



## Impact of Family Dysfunction on The Psychological Wellbeing of Pupils in Inclusive Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

Omoshalewa L Badamas\*, Elizabeth O Uyanne & Ifinju I. O.

Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, P.M.B. 1515

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### ABSTRACT

Family plays a significant role on how children develop and a steady family that is steady (responsibility and functionality) is extremely important to the development of a child. A child's home environment should offer a favourable framework for healthy psychological wellbeing. Thus, this study investigated the impact of family dysfunction on the psychological wellbeing of pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and simple random sampling technique was used to select 216 respondents from 12 inclusive schools in Lagos State. Two questionnaires titled Family Dysfunction and Psychological Wellbeing Scales (PWBS) were used. Percentage analysis was used to answer the research questions and PPMC was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The study revealed that the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive school in Lagos was relatively high, the state of psychological wellbeing of pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos was relatively low and there was significant negative impact of family dysfunction on psychological wellbeing of pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State. The study concluded that social support (emotional support) should be highly encouraged by the school authorities to emotional support struggling pupils and their counterparts.

## 1. Introduction

A dedication to educating every child to the greatest extent possible in the school and classroom that they would not ordinarily be able to attend is expressed by the phrase "inclusion." Instead of sending children to support services, inclusive education brings the support services closer to disadvantage children, and all that is necessary is for the child to benefit from the class (rather than having to keep up with other students). According to advocates of inclusive education, children with special needs should have the same educational opportunities as others

\* Corresponding author.  
E-mail: badamas.ol@unilorin.edu.ng

(Komolafe, 2018). This is because, the goal of an inclusive education system is to educate children with disability in local schools alongside other children without disability, assuming they had no specific learning difficulties. This implies that regardless of psychological and physical differences, no child should be excluded from school. However, whether with or without disability, for children in inclusive school or any other kind of school to thrive, a functional and structural household is essential, thus family functioning is critical in the overall development of pupils in any school, inclusive or not (Lewandowski et al., 2010).

A family is a group that includes parents and children who reside in the same home. Families are made up of different numbers of people who are related to one another in specific ways, such as mothers, fathers, and children. Grandparents, in-laws, step-relatives, and even ex-relatives could all be included in this perspective. Different schools of thought have described families in literature. The primary purposes of a family are emphasized in the functional school of thought's definition of the term "family" (Hamon & Smith, 2016). It is based on the significance of human reproduction and emphasizes how long-lasting the nurturing needs of children are.

Functional theories examine how well families provide the necessary functions, and families are referred to as dysfunctional if these roles are not fulfilled (Alexander & Robbins, 2019). Structural school of thought, emphasizes the make-up of the family and its structure. This implies that family members are connected by blood, marriage, or another type of legal tie. It also has to do with various forms of relationships amongst members. Power, influence, communication, affection, and leisure all play a role in certain friendships being formed. Typically, a family is organized according to factors like gender, age, and generation. Four key roles that families play have been emphasized by numerous experts (Povedano-Diaz et al., 2020). These include financial security, psycho-emotional support, appropriate lifestyles, and early socialization.

In developing nations, including Nigeria, it is the duty of a family to ensure the financial stability of family members, especially the father who is seen as the family's leader while mothers typically take care of the home. Instead, due to recent economic downturns and advancements in technology, families now have two working parents who share parenting duties. Before being handed any family responsibilities, children are expected to finish their official education up to the university level and find good careers. Therefore, it is abnormal or dysfunctional to see school-age youngsters supporting their families or themselves. Another critical function of a family is to provide psycho-emotional support. A family's members are required to support one another in resolving their interpersonal and social issues. Family upbringing also determines the family lifestyle (Ufuophu-Biri, 2020). The family also takes care of child socialization. Family instills fundamental values in early children that shape their personalities, communication skills, habits, etiquette, and, of course, complete socialization. As a result, family dysfunction could be detrimental to a child's general development and school involvement (Grusec & Davidov, 2021).

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Family dysfunction is considered as any situation that prevents a normal, healthy family from operating properly (Guo et al., 2018). But in homes with instability, issues can become persistent at times, and children frequently lack the resources they require to meet their emotional, psychological, and financial demands. According to Nie et al. (2020), children from these homes occasionally grow up thinking that their living situation is typical. Sutanto and Soetikno (2022) state that dysfunctional families are sometime caused drug and alcohol misuse, or occasionally a parent's untreated mental illness. (Agrawal & Bhardwaj, 2013) noted that some dysfunctional parents could reflect their own problematic parental experiences onto their own families, imitating or over-correcting such situations. In certain situations, a "childlike" parent will consent to their children being abused by a more violent parent. A frequent misconception about dysfunctional families is that the parents are about to get divorced or separated. Contrary to divorce and, to a lesser extent, separation, an "intact" family's dysfunction is frequently not documented. As a result, the situation may go unnoticed by the friends, family, and teachers of such child.

While this is true in some instances, the marriage bond is frequently quite strong since the parents' flaws actually work to each other's advantages. They simply don't have anywhere else to go. Though the family's condition is not necessarily stable despite this. Yeo and Chan (2020) reiterated that any significant stressor, such as moving, being unemployed or underemployed, suffering from a medical or mental ailment, or experiencing a natural disaster, can make already existing tensions affecting a child considerably worse. Additionally, a child could be unfairly held responsible for the turmoil in the household and put through more stress than children whose parent divorce.

According to Felisilda and Torreón (2020) there are no established social, economic or intellectual boundaries in dysfunctional households. However, until recently, professionals such as therapists, social workers, teachers, counselors, and religious leaders, particularly among the middle and upper classes, did not take the idea of a dysfunctional family seriously. Any involvement would have been viewed as a socially unacceptable violation of the sacredness of marriage and raising the likelihood of divorce. In the past, children in unhappy homes were expected to obey their parents, especially the father, and to handle their circumstances on their own. Magpantay et al. (2014) attested that the social skills in children are known to suffer from family turmoil, both at home and at school.

Negative parental behavior patterns frequently predominate in the lives of children in dysfunctional homes and the consequences on children can sometimes last long even after they have left their troubled homes when issues and conditions like parental drunkenness, mental illness, child abuse, or strong parental rigidity and control interfere with family functioning (Apriyeni & Patricia, 2021). Adults who were raised in dysfunctional households usually report having trouble developing and sustaining close friendships, upholding a sense of self-worth, and having faith in other people. They suppress their emotions and reality out of a fear of losing control, hence the oftentimes lack the capacity to be playful (Coohey et al., 2011).

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In addition to lacking the capacity to be playful or youthful, children from dysfunctional families may also mature too quickly (Brown et al., 2011). Many times, older children have their childhoods abruptly cut short and find up raising their younger siblings in place of them. This causes the developing child great stress because he or she must continue with necessary quasi-parental responsibilities while managing his or her education. On the other hand, a child can mature too slowly or exhibit a mixed mode, such as being well-behaved yet incapable of taking care of themselves (Sutanto & Soetikno, 2022). Additionally, they have a propensity to exhibit moderate to severe mental health disorders, including potential suicidal thoughts, sadness, and anxiety (Ulitua & Soetikno, 2022). Some of these children bully or harass others or easily fall prey to it; they might even play two roles in different contexts.

Evidence suggests that many of these children develop confused feelings of love and hatred for some family members as they grow up, denying the gravity of their family's circumstances (Edwards et al., 2019). Some of them eventually turn into sex offenders, potentially even engaging in pedophilia (Međedović & Kujčić, 2020). As they get older, the majority of these children struggle to establish good friendships among their peers, typically as a result of shyness or a personality condition. They frequently engage in activities that don't involve face-to-face social connection, such as watching television, playing video games, surfing the internet, listening to music, and others, for extended periods of time alone (Spinelli et al., 2021). In the study of Öztürk (2022), it was emphasized that most of them frequently experience feelings of rage, anxiety, depression, loneliness, or unlovability; they may also have speech difficulties linked to emotional abuse. In other situations, they develop paranoia and develop a general mistrust of other people, which are indications of poor psychological wellbeing.

Psychological wellbeing can be described as the absence of overt psychiatric symptoms or as having good mental health and existential qualities like the capacity to think and act in the best possible way given a certain setting (Hailegiorgis et al., 2018). The scientific research of Ryff in 1989 made the significance of psychological well-being generally known. His research on the "Exploration on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being" demonstrates that psychological well-being is a state of people who have the capacity to make their own life decisions independently, to control their environment successfully, to build positive relationships with others, to choose and carry out the direction and purpose of their lives, to accept themselves positively, and to continuously develop their potential (Ryff, 2014). Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, meaningful relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance are six fundamental themes that emphasize what Ryff means by psychological wellbeing in his work. These six themes are all essential to a child's mental and emotional development. Within the framework of this study, psychological wellbeing is defined as the feelings of normalcy and mental stability that indicate that everything is fine and moving in the right direction. The subjective perception of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and one's function in school, as well as a lack of discomfort, dissatisfaction, or worry, are all examples of psychological wellbeing.

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The study of Atia et al. (2021) indicated that social support, happy emotions, and a good mood all play fundamental roles in building robust psychological well-being. Optimism, self-control, enjoyment, feeling of purpose, freedom from failures, worry, and loneliness was identified as the special aspects of psychological well-being in Hailegiorgis et al.(2018) study. Psychological well-being is a multidimensional notion. Irwin et al. (2019) asserts that modern approaches to psychology, such as positive psychology, place a strong emphasis on how happiness and wellbeing are seen, interpreted, and related characteristics are predicted. Psychological health is crucial throughout all stages of life, including childhood. Psychological well-being serves as the foundation for quality of life because it can serve as an investigative criterion for individual merit and quality as viewed in all areas of everyday life of which family plays a crucial role (Law et al., 2018).

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The family has a significant impact on how children and adolescents develop. Among the many aspects of a family that may affect a child's development, an intact home that is largely steady in terms of responsibility and functionality is extremely important. Naturally, a child's home environment should offer a favorable framework for their overall growth. This might significantly affect how well the child does in school and in life in general. A child's growth can be positively impacted by the family environment, which provides unique learning opportunities. In inclusive schools, the home environment is especially crucial for young children, and concrete activities like reading aloud are very engaging. A stimulating environment has been demonstrated to influence children development more powerfully than socioeconomic background.

However, it is self-evident that families experience times when stress-related events, such as a family member's death, a parent's significant sickness, a divorce, a loss of household income, an abusive parent, or extended substance usage, make it difficult for the family to function which might cause significant drawback in the development of a child in such context. A dysfunctional family is one in which disputes, bad behavior, and frequently child neglect or abuse on the part of individual parents occur continuously and frequently, leading other family members to put up with such behavior i.e., their children. Healthy families typically resume normal functioning after the stated crisis has passed. Studies have shown the negative consequence of dysfunctional family to a child development; for instance, Bussemakers et al. (2022) titled "Household dysfunction and child development" shows that a dysfunction home negatively impact child development in terms of financial constraint. Also, the study of Guo et al. (2018) on family dysfunction and anxiety among adolescents reveals that adolescents from dysfunctional families and more likely to be anxious compare to those who are not. Thus, while these studies are foreign based, adopting different methodological approaches, this present study, therefore, investigated the impact of Family Dysfunction and Psychological well-being of Pupils in Inclusive Education in Lagos, Nigeria.

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### **Research Question**

1. What is the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State?
2. What is the level of psychological well-being of pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils with disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State.

## **2. Methodology**

*Research Design:* The study adopted a descriptive survey design. *Sample and Sampling Techniques:* The study used a simple random sampling method. 216 pupils were chosen at random by the researcher from 12 inclusive schools in Lagos State. It has 115 females and 101 males, all of whom are between the ages of nine and thirteen. *Instrumentation:* Family Dysfunction Scale by Odedokun (2020) was adapted to measure the family dysfunction of each participant and experiences in the family. It has fifteen items having a 5-likert response format scale, from SA, which stands for strongly agreed, to SD, which stands for strongly disagreed. The scale has a test-retest reliability of 0.85, indicating that it is internally trustworthy.

By using the instrument to sample people beyond the initial group (a pilot study) and a Cronbach alpha of 0.78 was obtained. The Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWBS) by Devendera Singh Sisodia and Pooja Chaudhary (2012) was adapted to examine psychological wellbeing. The test consists of 28 questions covering the following five areas: (1) Satisfaction; (2) Efficiency; (3) Sociability; (4) Mental Health; and (5) Interpersonal Relations. A coefficient of 0.94 was achieved when the scale was validated using external criteria. The consistency value for the scale was 0.90, while the test-retest reliability was 0.87.

*Procedure of Data Administration:* The responders received the questionnaires in their respective classroom. The importance of working with the researcher was effectively explained to the pupils. They were made aware that the study's primary goal was research, the findings of which might have a significant positive impact on both their mental health and involvement in school. The confidentiality of the respondents' answers was guaranteed. *Method Of Data Analysis:* The data obtained from the field were subjected to percentage analysis to answer the two research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical test was used to test the hypothesis, tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

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### 3. Results and Discussion

Results in table 1 show that 216 pupils participated in the study out of which 101 (46.8%) were males while 115(53.2%) were female and 97(44.9%) were with disability as well as 119(55.1%) were without disability.

*Question one: What is the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos?*

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Male	101	46.8
Female	115	53.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Condition</b>		
With Disability	97	44.9
Without Disability	119	55.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Result in table 2 shows the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos. As shown in the table, 71(32.9%) of the respondents got low score while 145(67.1%) of the sampled respondents got high score. This means that the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive schools was relatively high.

Table 2. Level of Family Dysfunction among Pupils in Inclusive Schools in Lagos

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Cutoff range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Low	7-17	71	32.9
High	18-28	145	67.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>216</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Question Two: What is the state of psychological well-being among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos?*

Table 3. The Level Psychological Well-Being among Pupils in Inclusive Schools in Lagos

<b>State</b>	<b>Cutoff Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Low	6-14	122	56.5
High	15-23	94	43.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>216</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Result in table 3 reveals the level of psychological well-being among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos. As shown in the table, 122(56.5%) of the respondents scored low while 94(43.5%) of the sampled respondents got high score on psychological wellbeing. This means that the level of psychological well-being among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos was relatively low.

*Hypothesis Testing One: There is no significant impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State*

Table 4. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the Impact of Family Dysfunction on the Psychological Well-Being of Pupils with Disability in Inclusive Schools in Lagos State

Variables	r - cal.	p-value	Remark
Family Dysfunction	-0.621	0.000	Significant
Psychological Well-Being			

Table 4 reveals the r-calculated value (-0.621) and the p-value (0.000) of pupils with disability in inclusive schools in Lagos. Since the calculated p-value (0.000) was less than 0.05 level of significance value ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). This means that the null hypothesis was rejected, meanwhile the r-calculated value of -0.621 was negative; hence, there was significant negative impact of family dysfunction on the psychological wellbeing of pupils with disability in inclusive schools in Lagos ( $r = -0.401$ ). This implies that an increase in family dysfunction leads to decrease in the psychological wellbeing of pupils with disability in inclusive school in Lagos.

*Hypothesis Testing One: There is no significant impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State.*

Table 5. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the Impact of Family Dysfunction on the Psychological Well-Being of Pupils Without Disability in Inclusive Schools in Lagos State

Variables	r - cal.	p-value	Remark
Family Dysfunction	-0.401	0.031	Significant
Psychological Well-Being			

Table 5 reveals the r-calculated value (-0.401) and the p-value (0.031) of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State. Since the calculated p-value (0.031) was less than 0.05 level of significance value ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). This means that the null hypothesis was rejected, meanwhile the r-calculated value of -0.401 was negative; hence, there was significant negative impact of family dysfunction on the psychological wellbeing of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State ( $r = -0.401$ ). This implies that an increase in family dysfunction leads to decrease or low psychological wellbeing of pupils without disability in inclusive school in Lagos State.

### ***Discussion of the Finding***

Research question one examines the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos. The result indicates that the level of family dysfunction among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos was relatively high. This result supported the finding of Odedokun (2020) who found that the prevalent of dysfunctional family among school students is on the increase which could significantly affect the overall performance of students. In the same vein, the study of Omoruyi (2014) and van der Wal et al. (2019) found out that children that hails from broken homes or homes with high-conflict performs poorly in



school and lacks critical social skills. Ibegwam (2013) study concurred that the rate of parental separation and divorce among in-school adolescents is somewhat high although the study did not clearly specify the connection of students whose parents are undergoing separation and their school engagements it however revealed that students whose family somewhat dysfunctional are worrisomely raising. In similar fashion, Tullius et al. (2021) concurred with their longitudinal data, reporting that young teenagers from families of divorce were twice as likely to have dropped out of high school as their peers from traditional intact families.

Research question two investigates the level of psychological well-being among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State. The finding shows that the level of psychological well-being among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos was relatively low. This result is in tandem with Umoren and Owiriwa, (2018) findings that factors such as domestic violence, parental separation and bad drinking habit negatively affects children psychological wellbeing which leads to poor psychological wellbeing. Also, Amarachi et al. (2020) research survey indicated that there is a decline in the psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents in Nigeria, this is partly due to the economic issues parents had to contend with, hence most children are forced to cope with the situation hereby affecting their mental health. In similar fashion, Vinayak and Judge (2018) while examining the psychological wellbeing of adolescents found that factors such as resilience and empathy are strategies adolescents have to utilize in order for them to maintain a relatively stable psychological wellbeing, however, a significant number of young teenagers revealed symptom of depression which is a sign of poor psychological wellbeing in the classroom environment.

The hypothesis which state that there was no significant impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils with disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State was rejected. The hypothesis finding shows that there was significant negative impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils with disability in inclusive schools in Lagos ( $r=-0.621$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This means that an increase in family dysfunction leads to decrease or low level of psychological wellbeing of pupils with disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State. This result corroborates with the findings of Garcia Mendoza et al. (2019) that parental role in the psychological wellbeing of children is critical, a bridge in the family structure significantly impact the psychological condition of a child. Also, Mosley-Johnson et al. (2019) agreed that children psychological wellbeing is significantly impacted by the kind of family they hail from. That is, a functioning family enables and increase positive psychological wellbeing while a dysfunctional family negatively impact children psychological wellbeing. The study of Odedokun (2020) on “Influence of family dysfunction and emotional intelligence on school dropout intention among police officers’ children in Lagos State” agreed that family dysfunction is one of the main factors negatively affecting the psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents. Hence, an increase in the dysfunctional family lead to the decrease or lower level of psychological wellbeing of children.

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The hypothesis which state that there was no significant impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State was rejected. The hypothesis finding shows that there was significant negative impact of family dysfunction on the psychological well-being of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos ( $r=-0.401$ ,  $p=0.031$ ). This means that an increase in family dysfunction leads to decrease or low level of psychological wellbeing of pupils without disability in inclusive schools in Lagos State. This result is in agreement with the findings of Harkness and Lumley (2008) that family is an essential component in building the psychological wellbeing of children, if the family structure is negatively altered, children in such situation are forced to live with the consequence which often time is psychologically, emotionally and physically detrimental. Also, Sutanto and Soetikno (2022) study indicated that psychological wellbeing is significantly impacted by home environment. That is, hostile home negatively increases the psychological condition of children that are in their formative stage of development and vice versa. The study of Bussemakers et al. (2022) on "Household dysfunction and child development" agreed that dysfunctional household as a result of economic factor negatively affect the psychological development of children in such situation. Hence, pupils whose family are at the brick of separation as a result of economic or marital issues are more likely to be psychological stressed and unable to maintain optimal attention in classroom situation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The implication of this study is that family dysfunction and psychological wellbeing are two main factors to be taken into consideration as far as pupils in inclusive school are concerned. Family dysfunction has been shown to drive poor psychological wellbeing condition in this study. Hence, in view of this, it is hereby recommended that inclusive schools in Lagos State should recruit more qualified personnel so as to monitor and supervised these pupils who have family challenges. This would however help reduce psychological stress pupils are facing as a result of family related problems. Social support, specifically, emotional support, should be highly encouraged and facilitated by the school authorities. One implication of this study is that there is a negative relationship between family dysfunction and psychological wellbeing among pupils in inclusive schools in Lagos State, based on this fact, a comprehensive sensitization campaign should be done from time to time during Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings to inform parents how their actions and inactions at home impact their children psychological wellbeing, this will go a long way in curtailing toxicity some parent display in front of their children. In future studies, it would be useful to check the moderating effects of social support on the psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents having dysfunctional family while moderating for age and gender. Finally, to assess the validity and generalizability of the findings, future research should replicate and extend the findings of this study.

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