

The Impact of Family Crisis on Student Development in Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the impact of family crises on the development of elementary school students. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, the research involves interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that family crises, such as broken homes, negatively affect children's emotional, social, and academic development. Affected children exhibit withdrawn behavior, moral difficulties, and decreased academic performance. Collaborative approaches between schools and families are necessary to provide effective support. Interventions by class teachers, such as home visits and personal counseling, have proven helpful in mitigating these negative impacts. This study highlights the importance of emotional and social support for children from broken homes.

Keywords: family crisis, broken home, child development, school support

A. INTRODUCTION

Basic education serves an exceptionally significant function in the holistic development of a child, as it lays the groundwork upon which further learning and personal growth can be built. During the formative years spent in elementary school, children engage in the acquisition of fundamental knowledge, alongside essential skills that include the critical abilities of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which are paramount for their academic success and day-to-day functioning. Moreover, this stage of education is not limited to the mere transmission of information; it is also instrumental in fostering cognitive capabilities such as critical thinking and effective problem-solving, while simultaneously playing a pivotal role in shaping children's character through the instillation of core values like discipline, perseverance, and a sense of responsibility. Furthermore, the experience of primary education is vital in refining social and emotional competencies, which in turn significantly enhances children's self-confidence and equips them with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of further educational endeavors. Basic education is also a crucial factor in mitigating dropout rates among students, enabling them to explore their diverse interests and latent talents, while cultivating lifelong learning habits that are indispensable for ensuring a child's future well-being, academic success, and overall fulfillment in life.

The family unit constitutes the primary environment that profoundly influences a child's developmental trajectory from the moment of birth all the way through to adulthood, serving as the initial context in which children receive their education and formative experiences. Within the family structure, children are exposed to their first lessons, which carry immense significance in shaping their personalities and overall character development, as established by the scholarly work of Amalia and Pahrul (2019). Parents, as integral members of the family, bear the weighty responsibility of being the primary

educators of their children within the home environment, which positions them as foundational figures in terms of education and moral guidance. Through their daily interactions and engagements within the familial setting, children are instilled with fundamental values, social norms, and behaviors that will ultimately influence their character and decision-making processes in the future. Consequently, the role of the family emerges as exceedingly vital in both the development and the formation of a child's identity and moral compass.

However, it is crucial to recognize that family crises can significantly disrupt this otherwise nurturing process of development. A family crisis, often colloquially referred to as a "broken home," represents a situation where the dynamics of family life become chaotic, disordered, and fraught with conflict. In such circumstances, parents frequently experience a loss of authority over their children, particularly as teenagers begin to assert their independence and rebel against established norms and expectations. The frequency of conflicts between parents, especially concerning differing parenting methodologies, tends to escalate, as noted by Rajagukguk et al. (2022). This tumultuous situation may lead to a breakdown of familial direction and stability, which can have detrimental effects on the emotional and psychological development of the children involved, creating an environment that is no longer perceived as safe or supportive. Each individual within the family is susceptible to various types of disturbances, which typically involve profound moral dilemmas and significant personal transformations. According to the research conducted by Willis (as referenced in Amalia and Pahrul, 2019), a broken home is characterized by an alarming lack of attention and affection from family members, which can result in a child's mental state becoming marked by frustration, aggression, and an overall difficulty in emotional regulation. This term also encompasses families that lack harmony, often experiencing conflicts that may ultimately lead to separation or divorce.

Saikia (as cited in Wulandri and Fauziah, 2019) posits that one of the principal contributors to the phenomenon of broken homes is the occurrence of parental divorce. The process of divorce not only alters the structural dynamics of the family but also profoundly impacts the emotional and psychological stability of the children who are caught in the crossfire of this transition. Children emerging from families undergoing the distressing experience of divorce frequently face significant emotional and social challenges that manifest in various forms, including feelings of profound loss, confusion, and deep-seated sadness. Additionally, these children may witness a decline in their academic performance, as well as confront difficulties in establishing and maintaining healthy social relationships with their peers.

The principal objective of this research endeavor is to meticulously identify and analyze the impact of family crises on the developmental trajectories of elementary school students. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of how family crises exert their influence on children, it is anticipated that effective and appropriate strategies and interventions can be devised to assist these young individuals in coping with the myriad challenges they face during such tumultuous times.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This scholarly investigation employs a qualitative methodology, specifically utilizing a case study design as its primary framework. As articulated by Creswell (as cited in Assyakurrohim, Ikham, Sirodj, & Afgani, 2023), a case study is characterized as a form of research that meticulously explores a particular phenomenon—referred to as the case—within a specified timeframe and context, which may encompass various activities such as programs, events, processes, institutions, or social groups, while simultaneously accumulating detailed and comprehensive information through a variety of data-gathering techniques over a defined duration. Qualitative research is inherently conducted within naturalistic settings and is fundamentally exploratory in its orientation, seeking to uncover deeper insights and understandings. Within this framework of qualitative research, the researcher assumes the role of the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, as noted by Gumilang (2016). This particular study encompasses direct observational methods and engages in profound interactions with the subjects of research, aiming to elucidate the ramifications of family crises on the developmental trajectories of elementary school students. Such an investigative approach facilitates the acquisition of an extensive and nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of the individuals involved, with a particular focus on those students identified as being significantly influenced by familial disruptions.

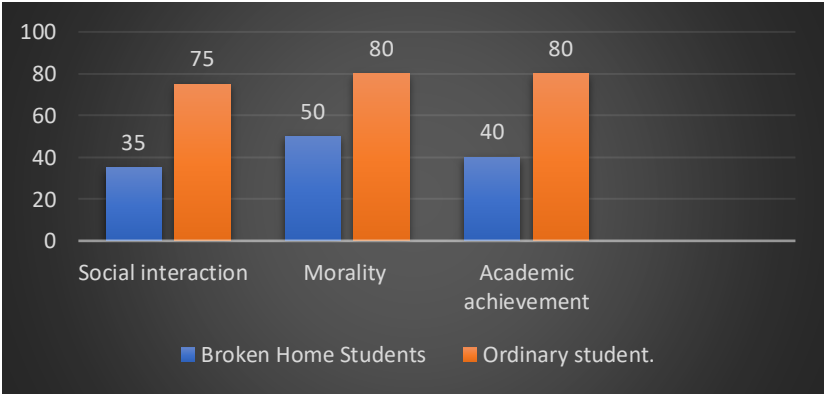
The techniques employed for data collection are multifaceted and include conducting interviews with the primary subjects of the study, which consist of students who are currently enduring the adverse effects stemming from family crises, as well as gathering perspectives from significant others in their vicinity, including parents and educators. In addition to interviews, the researcher undertook engagement observations, wherein they meticulously observed the interactions of students within the school setting, both in classroom environments and during other school-related activities, thereby gaining a firsthand account of the students' behaviors and emotional responses. Furthermore, documentation was meticulously compiled in the form of daily notes that chronicled the activities of the subjects, along with pertinent academic records and behavioral assessments, all of which contribute to a rich dataset for analysis.

The analytical phase of the research was conducted utilizing triangulation techniques, a method employed to bolster the credibility and validity of the findings presented in this scholarly work. Data triangulation specifically entails the process of comparing and verifying information sourced from a variety of origins, thereby ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the conclusions drawn and interpretations made. By integrating the data acquired from interviews, observational insights, and documented evidence, this research aspires to present a holistic representation of the influences exerted by family crises on the developmental processes of elementary school students. The imperative to ensure that the findings derived from this research are both reliable and robust is paramount, as it lays a solid groundwork for the formulation of targeted interventions aimed at supporting students who are grappling with the challenges associated with family crises.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research reveals the significant impact of family crises, particularly on an elementary school student referred to as Child D. Child D experienced a family crisis caused by parental infidelity and their subsequent separation. The psychological and behavioral effects of this "broken home" condition are very evident in Child D's behavior at school. Child D exhibits erratic behavior, seeks negative attention, and experiences a decline in academic and moral performance. To gain a deeper understanding of this impact, researchers conducted a survey among other students at the school, comparing those from broken homes with students from typical families in terms of social interactions, morals, and academic performance. The survey results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Comparison Chart of Student Behavior from Broken Home and Non-Broken Home Families



This graphic representation serves as a visual aid that delineates the distinctions in social interactions, moral values, and academic accomplishments between students hailing from fragmented familial structures, commonly referred to as broken homes, and their counterparts who originate from cohesive and intact family units. It becomes abundantly clear from the data presented that students who come from broken homes encounter significantly greater obstacles and challenges across all the assessed categories, as opposed to students who benefit from the stability and support provided by intact families, highlighting the profound implications of family structure on a child's development.

The phenomenon of family crises, characterized by the presence of broken homes, exerts a considerable negative influence on the holistic development of children, manifesting itself in various dimensions including emotional, social, and academic realms. A case study exemplifying this issue is Child D, who serves as a poignant illustration of the disruptive effects of familial instability on a child's comprehensive growth and development trajectory.

In terms of emotional and social functioning, Child D demonstrates a pronounced tendency to withdraw from engaging in social interactions, experiences a perpetual sense of restlessness, and increasingly resorts to negative behaviors as coping mechanisms. The emotional turmoil and instability that Child D endures as a direct consequence of their parents' infidelity and subsequent separation creates formidable barriers that hinder their

ability to cultivate healthy and constructive relationships with their peers, thereby exacerbating their social isolation.

Regarding the development of moral values, it is often observed that children emerging from broken homes encounter significant difficulties in forming stable and coherent moral frameworks. Observations concerning Child D suggest that they exhibit diminished moral values, a phenomenon that may be attributed to the absence of positive role models and a lack of consistent, guiding influences within their familial environment. The family unit, which traditionally fulfills the vital role of protector and nurturer, fails to provide the necessary support and guidance that is essential for healthy moral development.

The fundamental protective function of a family is to safeguard and nurture its members from adverse influences and negative experiences that may arise, thereby ensuring a supportive environment conducive to healthy growth. It is imperative for the family to uphold its responsibilities as a pivotal institution, facilitating interaction that fosters strong emotional bonds among its members, in alignment with their social roles and statuses within the familial hierarchy. This profound and robust emotional connection must be palpable to every individual within the family as a manifestation of care and affection, as articulated by Rakhmawati (2015). The absence of love and attention in the home environment frequently compels children to seek validation and attention through unhealthy avenues, which can have deleterious effects on their overall well-being.

Additionally, the emotional instability that arises from the experience of living in a broken home has far-reaching implications for the academic performance of children. Empirical research consistently indicates that children from broken homes tend to achieve inferior academic results when juxtaposed with their peers from intact families, thereby underscoring the correlation between familial stability and academic success. The inability to concentrate on educational pursuits, largely due to the emotional disturbances stemming from their home life, emerges as a significant factor contributing to this decline in academic performance. According to the research conducted by Okafor, as cited in Wahid et al. (2022), it is evident that children originating from broken homes frequently endure a marked decline in their academic achievements, primarily attributable to the substantial mental burdens they are compelled to bear as a result of their challenging home environments.

In the context of addressing the challenges faced by students hailing from backgrounds characterized by familial instability, it becomes paramount for educational institutions to implement comprehensive support mechanisms that cater to the multifaceted needs of these learners, thus ensuring their academic success as well as their social and emotional development. Moreover, the active engagement of parents or guardians plays an indispensable role in equipping students with the necessary tools to navigate the adverse effects associated with experiencing a fractured home environment, thereby fostering resilience and coping strategies that are crucial for their overall well-being (Nuzuli et al., 2023). The synergistic collaboration between educational establishments and families can significantly contribute to the creation of an environment that is not only supportive but also conducive to student growth, enabling them to surmount various challenges while optimizing their inherent potential and enhancing their psychological health in the process.

To mitigate the detrimental consequences that a fractured home life can impose on children, a variety of strategic interventions can be employed, particularly by classroom educators and school administrators who play a pivotal role in this endeavor. In this context, the homeroom teacher undertook the initiative to visit the residence of student D, thereby acquiring direct insight into the familial circumstances that may be influencing the student's academic and social experiences. Through such home visits, the class teacher is afforded the opportunity to engage in dialogue with both the parents and student D, facilitating a deeper comprehension of the domestic environment and enabling the teacher to devise tailored strategies aimed at supporting child D effectively. This particular visit assumes critical importance as it allows for the identification of underlying issues that may be affecting the child, thereby guiding the development of appropriate interventions that can address these challenges.

Within the school setting, the homeroom teacher subsequently organized a personal counseling session with child D, during which the educator inquired about the student's home life, gauging his feelings regarding his ability to attend school regularly, and encouraging him to articulate the various issues he was encountering. By fostering a safe and supportive atmosphere in which child D feels comfortable sharing his emotions and experiences, the homeroom teacher plays an instrumental role in alleviating the adverse effects stemming from the problematic behaviors that child D had previously exhibited, thus promoting the student's maturation process and reducing the frequency with which he disrupts his classmates. Furthermore, the homeroom teacher actively motivates other students to extend their support to child D by engaging in social interactions and forming friendships with him, while being mindful to avoid discussing sensitive topics that could potentially exacerbate his emotional distress. The provision of social support from peers is of paramount importance, as it can significantly enhance child D's sense of belonging and acceptance within the school community.

In instances where student D becomes embroiled in a conflict with another student, the homeroom teacher adopts a constructive and mediative approach, which involves convening both parties to hear their respective accounts of the incident and endeavoring to align their perspectives for a mutual understanding. Following the determination of accountability regarding the altercation, the teacher then arranges a private counseling session with child D to delve deeper into the motivations behind his aggressive behavior, with the aim of assisting him in discovering more effective and constructive methods for expressing his emotions in the future.

D. CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes that family crises, such as those experienced by child D due to parental infidelity and divorce, have a significant impact on child development. Family crises affect the emotional, social, moral, and academic aspects of children. Children from broken homes often exhibit withdrawal behavior, negative attention-seeking, and a decline in academic and moral performance. Students from broken homes face greater challenges in social interactions, moral values, and academic achievements compared to students from intact families.

To address this impact, schools need to provide academic and social-emotional support, such as personal counseling guidance. In addition, schools must create an inclusive and supportive environment, as well as involve parents or guardians to help children cope with broken home situations. With the right support, children from broken homes can optimally develop their potential and achieve well-being and success in the future.

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