of the 16 schools. A total of 320 students which is 20% of the total target population participated in the research. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample size of 10 to 20 percent is a good representation of the target population. The pupils were picked from intact and non-intact families. Saturated sampling technique was employed in the study because all the possible category of respondents has a chance of providing data while purposive sampling was used because the researcher feels that any of these respondents can provide the much sought for data.

The main instruments of data collection for this study were questionnaires, interview schedules and observation. Separate questionnaires were developed for head teachers, class teachers, and learners. A face to face in-depth interview was done to solicit responses from each of the Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer.

Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires based on the study objectives. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means, frequency counts and percentages. The findings were presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts. On the other

hand, qualitative data from the interview schedules were analyzed on the basis of theme and sub themes that emerged based on the study objectives.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

Out of 16 questionnaires issued to the head teachers, 14 were returned back. This represents a return rate of 87.5%. Moreover, return rate of 28(87.5%) of the sampled class teachers took part in the study and returned the questionnaires. Further, a total of 272 learners out of 320 filled in the questionnaires and returned. This represents a return rate of 85.0%. In overall, 314 respondents out of 368 participated in the data collection process presenting an average response rate of 85.3%. According to Baruch and Holtom (2014), 50 per cent rate of response is satisfactory, 60 per cent good and above 70 per cent rating better.

Data on demographic information of respondents indicated that majority of the administrative personnel in the schools were males. These are represented by 57.1% of head teachers and 53.6% of the teachers. These findings succinctly indicate that there is gender bias in terms of responsibility allocation. The fact that there are more male head teachers would mean that women's ability in administrative roles has really not fully been appreciated. Further, the study revealed that 138(50.7%) of the learners participated were male while 134(49.3%) were female. Based on data from the Kenya Ministry of Education, the enrollment of male and female students in secondary schools has been relatively close.

Data on age distribution indicated that the majority of the head teachers who participated in the survey were between the ages of 41 and 50. The head teachers who are above 50 years constitute to 21.4 percent. This infers that all the head teachers who participated in the research had enough experience and were mature enough as indicated by their age. Regarding the teachers' age, majority were aged between 36 and 45 years as presented by 42.9. Further, 25.0% of teachers were aged between 26 and 35 years. According to Malik (2021), an employees' age has an effect on their perception of satisfaction and commitment which consequently affects turnover intentions. In this regard, there is almost an equal distribution of age among respondents. In terms of age, the majority of pupils (87.5%) were between the ages of 12 and 15, with 12.5% falling between the ages of 16 and 20. According to recent Ministry of Education (2022) reports, the age distribution of students in Kenyan primary schools is normally 12 to 14 years old, spanning a wide range of adolescents and young adults. The majority of pupils in class eight were around the age of 13, while differences in age can exist depending on individual circumstances and academic progression.

Data on the level of academic qualification indicated that half of the head teachers hold bachelor's degree certificate while 5(35.7%) hold bachelor's degree. This shows that all the respondents were qualified and thus likely to translate and implement issues of management effectively. Regarding academic qualification of teachers, majority of the teachers hold P1 certificate as presented by 12(42.9%). This implies that teachers were sufficiently qualified and hence able to understand the influence of family structures on learners' academic performance. Educational qualifications are relevant because they allow educational professionals to conduct

systematic and analytical research into the theory and practice of leadership and management in education. The knowledge and skills learned from educational courses could be applied to better their own practice as managers in educational institutions.

Data on distribution of head teachers and teachers by teaching experience indicated that majority of the head teachers 6 (42.9) have served as a teacher for between 11 and 15 years. This is an indication that head teachers had enough experience on management practices. Some head teachers have extensive teaching experience exceeding 15 years or more. These experienced educators bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and insights gained from years of classroom teaching to their administrative roles. They often provide strong mentorship and guidance to both teachers and newer administrators. Also, teachers were fairly distributed according to teaching experience as indicated by 3(10.5%) have taught between 1 and 5 years, 8 (28.6%) have taught between 6 and 10 years, 12(42.9%) have taught between 101 and 15 years while 5(17.9%) have taught more than 15 years. Mid-career teachers have acquired substantial experience ranging from 6 to 15 years.

**Contribution of Broken Family Structure on Academic Performance of Pupils**

The first objective of the study was to examine the contribution of broken family structure on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. The head teachers and teachers were requested to indicate their agreement level on statements regarding the contribution of broken family structure on academic performance using Likert scale where SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree. The findings are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1 Respondents' Views on broken family structure*

<b>Head teachers</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>
Family structures have a great influence on pupils performance.	9 (64.3%)	5 (35.7%)	-	-	3.57	0.626
Children from non-intact families sometimes lack material support.	12 (85.7%)	2 (14.3%)	-	-	3.79	0.641
Pupils from intact families are strong emotionally.	10 (71.4%)	4 (28.6%)	-	-	3.63	0.652
Peer groups pressure is prevalence in families affected by divorce and separation.	11 (78.6%)	3 (21.4%)	-	-	3.78	0.679
There is much difference in performance of pupils from intact families and those from non-intact families.	6 (42.9%)	3 (21.4%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (21.4%)	3.23	0.547
<b>Teachers</b>						
Family structures have a great influence on pupils performance.	9 (32.1%)	17 (60.7%)	2 (7.1%)	-	3.54	0.637

Children from non-intact families sometimes lack material support.	15 (53.6%)	10 (35.7%)	3 (10.7%)	-	3.42	0.642
Pupils from intact families are strong emotionally.	12 (42.9%)	16 (57.1%)	-	-	3.59	0.627
Peer groups pressure is prevalence in families affected by divorce and separation.	10 (35.7%)	14 (50.0%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	3.55	0.631
There is much difference in performance of pupils from intact families and those from non-intact families.	8 (28.6%)	13 (46.4%)	3 (10.7%)	4 (14.3%)	3.67	0.638

*Source: Field Data (2024)*

The results presented in Table 1 show responses based on contribution of broken family structure on academic performance of pupils. The majority of the head teachers and teachers agreed with the family structures from where pupils come affect their performance as indicated by head teachers (mean =3.57; S.D = 0.626) and teachers (mean =3.54; S.D = 0.637). The findings are supported by the findings of a study by Torren and Felisida (2020) who established that children undergoing family disruptions often experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, which interfere with their ability to concentrate and perform well academically. The instability at home lead to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, all of which are detrimental to academic success. Studies have shown that children from disrupted family environments exhibit higher levels of absenteeism and lower academic achievement compared to their peers from intact families (Smith & Jones, 2020). This emotional turmoil often translates into behavioral issues within the school setting, further hindering their ability to perform academically.

The findings reveal that children from non-intact families sometimes lack material support as supported by head teachers (mean =3.79; S.D = 0.641) and teachers (mean =3.42; S.D = 0.642). Financial strain also leads to residential instability, causing frequent school changes that disrupt a child's education continuity and social relationships, both of which are important for academic success. The findings are consistent with those of a study conducted by Casinillo and Abrantes (2020) who found that single-parent households are more likely to experience financial difficulties, which limit access to educational resources such as tutoring, extracurricular activities, and even basic school supplies. According to Brown and Taylor (2018), financial instability in broken families can lead to insufficient academic support at home, inadequate school supplies, and limited opportunities for academic enrichment outside of school hours. This lack of resources contributes significantly to the academic underperformance of pupils from these backgrounds.

The findings show that pupils from intact families are strong emotionally as supported by head teachers (mean =3.63; S.D = 0.652) and teachers (mean =3.59; S.D = 0.627). Children struggle to maintain focus in class or complete homework assignments due to the emotional turmoil

caused by changes in their family environment. The findings are corroborated by Kussainov et al. (2014) who found that changes in family structure can disrupt a child's routine and stability at home, making it harder for them to establish study habits and maintain a consistent academic performance.

Further, the findings reveal that peer groups pressure is prevalence in families affected by divorce and separation as supported by head teachers (mean =3.78; S.D = 0.679), and teachers (mean =3.55; S.D = 0.631). This means that single parents or divorced parent have less time and energy to devote to their children's educational needs due to additional work or personal stress. Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) supports the findings, stating that both boys and girls in families where the mother had divorced and remarried had the highest rates of misbehavior approximately three times higher than the rate for adolescents from intact families.

Additionally, the findings show that there is much difference in performance of pupils from intact families and those from non-intact families as indicated by head teachers (mean =3.23; S.D = 0.547), and teachers (mean =3.67; S.D = 0.638). The instability and uncertainty that in the family lead to increased behavioral issues and absenteeism, further hindering academic success. The findings are supported by findings of a study by Omuruyi (2014) who established that that pre-school children were adversely affected by their parents' separation/divorce. The mean difference of boys and girls from unstable backgrounds showed minimal variation in performance.

Educational Officer emphasizes that;

*“Children from broken families often exhibit signs of anxiety and depression, which directly correlates with lower academic performance. He also advocates for increased counseling services in schools to help these children cope with their emotional struggles, thereby improving their academic outcomes”.*  
(Educational Officer FR5)

From the interviewed class teacher, it was noted;

*“Economic stability, and communication within the family unit all play a role in determining academic success. It's essential for educators to recognize and understand the diversity of family structures and provide tailored support to meet the specific needs of students from different backgrounds.”* (TR01)

Further, pupils were requested to indicate their agreement level on statements regarding the contribution of broken family structure on academic performance using Likert scale where SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree. The findings are presented in Table 2.



**Table 2 Pupils' Views on Contribution of Broken Family Structure on Academic Performance**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>
My parents offer necessary support in my academics.	109 (40.1%)	127 (46.7%)	21 (7.7%)	15 (5.5%)	3.54	0.636
I'm emotionally impacted by my parents' separation and am unable to pay my tuition.	98 (36.0%)	151 (55.5%)	23 (8.5%)	18 (6.6%)	3.46	0.647
My parents stay far apart and it affects my performance.	23 (8.5%)	56 (20.6%)	79 (29.0%)	86 (31.6%)	2.55	1.639
It is difficult to get breakfast before attending school.	46 (16.9%)	44 (16.2%)	75 (27.6%)	107 (39.3%)	2.36	1.614
No one cares about my performance in school.	61 (22.4%)	48 (17.6%)	69 (25.4%)	94 (34.6%)	2.67	1.619

*Source: Field Data (2024)*

The findings presented in Table 2 show that majority of the pupils agreed that their parents offer necessary support in my academics (mean = 3.54; standard deviation = 0.636). Further, the results reveal that most pupils agreed that they get emotionally impacted by their parents' separation and they unable to pay the tuition (mean = 3.46; standard deviation = 0.647). Children from broken families experience emotional distress due to the separation or divorce of their parents. This lead to feelings of sadness, anxiety, or anger, which interfere with their ability to concentrate in school and perform well academically. The findings are supported by results of Burbelwa (2014) who established that single-parent households, in particular, faces economic challenges that hinder a child's access to quality education, extracurricular activities, and educational materials. These financial constraints limit a child's opportunities for enrichment and academic growth, contributing to lower academic achievement compared to children from intact families. Johnson and White (2019) argue that children in single-parent families are less likely to have parents who attend school meetings, assist with homework, or encourage academic pursuits, which negatively impacts their school performance. The fragmented attention and support can make it challenging for these children to keep up with their peers academically. The instability caused by moving between households or changing schools can interrupt a child's education, causing them to miss out on key learning milestones and struggle to adapt to new educational environments (Miller & Davis, 2021). This instability is particularly damaging during critical periods of academic development.

Additionally, most pupils disagreed that their parents stay far apart and it affects their performance as supported by a mean of 2.55 and standard deviation of 1.639. The pupils disagreed with the statement that it is difficult to get breakfast before attending school as indicated by a mean of 2.36 and standard deviation of 1.614. Furthermore, the pupils disagreed that no one cares about their performance in school as indicated by a mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.619. In a broken family, children may not receive the same level of emotional or academic support from their parents. This lack of support result in low self-esteem,

motivation, and confidence, making it difficult for them to excel in their studies. The findings corroborate with the findings of a study by Igbiosa (2014) who established that separation or divorce also lead to financial instability for families. This impact a child's access to resources such as tutoring, educational materials, or extracurricular activities, which are important for academic success.

From the interview schedule, it was noted that;

*“Families where parents are actively engaged in their children's education tend to see better academic outcomes. This involvement ranges from helping with homework to participating in school activities and maintaining regular communication with teachers. Parents who emphasize the importance of education and set high expectations tend to instill a similar value system in their children. The socio-economic status of a family plays a vital role in determining academic performance. Families with higher socio-economic status can afford better educational resources, such as books, tutoring, and technology, which enhance learning opportunities”.* (Education Officer, FR 006)

Class teacher noted that;

*“Pupils from broken family structures often exhibit behavioral problems, lack focus, and show signs of low self-esteem. They note that these challenges make it difficult for teachers to maintain a conducive learning environment. They need professional development on handling these issues and calls for a collaborative approach involving parents, educators, and counselors to support affected students effectively.”* (TR07)

The findings are supported by the findings of a study by Amato (2021) who established that children from broken homes often experience higher levels of emotional distress, which hinder their ability to focus on schoolwork and perform well academically. Moreover, a study by McLanahan and Sandefur (2022) suggests that the absence of one or both parents in the home lead to decreased parental monitoring and support, which are essential for a child's academic success. Furthermore, the instability and changes associated with family breakdown can disrupt the routines and support systems that are crucial for academic success. As highlighted by Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan (2019), children from broken families may struggle to adapt to new living arrangements, cope with parental conflicts, and adjust to changes in their daily lives, all of which can impact their concentration and academic performance in school.

### **Role of Nuclear Family Structure on Academic Performance of Pupils**

The second objective of the study was to establish the role of nuclear family structure on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. The head teachers and teachers were requested to indicate their agreement level on statements regarding role of nuclear family structure on academic performance of pupils using 5-likert scale where SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree. The findings were presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Head teachers and Teachers Views on Role of Nuclear Family Structure on Academic Performance of Pupils**

<b>Head teachers</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>
Pupils from nuclear families with both parents present perform better academically.	7 (50.0%)	5 (50.0%)	-	-	3.79	0.684
The involvement of both parents in contributes positively to a pupil's academic success.	9 (64.3%)	5 (35.7%)	-	-	3.75	0.678
The stability provided by a nuclear family structure enhances a pupil's academic performance.	3 (21.4%)	11 (78.6%)	-	-	3.68	0.673
Pupils from nuclear families have better access to educational resources (e.g., books, internet) at home.	4 (28.6%)	10 (71.4%)	-	-	3.73	0.671
Parents in nuclear families are more likely to monitor and support their children's study habits.	8 (57.1%)	6 (42.9%)	-	-	3.67	0.664
<b>Teachers</b>						
Pupils from nuclear families with both parents present perform better academically.	8 (28.6%)	16 (57.1%)	4 (14.3%)	-	3.61	0.655
The involvement of both parents in contributes positively to a pupil's academic success.	6 (53.6%)	19 (35.7%)	3 (10.7%)	-	3.53	0.658
The stability provided by a nuclear family structure enhances a pupil's academic performance.	11 (39.3%)	15 (53.6%)	2 (7.1%)	-	3.52	0.646
Pupils from nuclear families have better access to educational resources (e.g., books, internet) at home.	9 (32.1%)	12 (42.9%)	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	3.40	0.627
Parents in nuclear families are more likely to monitor and support their children's study habits.	7 (25.0%)	18 (64.3%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)	3.57	0.642

*Source: Field Data (2024)*

The results displayed in Table 3 show responses based on role of nuclear family structure on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. Large part of head teachers and teachers agreed with the statement that pupils from nuclear families with both parents present

perform better academically as indicated by head teachers (mean =3.79; S.D = 0.684), and teachers (mean =3.61; S.D = 0.655). This infers that the presence of both parents in a nuclear family structure often means that children have access to diverse role models and support systems. The results are supported by the findings of a study by Gabriel (2013) who established that children in nuclear families often benefit from consistent and balanced parental involvement, which is crucial for their academic development. Both parents can share the responsibilities of nurturing and supervising their children's education, ensuring that children receive adequate attention and support. According to Harris and Lee (2020), children in nuclear families are more likely to have the necessary school supplies, access to private tutoring, and opportunities for educational trips, all of which contribute to improved academic outcomes. Financial stability ensures that pupils do not face the same level of economic stress as those in single-parent or non-nuclear family setups.

The findings uncovered that involvement of both parents in contributes positively to a pupil's academic success as indicated by head teachers (mean =3.75; S.D = 0.678), and teachers (mean =3.53; S.D = 0.658). This implies that children whose parents are actively engaged in their education such as attending parent-teacher conferences, assisting with homework, and participating in school activities tend to achieve higher academic performance. The results concur with those of Lubanga (2021) who established that learners from nuclear family performed better due to economic support, family support, and parental motivation. The presence of both parents allows for the establishment of consistent routines and disciplinary practices, which are essential for effective learning. A stable home environment with regular study times, balanced with recreational activities, helps children develop good study habits and time management skills. Jones and Carter (2022) found that the structured environment typical of nuclear families positively influences pupils' academic performance, as it provides a reliable framework within which children thrive academically.

The results show that stability provided by a nuclear family structure enhances a pupil's academic performance as supported by head teachers (mean =3.68; S.D = 0.673), and teachers (mean =3.52; S.D = 0.646). This deduces that children from nuclear families tend to perform better academically compared to those from non-nuclear family structures due to the stability and support provided by two parental figures. The findings are supported by Nato (2016) who revealed that presence of both parents in a child's life can lead to a nurturing and structured environment that fosters a positive attitude towards learning and achievement. Research by Clark and Mitchell (2021) suggests that this increased parental involvement leads to higher educational aspirations and better academic performance among pupils. The collaborative effort of both parents in supporting and monitoring their child's education significantly boosts the child's motivation and performance in school.

Also, the results reveal that pupils from nuclear families have better access to educational resources (e.g., books, internet) at home as supported by head teachers (mean =3.73; S.D = 0.671), and teachers (mean =3.40; S.D = 0.627). This implies that learners from nuclear family performed better due to economic support, family support, and parental motivation. The results are supported by the findings of a study by Ella *et al.* (2015) who established that dual-parent

households typically have better financial resources, which can be allocated towards educational materials, extracurricular activities, and other academic support services. The presence of both parents in the household provides a consistent support system, which is crucial for a child's mental well-being and academic focus. The children who grow up in nuclear families are more likely to experience a stable and supportive home environment, leading to better concentration and higher academic achievement (Williams & Thompson, 2019).

Further, the findings indicate that parents in nuclear families are more likely to monitor and support their children's study habits as indicated by head teachers (mean =3.67; S.D = 0.664), and teachers (mean =3.57; S.D = 0.642). When both parents are actively engaged in their child's schooling, they can provide consistent academic support, guidance, and encouragement that contribute to improved educational outcomes. The results are consistent with results of a research by Parveen et al, (2013) who established that stability, economic resources, and active parental involvement characteristic of nuclear families create an environment that supports and promotes academic excellence.

Based on interview schedule, the education officer noted that;

*“Parents in nuclear family typically have more opportunities to engage directly with their children's educational activities. This includes helping with homework, attending school events, and maintaining communication with teachers. Parents in nuclear families are often able to monitor and support their children's academic progress more closely, leading to better educational outcomes”.* (Education officer, FC1)

Also, the class teacher noted that;

*“A stable home environment, characterized by the presence of both parents, often fosters a sense of security and support, which is crucial for a child's academic performance. Officer 1 notes that children in nuclear families generally experience fewer disruptions in their lives, allowing them to focus better on their studies. The class teacher advocates for educational programs that emphasize the importance of family involvement in children's education, as it can significantly enhance their academic achievements”.* (TR02)

The findings were supported by Wairimu and Ndung'u (2020) who highlights that pupils from nuclear families benefit from higher levels of parental engagement. This engagement includes helping with homework, attending school meetings, and monitoring academic progress, which are critical factors in a child's educational success. The study emphasizes that such parental involvement fosters a conducive environment for academic excellence, as children feel more supported and motivated. Mwangi and Orodho (2019) pointed out that these families often have better financial stability, allowing for the provision of educational resources such as books, tutoring, and extracurricular activities. This financial advantage significantly contributes to the children's academic success, as they have access to a richer educational experience compared to those from single-parent or extended families.

Also, pupils were requested to indicate their agreement level on statements regarding the role of nuclear family on academic performance using Likert scale where SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree. The findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4 Pupils' Views on Role of Nuclear Family on Academic Performance of Pupils**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>
Children from divorced, separated or deceased families are likely to perform poorly.	98 (36.0%)	132 (48.5%)	29 (10.7%)	13 (4.8%)	3.46	0.594
Most children from two parent families perform well.	95 (34.9%)	118 (43.4%)	34 (12.5%)	25 (9.2%)	3.53	0.602
Pupils from broken homes perform poorly as compared to those with parents.	85 (31.3%)	96 (35.3%)	62 (22.8%)	29 (10.7%)	3.39	0.619
A good number of learners from single families have problems with paying school levies.	65 (23.9%)	113 (41.5%)	35 (12.9%)	59 (21.7%)	3.64	0.628

*Source: Field Data (2024)*

The results displayed in Table 4 show that majority of the pupils agreed that children from divorced, separated or deceased families are likely to perform poorly (mean = 3.46; standard deviation = 0.594). Additionally, the results reveal that most pupils from two parent families perform well (mean = 3.53; standard deviation = 0.602). The results are supported by results of Musili (2015) who established that children in nuclear families benefit from a consistent and balanced parental presence, which contributes to a secure and supportive home environment. This stability is crucial for academic success, as it allows children to focus on their studies without the distractions and stress that may come from more fragmented family arrangements

Further, most pupils agreed that pupils from broken homes perform poorly as compared to those with parents (mean = 3.39; standard deviation = 0.619). The pupils agreed with the statement that good number of learners from single families have problems with paying school levies (mean = 3.64; standard deviation = 0.628). The presence of both parents in a nuclear family structure provides children with diverse role models and support systems. This dual influence help child develops a more balanced approach to problem-solving and decision-making, which are important skills for academic success. The findings concur with the findings of a study by Chador (2008) who established that learners from nuclear family performed better due to economic support, family support, and parental motivation. Single parent family background attributed good performance of learners with small percentage.

From the interviewed schedule, it was noted that;

*“The community serve as a support system for children, offering encouragement, guidance, and mentorship. Positive role models within the community can inspire children to excel academically and pursue their goals.*



*Communities provide access to resources such as libraries, tutoring services, after-school programs, and educational workshops. These resources help children develop their skills, expand their knowledge, and succeed academically. Community involvement in education, such as parent-teacher associations, volunteering opportunities, and collaboration with schools, enhanced the overall academic experience for children. When parents, teachers, and community members work together, children benefit from a holistic approach to learning.” (Education officer FR2)*

Another class teacher noted that;

*“Children from nuclear families often exhibit higher levels of confidence and engagement in their studies. This officer attributes these positive traits to the consistent support and encouragement children receive from both parents. They explain that students from nuclear families tend to have better attendance and are more likely to complete assignments on time.” (TR03).*

The findings are supported by the findings of a study by Otieno and Nyaga (2020) underscores the importance of family structure in educational outcomes. The study notes that children from nuclear families are more likely to have regular school attendance and better punctuality. This regularity is partly due to the structured home environment where both parents can share responsibilities, ensuring that children adhere to their school schedules effectively. Another research by Njoroge and Kamau (2021) revealed that these pupils exhibit higher levels of emotional stability and self-esteem, which are crucial for effective learning and academic performance. The presence of both parents provides a balanced emotional support system, reducing stress and anxiety levels that can otherwise hinder academic achievements. Kariuki and Ogola (2021) established that children from nuclear families generally perform better academically compared to their peers from other family structures. This enhanced performance is attributed to the consistent support and involvement of both parents in the child's education, providing a stable and encouraging learning environment.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study draws the following conclusions:

- i. The study concludes that pupils from broken family structures often face more challenges in their academic performance compared to those from intact families. The emotional and psychological stress associated with broken families can adversely affect children's focus, behavior, and overall academic achievement. This highlights the need for targeted interventions, such as counseling and community support systems, to provide these pupils with the necessary support to succeed academically.
- ii. The study finds that pupils from nuclear family structures generally perform better academically. The stability and support typically provided in nuclear families create an environment conducive to academic success. Strong family bonds, consistent parental involvement, and access to educational resources are key factors that contribute to the



positive academic outcomes observed in these pupils. Therefore, promoting and supporting nuclear family structures through educational policies and community programs can have a beneficial effect on pupils' academic performance.

### **Recommendation of the Study**

The following recommendations are based on study findings and conclusions:

- i. The Ministry of Education should implement robust counseling services within schools to provide necessary emotional and psychological support for pupils from broken families. These programs may help mitigate the negative impacts on academic performance by offering a stable and supportive environment. Additionally, organizing parental education programs may equip parents from broken families with strategies to better support their children's education despite familial challenges. Furthermore, developing community-based support systems, such as mentoring programs and after-school clubs may offer additional academic and emotional assistance. Enhancing communication between schools and parents in broken families is also crucial, ensuring any academic or behavioral issues are promptly addressed.
- ii. The Ministry of Education should promote activities and programs that strengthen family bonds within nuclear families, as strong family relationships have a positive influence on academic performance. Encouraging greater parental involvement in school activities and academic processes is vital, as engaged parents typically lead to better academic outcomes for their children. Ensuring that nuclear families have access to educational resources and support services is also important for aiding children's academic development. Policies supporting a healthy work-life balance for parents should be advocated, allowing them to be more involved in their children's education.
- iii. The Ministry of Education should develop programs guiding parents on how to effectively assist their children with homework and other academic tasks. Regular parent-teacher meetings should be scheduled to discuss pupils' academic progress and address any concerns. Encouraging parental participation in school activities and events may foster a stronger connection between home and school, which is beneficial for academic performance. Educational workshops for parents may provide them with various ways to support their children's education, including creating conducive study environments at home.

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