



PARENTAL MARITAL INSTABILITY AS A DETERMINANT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study examined parental marital instability as a determinant of academic performance among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by concerns about persistent low academic performance and the possible influence of family-related factors, particularly parental marital instability manifested through marital conflict, divorce and other disruptions in family relationships. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, from which 200 respondents were selected from public and private secondary schools using simple random sampling. A questionnaire was used for data collection and validated by experts. Pilot testing established a reliability coefficient of 0.70. The findings revealed that parental marital instability significantly affects students' academic performance. Significant differences were also found in its influence on students' academic performance based on gender and school type. The study concluded that parental marital instability can distract students from their studies and create financial and emotional challenges that may affect educational outcomes. It was recommended that government, religious organisations, and non-governmental organisations organise regular marriage counselling and parenting seminars.

Keywords: Parental marital instability, academic performance, secondary school students.

Introduction

The family is one of the most important agents of socialisation and serves as the primary foundation for child development. It is within the family that children acquire moral values, social norms, attitudes and behavioural patterns that shape their future lives. In homes where both parents actively participate in the upbringing and welfare of their children are provided help such as to achieve greatly, enhance their educational development and contribute positively to their academic performance. It is further asserted that parents play a crucial role in shaping the lives and futures of their children through moral guidance, emotional support and financial provision. Consequently, the separation of parents may impede children's educational progress and overall development. The absence of parental unity frequently exposes children to emotional and psychological challenges that may seriously affect their academic pursuits. Onyela et al (2025) revealed that children from homes experiencing marital crises continue to encounter challenges that undermine their educational attainment and academic success. Wami et al (2021) emphasised that parental violence and separation significantly contribute to poor academic performance among students.

Furthermore, parents serve as the first educators of their children by providing moral instruction, emotional stability and financial resources necessary for quality education. However, when families experience marital instability that results in persistent conflict, separation or divorce, the capacity of parents to effectively discharge these responsibilities may be weakened. Such circumstances may undermine children's moral development, emotional well-being and critical thinking abilities. Fadokun (2018) observed that adolescence is a transitional stage characterised by significant physical, emotional and psychological changes. The study further emphasised that this developmental stage requires adequate



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parental attention and support. Unfortunately, marital crises and divorce during this period may have adverse consequences for adolescents' academic performance. The study further opined that marital instability and divorce have a significant negative impact on students' academic achievement. Therefore, a stable home environment remains essential for the holistic development of children and adolescents.

Marriage is a social institution established through the mutual consent of two individuals who agree to live together as husband and wife. Marriage is a lifelong contract which is a mutual agreement between man and woman to become husband and wife after the fulfillment of the marriage conditions for the purpose of legal procreation. Allah says in Q.30:21:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ

“And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility (peace and comfort) in them; and He has placed between you affection and mercy”

Marriage is expected to promote happiness, tranquility, cooperation and mutual understanding. Allah says in Q.16:72:

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ

“And Allah has made for you spouses from among yourselves and through your spouses He has given you children and grandchildren and has provided you with good things.”

Through marriage, families are established and children are nurtured within an environment that fosters responsible behaviour and positive social values. Consequently, marital stability refers to a harmonious relationship between spouses characterised by cooperation, mutual understanding, effective communication and shared responsibility in child upbringing. Such stability creates a conducive environment for children's educational and social development. Allah says in Q. 66:6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

“O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire”. The Quran 66:6 quoted above emphasises the responsibility of parents to protect their children which is made possible through parental marital stability. Conversely, parental marital instability refers to a condition in which marital relationships are characterised by persistent conflicts, lack of cooperation, poor communication, separation or divorce. It reflects a breakdown in the harmonious relationship expected within marriage and often disrupts family functioning. Parental marital instability is expected not to affect the children's fundamental human right due to the issue between the parents. UNESCO (2025) noted that Education is a fundamental human right of every man, woman and children. Allah says in Q. 2:233:

لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ

“No mother should be harmed through her child, nor should a father be harmed through his child...”

Based on the theme of the above citation (Q.2:233) that parental attention, supervision and support for children shouldn't be reduced, neither affect children's academic progress and overall well-being as a result of parental marital instability

Several studies have highlighted the adverse consequences of marital instability on students' educational outcomes. Chukwu et al (2025) found that marital instability contributes to depression,



emotional distress and poor academic performance among students. The authors further reported that children from unstable homes tend to perform less favourably academically than their counterparts from stable families. Similarly, Mikwili et al (2024) submitted that inadequate parental involvement in disintegrated families has a negative effect on learners' academic success. The study further established that students from unstable homes regularly experience significant stress that affects their concentration and academic performance. Consequently, marital instability constitutes a major challenge to students' educational attainment and personal development.

Academic performance refers to the extent to which students achieve educational objectives as measured through assignments, classroom activities, tests, examinations and other forms of academic assessments. It serves as an indicator of students' learning outcomes and educational achievement. Academic performance is influenced by several factors such as school-related factors, teacher-related factors, student-related factors and family-related factors. Family factors are widely regarded as being closely linked to the home environment, which significantly influences students' attitudes toward learning and their educational success. A peaceful and supportive home environment enhances students' motivation to learn and contributes positively to their academic achievement. In contrast, family conflicts and instability may create distractions that hinder effective learning. Kapur (2018) established that parental issues significantly influence students' academic performance, thereby underscoring the critical role of parents in educational development.

Secondary school students constitute a significant population for researching the relationship between parental marital instability and academic performance because the secondary school period largely coincides with adolescence, a critical stage of human development. The World Health Organization (WHO) discusses adolescence as the period between 10 and 19 years and describes it as a unique stage characterised by rapid physical, cognitive and psychosocial development. During this period, young people develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire abilities that are important for the transition into adulthood (World Health Organization {WHO}, 2020). These developmental changes make the family environment particularly relevant to adolescents' adjustment and educational experiences. In support of this, Størksen et al (2006), in a study involving 8,984 Norwegian adolescents aged 13-19 years, found that parental divorce was associated with greater psychological and school-related problems among adolescents, with the effects remaining after controlling for demographic factors. Similarly, Sun et al (2011), using longitudinal data from 8,008 children, found differences in academic performance trajectories between children from stable and disrupted family structures, providing support for the view that family instability can have implications for children's educational development. Therefore, secondary school students are a particularly relevant population for the present study because they are undergoing essential cognitive, emotional and social changes while simultaneously facing increasing academic demands. Parental marital instability during this period may create family-related challenges that interfere with students' adjustment to school and their ability to maintain satisfactory academic performance. Focusing on secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis therefore provides an appropriate context for investigating how parental marital instability is associated with academic performance at this important stage of students' educational and personal development.

The concept of gender has significantly progressed in discussions within educational and social sciences, commonly encompassing the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of individuals as male, female, or non-binary, rather than focusing solely on biological sex. Adeniran (2020) explained that gender classification transcends physical characteristics and includes the societal expectations and cultural norms imposed on individuals. Karimullah et al (2024) elaborated that gender encompasses not just male or female identities but also how individuals are perceived and expected to act within particular social contexts. Bala et al (2025) stated that, while sex is biologically defined, gender is influenced by social interactions and institutional factors over time. Nyaga (2025) asserted that understanding gender is vital in education, especially when tackling issues of equity and inclusivity, as gender roles can affect how students engage with material, participate in class, and respond to teaching



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methods. Adewale et al (2024) confirmed that gendered experiences often shape students' academic achievements and educational results. Similarly, Olabiyi (2021) noted that differences related to gender in educational settings can emerge from teacher expectations and peer interactions, which can either reinforce stereotypes or foster inclusive opportunities.

School type is a key factor in educational research and typically refers to the management and ownership of schools, specifically distinguishing between public and private institutions. Public schools are run by government entities, while private schools are operated by individuals or organizations. The type of school attended can greatly impact students' educational experiences, as public and private schools often vary in terms of facilities, learning resources, management practices and other elements that can affect learning outcomes. Alimi et al (2012) highlighted differences in the availability of resources between public and private schools, suggesting that school type might correlate with the educational environment. Faremi et al (2024) discussed how school type can significantly influence students' academic performance. Thus, school type is pertinent to this study, particularly for students dealing with parental marital instability, as their educational experiences may differ markedly depending on whether they are enrolled in public or private secondary schools. Investigating both school type and parental marital instability may enhance our understanding of variations in students' academic success in Ilorin Metropolis. Despite the importance of parental marital stability in fostering students' educational development, parental marital instability has become increasingly common in many societies. The disruption of family relationships may affect the emotional, psychological and educational well-being of children. Consequently, concerns have been raised regarding the implications of marital instability for students' academic outcomes. It is against this backdrop that this study examined marital instability as a determinant of academic performance among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Literature Review

Marital stability creates a peaceful and conducive home environment where proper supervision, monitoring, guidance and support are provided for children, thereby enhancing their academic performance. In such homes, parents are able to work together in nurturing their children academically, morally and socially. Despite the importance of marital stability in promoting students' educational success, poor academic performance among students remains a source of concern. This is evident in the reports of the WAEC Chief Examiners (2023), which highlighted students' weaknesses and persistent poor performance in several subjects. Several researchers have examined parental marital instability as a determinant of students' academic performance. For instance, Wami et al (2021) investigated the influence of marital conflict on the academic performance of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The findings revealed that parental violence, low socio-economic status and parental separation contributed significantly to students' poor academic performance. Similarly, Onyela et al (2025) examined marital conflict factors and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study established that children from homes experiencing marital crises continue to encounter challenges that undermine their academic pursuits. The researchers concluded that children from such homes often exhibit poor academic performance due to psychological and emotional problems.

In another study, Fadokun (2018) investigated the effects of marital instability and divorce on the academic performance of adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings indicated that marital crises and divorce have a significant negative impact on adolescents' academic performance. Furthermore, Chinedu et al (2024) examined family instability as a correlate of academic performance among secondary school students in English Language in Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study revealed that marital conflict and divorce negatively affect children's academic performance. Likewise, Rosemary (n.d.) investigated the influence of family instability



on the academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study established that family violence influences the academic performance of both male and female students to a high extent. Hassan (2017) also examined the effects of marital conflicts on academic performance among primary school pupils in Temeke District, Dar es Salaam Region. The findings revealed that inadequate provision of school needs, lack of parental affection and absenteeism among pupils from conflict-ridden homes adversely affected their academic performance. The study further reported that children from homes characterised by marital conflict performed more poorly in their studies than those from stable homes. Finally, Aliyu et al (2016) investigated Home Variables as Determinants of Secondary School Students' Performance in Islamic Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. They revealed that home variables such as parents' education and parents' occupation contribute significantly to academic success students particularly in Islamic Studies.

Despite the efforts of the aforementioned researchers in identifying the causes, consequences and solution to parental marital instability, the problem continues to persist in many parts of Nigeria, including Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Although previous studies have focused on marital conflict, family instability, divorce and related issues, limited empirical evidence exists on marital instability as a determinant of academic performance among senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. This gap in the literature necessitates further investigation. Therefore, this study seeks to examine parental marital instability as a determinant of academic performance among senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the finding was to examine parental marital instability as a determinant of academic performance among senior secondary school students in the Ilorin metropolis. Specifically, this finding aimed to:

- a. Examine the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance among secondary school students
- b. Investigate the difference of influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance among secondary school students based on gender
- c. Found out the differences between the perception of marital instability and stability on the academic performance among secondary school students based on school types

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance among secondary school students?
2. What difference exists in the perceived influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of male and female secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis?
3. What are the differences between the perception of parental marital instability and stability on the academic performance among secondary school based on school types

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on gender

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of male and female secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Methodology



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The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised all secondary school students while the target population consisted of Senior Secondary School students in Ilorin East and Ilorin West, Kwara State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools from each of the two Local Government Areas (Ilorin East and Ilorin West). Thereafter, twenty (20) students were randomly selected from each school, making a total of two hundred (200) respondents across the senior secondary students. The instrument that was used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled: "Parental Marital Instability Questionnaire (PMIQ)" The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A collected demographic information of the respondents such as gender age class Level while Section B contained items designed to elicit responses on parental marital instability as a determinant of academic performance among secondary school students. The questionnaire was structured using a four-point Likert Scale as Strongly Agree (SA) 4 Agree (A) 3 Disagree (D) 2 Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was submitted to the three experts. They examined the instrument in terms of clarity of language, relevance of items, adequacy of content and suitability to the objectives of the study. Their observations, suggestions and corrections were incorporated before the final administration of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot testing conducted among twenty (20) Senior Secondary School students in a school outside the sampled schools and their responses obtained were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered adequate for the study.

The researcher obtained the approvals from the principal of the selected schools and personally administered the questionnaires, assisted by trained assistants when necessary. Participants were informed about the study's aims and instructed on how to complete the questionnaire, assuring them that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential and participation is voluntary. The completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness and analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviation and rank order to answer the research questions, specifically independent Samples t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis.

Results and findings

Demographic data on gender, age and school type

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	frequency	percentage %
Male	95	47.5
Female	105	52.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 shows that 95 (47.5%) of the respondents were male, while 105 (52.5%) were female. This indicates that female respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion of the study participants.



Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age (Years)	frequency	percentage %
15 years	60	30.0
16 years	80	40.0
17 years	60	30.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 60 (30.0%) of the respondents were 15 years old, 80 (40.0%) were 16 years old, while 60 (30.0%) were 17 years old. This result translates to the majority of the respondents were 16 years old.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by School Type

School Type	Male	Female	total
public	40	40	80
private	55	65	105
Total	95	105	200

Table 3 shows that the respondents of public schools were 80 of which male was 40 and female was 40. As for the private school was 120 of which the male was 55 and female was 65 and the ground total was 200 respondents.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance among secondary school students?

Table 4: Mean Ratings on the influence of Parental Marital Instability on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1	Frequent conflicts between parents affect students' concentration in class.	3.42	0.72	Agree	1
2	Parental marital instability reduces students' interest in learning.	3.38	0.75	Agree	2
3	Separation of parents negatively affects students' academic performance	3.31	0.81	Agree	4



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4	Students from unstable homes are more likely to perform poorly in examinations.	3.35	0.77	Agree	3
5	Lack of parental cooperation affects students' educational progress	3.26	0.84	Agree	6
6	Emotional stresses caused by family conflict affects students' learning ability.	3.29	0.79	Agree	5
7	Marital instability contributes to poor school attendance.	3.18	0.86	Agree	8
8	Students from unstable homes receive less academic support from parents.	3.21	0.83	Agree	7
9	A peaceful home environment enhances students' academic performance.	3.14	0.88	Agree	9
10	Marital instability is a major factor influencing students' academic performance.	3.11	0.91	Agree	10
Grand mean		3.27		Agree	

Decision Rule: Mean score of 2.50 and above = Agree, while a mean score below 2.50 = Disagree.

The results of table 4 reveal that all the questionnaire items recorded mean scores above the benchmark mean of 2.50, with mean values ranging from 3.11 to 3.42. Item 1 (Frequent conflicts between parents affect students' concentration in class) had the highest mean score ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.72$), indicating that respondents strongly agreed with the statement. Item 10 (Marital instability is a major factor influencing students' academic performance) recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.91$), but it was still above the decision benchmark.

The grand mean of 3.27 shows that respondents generally agreed that marital instability has a considerable impact on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Research Question 2

What difference exists in the perceived influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of male and female secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis?

Table 5: Independent Samples t-test of Male and Female Students' Perceived Influence of Parental Marital Instability on Academic Performance

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1	Marital instability affects the academic performance of both male and female students.	3.36	0.74	Agree	2
2	Female students are more emotionally affected by marital instability than male students.	3.18	0.86	Agree	7



3	Male students experience poor academic performance due to marital instability.	3.22	0.81	Agree	5
4	Gender influences how students cope with marital instability.	3.29	0.79	Agree	3
5	Female students from unstable homes require greater academic support	3.17	0.87	Agree	8
6	Male students from unstable homes are more likely to exhibit poor classroom behaviour.	3.20	0.84	Agree	6
7	Both male and female students benefit from a stable home environment.	3.41	0.69	Agree	1
8	Marital instability affects students' classroom participation regardless of gender.	3.26	0.80	Agree	4
Grand Mean		3.26		Agree	

The results of table 5 shows that all the items had mean scores above the benchmark mean of 2.50, ranging from 3.17 to 3.41. Item 7 recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.69$), revealing that respondents strongly agreed that both male and female students benefit from a stable home environment. The grand mean of 3.26 indicates that respondents agreed that marital instability affects the academic performance of secondary school students irrespective of gender.

Research Question 3

What are the differences in the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on school type?

Table 6: Independent Samples *t*-test of the Perceived Influence of Parental Marital Instability on Academic Performance Based on School Type

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1	The effect of marital instability on students' academic performance differs between public and private schools.	3.41	0.71	Agree	1
2	Students in private schools receive more academic support when experiencing marital instability than those in public schools.	3.35	0.75	Agree	2
3	Students in public schools are more affected academically by marital instability than students in private schools.	3.30	0.78	Agree	3
4	School type influences how students cope with the effects of marital instability.	3.27	0.80	Agree	4



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5	Guidance and counselling services help reduce the effects of marital instability regardless of school type	3.23	0.84	Agree	5
6	Teachers' support for students experiencing marital instability differs between public and private schools.	3.19	0.87	Agree	7
7	School type influences the relationship between marital instability and students' academic performance.	3.21	0.85	Agree	6
8	Students from unstable homes perform differently in public and private schools.	3.15	0.89	Agree	8
Grand Mean		3.26		Agree	

Decision Rule: Mean score of 2.50 and above = Agree, while a mean score below 2.50 = Disagree.

The result of table 6 shows that all the questionnaire items recorded mean scores above the benchmark mean of 2.50, with mean values ranging from 3.15 to 3.41. The highest-rated item was "The effect of marital instability on students' academic performance differs between public and private schools" (M= 3.41, SD= 0.71), while the lowest-rated item was "Students from unstable homes perform differently in public and private schools" (M= 3.15, SD= 0.89). However, both items exceeded the benchmark mean. The grand mean of 3.26 shows that respondents agreed that the effect of marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students quietly differs according to school type.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between perception of male and female students on influence of parental marital instability on academic performance

Table 7: Independent Samples t-test Showing the Difference in the influence of Parental Marital Instability on the Academic Performance Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	95	3.22	0.48	2.12	198	0.035	Reject H ₀₁
Female	105	3.36	0.45				

Decision rule: level of sig 0.05

The results of table 7 reveals that male students (M = 3.22, SD = 0.48) and female students (M = 3.36, SD = 0.45) different in their mean scores. The calculated t-value was 2.12 with 198 degrees of freedom and the p-value (0.035) was less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows a statistically significant difference in the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on gender.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on school type.

Table 8: Independent Samples t-test Showing the Difference in the influence of parental marital Instability on Academic Performance Based on School Type



School Type	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Public	80	3.18	0.52				
Private	120	3.33	0.47	2.05	198	0.042	Reject H_0

The result of table 8 shows that students in public schools ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.52$) and private schools ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.47$) quietly differed in their mean scores. The calculated t-value of 2.05 with 198 degrees of freedom produced a p-value of 0.042, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on school type.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the findings indicated that parental marital instability has a significant influence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Respondents acknowledged that frequent parental crises, separation, emotional conflict, lack of parental cooperation and inadequate academic support negatively influence students' concentration, learning interest, school attendance and overall academic performance. This finding supports the concern expressed in the statement of the problem that, despite the importance of parental marital stability in promoting students' academic success, poor academic performance continues to be reported among secondary school students, as highlighted in the WAEC Chief Examiners' Report (2023). The finding is consistent with the study of Wami, Eremie and Kevin (2021) who emphasised that parental conflict, divorce and low socio-economic status significantly contributed to students' poor academic performance. It also agrees with Onyela, Adams and Duchi (2025) who agreed that children from homes experiencing marital crises often suffer psychological and emotional problems that immensely affect their academic pursuits. Similarly, this study is agreed with Fadokun (2018) who established that parental marital instability and divorce have significant negative effects on the academic performance of adolescent students. These findings collectively suggest that a stable family environment is essential for students' academic success.

The findings further showed that parental marital instability affects the academic performance of secondary school students irrespective of gender. Respondents agreed that both male and female students experience the negative consequences of parental marital instability. This finding is consistent with the study of Rosemary (2024.) who established that family instability significantly influences the academic performance of both male and female students. This study is also in line with Hassan (2017) who submitted that children from homes characterised by marital crises often experience inadequate parental care, absenteeism and poor academic performance regardless of gender. The finding implied that both male and female students are affected by parental marital instability. It is stated that differences in emotional resilience, family support and individual coping strategies influence the degree of its impact on academic performance.

The study also revealed that the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students differed according to school type. Respondents agreed that school type influences the level of academic support, teacher encouragement, guidance and counselling services available to students experiencing family instability. This finding indicates that students in public and private secondary schools do not experience the influence of parental marital instability in the same way due to differences in educational resources, learning environments and support systems. the finding is related to the work of Chinedu and Longjohn (2024) who concluded that marital conflict and divorce negatively influence students' academic performance. It also supported Hassan (2017) who pointed out that inadequate parental support and family conflict adversely affect students' educational achievement.



The result of the first hypothesis revealed a statistically significant difference in the effect of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on gender. Since the calculated probability value was less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that gender significantly influences the effect of marital instability on students' academic performance. The finding agrees with Rosemary (2024) who found that family instability significantly affects both male and female students, although the extent of the influence differed. The observed difference may be attributed to variations in emotional maturity, coping strategies and the level of support received by students from their families and schools.

The result of the second hypothesis also shows a statistically significant difference in the influence of parental marital instability on the academic performance of secondary school students based on school type. The null hypothesis was rejected because the calculated probability value was less than the 0.05 level of significance. This finding indicates that the influence of parental marital instability differs significantly between students attending public and private secondary schools. This study is also in line with Aliyu, Saidu and Abudu (2016) who submitted that Parents whose wards attended private schools performed better than those whose children went to public schools, particularly in Islamic Studies.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that parental marital instability is a significant determinant of the academic performance of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Family conflicts, separation and other forms of parental marital instability create emotional and psychological challenges that reduce students' concentration, motivation and overall academic achievement. In contrast, students from stable homes benefit from greater parental care, effective supervision and emotional support, which contribute positively to their educational success. The study also concludes that the influence of parental marital instability differs according to gender and school type. Therefore, promoting stable family relationships and strengthening support systems for students experiencing family-related challenges are essential for improving academic performance.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Parents should make every effort to resolve parental marital disagreements peacefully and provide a stable home environment that promotes their children's academic and emotional development.
- b. School counsellors should identify students experiencing family instability and provide regular counselling, mentoring and psychosocial support to minimise its adverse influence on their academic performance.
- c. Teachers should pay particular attention to students from unstable homes by providing academic guidance, encouragement and appropriate classroom support.
- d. Government agencies, religious organisations and non-governmental organisations should intensify marriage counselling, family-life education and conflict-resolution programmes to reduce the incidence of parental marital instability.
- e. Parents should remain actively involved in monitoring their children's education regardless of their parental marital status, ensuring that family challenges do not prevent students from achieving their academic potential.



- f. Future researchers should investigate other family-related variables, such as parenting style, parental educational level and socio-economic status, that may also influence students' academic performance.

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