

## Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

Kyle Dominick Caab<sup>1</sup>, Cristal May Imperial<sup>2</sup>, Jaeve Jumao-as<sup>3</sup>, Jesilmia Tubiano<sup>4</sup>, Mheljean Mae Perez<sup>5</sup>, Joe Carl Castillo, MAPHilo<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> Senior High School Students, UM Digos College, Roxas Ext., Digos City, Philippines

<sup>6</sup>Faculty Member, Senior High School Department, UM Digos College, Roxas Ext., Digos City, Philippines

**ABSTRACT** The family, recognized as the basic unit of society, plays a crucial role in the early socialization and moral development of children. It provides essential support for their growth and overall well-being. However, parental separation, an increasing prevalent phenomenon, introduces significant challenges that may affect children's academic performance. This study investigates the influence of parental separation on the academic performance of Senior High School students in Digos City, Philippines. Utilizing a non-experimental descriptive research design, the study analyzed data from nine (9) Grade 12 students through simple random sampling. The research employed standardized and validated questionnaires to assess three key aspects: the relationship of parental separation, reasons for parental separation, and effects of parental separation. The findings reveal that the influence of parental separation on academic performance is often manifested, though the relationship between these variables is described as moderate. Interestingly, the study also found no significant difference in academic performance when grouped by sex or academic strand, suggesting that while parental separation presents challenges, other mitigating factors may play a role in buffering its impact. These findings underscore the importance of a supportive family and educational environment in maintaining academic engagement despite familial disruptions. The study contributes valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support students navigating the complexities of parental separation.

**KEYWORDS:** Family, Parental Separation, Academic Performance, Senior High School Students

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A family is a vital component of society where the foundations of socialization and moral development are laid. It plays a pivotal role in meeting the fundamental requirements of its members, particularly children, and creating a supportive atmosphere for their growth. Moreover, fostering affection, open communication, and offering assistance are essential aspects of family dynamics (Buehler, 2020). The Philippine Constitution of 1987 acknowledges the Filipino family as the nation's cornerstone, underscoring the government's responsibility to bolster legislation and advocate for the comprehensive advancement of Filipino families.

Previous research conducted in the United States has indicated that the proportion of students from divorced or separated families negatively impacts their academic performance. This study utilized data from 16,468 students and their parents across 471 secondary schools in England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. It aimed to examine the effects of the demographic composition of schools on student outcomes. The study also explored the influence of school disadvantages and school-level social capital. The results revealed that when a higher percentage of students in a school came from separated families, students exhibited lower scores in reading tests, displayed disruptive behavior, and engaged in more problematic behaviors outside school (Kalmijn, 2023).

Aside from the Vatican, the Philippines is the only country that does not have a divorce law. Despite the absence of a divorce law, the number of parental separations in the Philippines continues to increase over the years (Abalos, 2017). Therefore, Filipino families continue to face various consequences of parental separation. However, there is a scarcity of research explicitly addressing Filipinos who have undergone parental separation compared to international studies. Existing literature on this subject also lacks exploration of related areas and is outdated (Falculan et al., 2019).

Pinantoan (2013) pointed out that the influence of parental involvement on a student's academic success should not be underestimated. The article stressed that a student's support system from home is equally important as his brain power, work ethic, and genetics, which all work in accomplishing his goal in life. Furthermore, students with two parents operating in supportive roles are 52% more likely to enjoy school and get straight A's than students whose parents are disengaged with what is happening at

## **Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students**

school. This is especially the case during the earliest years of schooling, in Kindergarten through the 5th grade, when students with active parents are almost twice as likely to succeed. Once students enter middle school, the effect diminishes slightly, possibly because they are maturing during this time (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014).

Parents showing a positive attitude toward education at home inspire their children to adopt better behavior in the classroom. Students feeling their education is worthwhile at home are more motivated to behave well in school and focus on their studies. It can create a more positive learning environment for all students. It is important to note that many factors can contribute to a child's development and academic performance; each child is unique. However, parental involvement can be influential (Ejaz, 2023). Ultimately, the role of parents in educating their children needs to be supportive and proactive. By encouraging the children to explore a wide range of subjects, parents can help to ensure that their children receive a well-rounded and meaningful education that prepares them for the future.

The family plays a crucial role in protecting children, as it places responsibility on parents for their upbringing and overall development. Women, particularly mothers, as educators, are essential for shaping individual identity. Research suggests this role is more significant than the parent's marital status or occupation. The biological and physiological bond between mother and child is fundamental in early development. The mother not only gives life but also nurtures the child from infancy to independence in adulthood (Ceka & Murati, 2016).

This study was anchored on the psychodynamic theory by Sigmund Freud (1923), which states that an individual's psychological thinking, behavior, and personality can result from parental separation. Hence, it can also reflect on their academic performance (Guntrip, 2018). The psychological thinking, behavior, and personality of an individual in their adulthood, especially psychological dysfunction and distress, are thought to be significantly shaped by their early childhood experiences. According to (Teater, 2015), the role played by the influential individual's behavior is pivotal in instigating a reciprocal response from the other party. Hence, within an individual's subconscious, patterns of relationships established during infancy or childhood may resurface or materialize in adult interpersonal dynamics.

The study focuses on the influence of parental separation on the academic performance of Senior High School Students. It examines three aspects: relationships of parental separation, which refers to the relationship dynamics between parents after separation; reasons for parental separation, which refers to the factors or causes that led to parents getting separated; and effects of separation, which refers to how children are affected by their parent's separation.

The study's findings will serve as an eye-opener for parents, emphasizing that their role in their children's education is crucial, as education begins at home and parents are a child's first teachers. Therefore, parents play a significant role in shaping their children's personalities. Additionally, the study's findings may help students address and overcome personality challenges resulting from their parents' separation, encouraging them to adopt positive qualities for a better future. Furthermore, the study's results are expected to be an effective tool for raising teachers' awareness and guiding students, particularly enhancing their academic engagement. For future researchers, the data could provide insights and facilitate exploration of other aspects of how parental separation affects children's development.

### Research Objectives

This study aims to determine the influence of parental separation on the student's academic performance. Specifically, it sought answers from the following: (1) to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex and strand; (2) to assess the level of the influence of parental separation on the academic performance of the students in terms of Relationship of Parental Separation and Academic Performance, Reasons for Parental Separation, and Effects of Parental Separation; and (3) to determine if there is a significant difference in the influence of parental separation on academic performance when respondents are grouped by profile.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This section contains research respondents, research instrument employed, and research design and procedure.

### **Research Respondents**

The study was undertaken at a Senior High School in Digos City, Philippines. The study employed simple random sampling to determine the respondents. This sampling technique is a method which has an inclusive and equitable representation of drawing samples from the general population (Gupta & Shabbir, 2008 as cited in Diquito et al., 2024). Moreover, the following inclusion criteria were used in selecting the respondents of the study: a Grade 12 student in senior high school who are officially enrolled in the school year 2023 - 2024; living through a parental separation and are willing to participate in the study. Following these set criteria, a total of 19 respondents were able to participate in the study.

# Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

## Research Instrument

The research instruments utilized in the study were standardized questionnaires adapted from the study of Onifade (2017) entitled “Effects of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Adolescent Students in Ijemo Titun High School, Ibara, Abeokuta” and contextualized by the researcher to fit based on the research objectives and validated by the experts. The following are the indicators: relationship of parental separation (11 items), reasons for parental separation (9 Items), and identifying the effect of parental separation (10 items).

In evaluating the influence of parental separation on the academic performance of Senior High School students, the five orderable gradations with their respective range of means and descriptions were used as follows:

**Table 1: Range of Means and Interpretation**

Range of Means	Numerical Value	Verbal Description	Descriptive Meaning
4.21-5.00	5	Very Low	This means that the level of influence of parental separation is not manifested.
3.41-4.20	4	Low	This means that the level of influence of parental separation is rarely manifested.
2.61- 3.40	3	Moderate	This means that the level of influence of parental separation is sometimes manifested.
1.81- 2.60	2	High	This means that the level of influence of parental separation is often manifested.
1.00-1.80	1	Very High	This means that the level of influence of parental separation is always manifested.

## Research Design and Procedure

The study utilized a non-experimental descriptive- research design as it would determine the Influence of Parental Separation on the Academic Performance of Senior High School students. As highlighted by (Calmorin & Calmorin, 2007), descriptive research design involves describing conditions between variables. A data collection approach that helps them to clarify the situation more thoroughly, descriptive research sought to shed light on current issues or concerns. Descriptive analysis accounts for the current situation in which the researcher has no control over the variables. According to Creswell (2013), the outcomes of this design method can be descriptive, informative, or confirmatory.

In conducting the study, the following procedures were taken out by the researchers: firstly, the researchers have conducted a validation of the research questionnaire to experts to determine its applicability to the context of the study. Secondly, the researchers then submitted a formal letter to the school principal of the selected school for approval. Thirdly, upon the approval, the researchers then conducted a preliminary screening to determine the potential respondents to the study based on the set inclusion criteria. Fourthly, after the screening, the researchers then distributed the questionnaire to the target respondents along with the consent form. Fifthly, the researchers then retrieved the questionnaire along with the consent form, and then tabulated and analyzed.

In the data analysis, the researchers used mean, standard deviation, Mann-Whitney U test, and Kruskal-Wallis test to identify significant differences in the influence of parental separation on academic performance of the students. Moreover, the data obtained were statistically treated at a validity level of alpha 0.05.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section the result and discussion of the demographic profile of the respondents, the level of influence of parental separation on academic performance among Senior High School students and the significant differences of various indicators when grouped according to students’ sex and strand.

## Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents of the study. In terms of sex, female respondents consists the majority of the respondents (f=14, %=73.70) compared to male (f=5, %=26.3). In terms of strand, HUMSS strand consists the majority of the respondents (f=13, %=68.4) compared to STEM (f=6, %=31.60).

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=19)**

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	5	26.30
Female	14	73.70
Strand		
HUMSS	13	68.40
STEM	6	31.60

### Level of Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance Among Senior High School Students

Table 3 presents the influence of parental separation among Senior High School students in terms of the relationship of parental separation on academic performance, reasons for parental separation, and effects of parental separation. The overall mean score obtained is 2.60, which is described as high. This means that the level of influence of parental separation is often manifested. The mean score obtained for each indicator is presented and discussed below.

#### Relationship of Parental Separation on Academic Performance.

As shown in the table, the level of influence of parental separation on academic performance among senior high schools in terms of the relationship of parental separation on academic performance obtained a mean score of 2.68, which is described as moderate. Data implies that the relationship between parental separation and the respondents' academic performance is sometimes manifested. Respondents sometimes agree that students perform well in school because they live with their parents. Also, respondents believed that sometimes children from separated homes are not always punctual in school. Students reveal that, in some ways, they do not take their breakfast square meals in a day.

**Table 3. Level of Influence of Parental Separation on the Academic Performance of the Students**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Remarks
Relationship of Parental Separation on Academic Performance	2.68	0.55	Moderate
Reasons for Parental Separation	2.41	0.84	High
Effects of Parental Separation	2.71	0.58	Moderate
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.60</b>	0.85	High

The finding is supported by the study of Karhina et al. (2023) on Parental Separation and School Drop Out in Adolescence. Accordingly, children and adolescents with separated parents are at a higher risk of maladjustment across a multitude of outcomes compared with their peers in nuclear two-parent families. The link between parental separation and poorer academic outcomes in adolescence may be vital, as it may initiate future disadvantages, including occupational and economic instability and poorer health. The link between parental separation and school dropout could also be influenced by more proximal factors relating to child adjustment.

#### Reasons for Parental Separation

As shown in the table, the level of influence of parental separation on academic performance among senior high school students in terms of reasons for parental separation obtained a mean score of 2.41, which is described as low. Data implies that the respondents often manifest the reasons for parental separation. Respondents revealed that they experienced a lack of intimacy and insufficient communication often. They have deferring personalities and interests. Also, the parent's income level predicts separation, as the respondents agreed.

## Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

Cameron (2008) in her article points out that the negative factors in the separated or divorced parents' lives are anger over parental separation or divorce, stress over financial issues and ongoing conflict with the other parent, low levels of education, and a lack of emotional support from the social environment; may, at times, overflow onto their children and adolescents' life; whether or not they intend to do it, or are even aware that it is happening. This spillover effect from the separated or divorced parent to the child or adolescent can, in turn, cause anxiety and stress in the child or adolescent over conflicts that the affected offspring are not fully able to grasp. Growing up in this emotionally turbulent environment can have a negative emotional effect on the child or adolescent.

### Effects of Parental Separation

As shown in the table, the level of influence of parental separation on academic performance among senior high school students in terms of the effects of parental separation obtained a mean score of 2.78, which is described as moderate. Data implies that parental separation presents a real danger to the emotional personality and mental adjustment of young adolescents. Respondents moderately agree that parental separation does not endanger intellectual stimulation.

Holroyd and Sheppard (1997) support findings in the article, *The Effects of Parental Separation on Children*, positively, saying that separation or divorce can also strengthen a child's attachment to their primary caregiver(s). Attachment theory focuses on parents' ability to be nurturing and receptive to their child's developmental needs. Separation or divorce can change parents' availability, living situation, household income, and relationships. Younger children may be less resilient toward parental separation or divorce due to their relatively immature social and cognitive development and have greater dependence on parents. Research also tells us that children become vulnerable when they experience inconsistencies and lack of availability to their parents. This threatens their ability to develop secure bonds and regulate themselves amidst emotional and environmental upheavals. Thus, maintaining a secure bond occurs best as parents have the fortitude to foresee, manage, and approach relationship changes sensitively while using an open communication style.

### Significant Difference in the Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance when Grouped According to Sex

Table 4 shows the independent samples t-test result comparing parental separation's influence on academic performance when grouped according to Sex. It can be observed that the t value for the Relationship between Parental Separation and Academic Performance is 0.475; reasons for Parental Separation have a t value of 0.973, while Effects of Parental Separation on Adolescents have a value of 0.383. All of the mentioned categories have 17 degrees of freedom. Moreover, all categories have p-values greater than 0.05, so we failed to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates no significant differences in the Relationship between Parental Separation and Academic Performance, Reasons for Parental Separation, and Effects of Parental Separation on Adolescents when the respondents are grouped according to Sex. This suggests no significant difference between parental separation and academic performance among senior high school students. Thus, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 4.** Significant Difference in the Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance when grouped according to Sex

Variables Reviewed	t	df	p	Interpretation
Relationship of Parental Separation and Academic Performance	0.475	17	.641	No Significant Difference
Reasons for Parental Separation	0.973	17	.344	No Significant Difference
Effects of Parental Separation on Adolescents	0.895	17	.383	No Significant Difference

The outcome was aligned with the statement that Parental divorce is not linked to academic success in teenagers whose parents have inadequate educational backgrounds. Compared to comparably educated nondivorced parents, educated divorced mothers seem less likely to impart their educational advantages to their kids. This could be because of the "double burden" of work pressure and childcare responsibilities (Nilsen et al., 2017).

## Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

### Significant Difference in the Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance when Grouped According to Strand

Table 5 shows the result of the independent samples t-test comparing the influence of parental separation on academic performance when grouped according to Strand. It can be observed that the t-value for the Relationship between Parental Separation and Academic Performance is 1.230, and the Reasons for Parental Separation have a t-value of 0.278. In contrast, the Effects of Parental Separation on Adolescents have a value of 0.356. All of the mentioned categories have 17 degrees of freedom. Moreover, all categories have p-values greater than 0.05, so we failed to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates no significant differences in the Relationship between Parental Separation and Academic Performance, Reasons for Parental Separation, and Effects of Parental Separation on Adolescents when the respondents are grouped according to their Strand. This suggests no significant difference between parental separation and academic performance among senior high school students. Thus, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 5. Significant Difference in the Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance when grouped according to Strand**

Variables Reviewed	t	df	p	Decision	Interpretation
Relationship of Parental Separation and Academic Performance	1.230	17	.235	Fail to Reject H0	No Significant Difference
Reasons for Parental Separation	0.278	17	.784	Fail to Reject H0	No Significant Difference
Effects of Parental Separation on Adolescents	-0.356	17	.786	Fail to Reject H0	No Significant Difference

The result agrees with the findings that demonstrate heterogeneity in the warmth of direction from parents across mothers and fathers, with varying effects on the outcomes of teenagers. A detailed and accurate comprehension of parenting in research and practice can only be achieved by excluding one parent and considering both parents' combined influences (Chung et al., 2020).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Family is the basic unit of the community that helps foster the well-being of the students. Hence, a family is not intact when the parents are separated due to issues and problems that they face on their journey with each other, therefore impacting the academic performance of their children. Academic performance is the extent to which the learner has to achieve during their academic year; various factors, including personal circumstances, learning environment, and access to resources, can influence it. Furthermore, academic performance can be altered depending on the student's environment.

The result of our study shows that there is no significant relationship between parental separation and the academic performance of senior high school students in Digos City, indicating that parental separation has no direct impact on student's academic outcomes; these findings suggest that, while the parental separation introduces challenges, other factors may mitigate its impact, like family school group and peers, which help the student to buffer from the potential negative impact of parental separation. In conclusion, while family stability is essential for students' overall well-being, parental separation's influence on academic performance is moderate, according to our study. Future researchers may explore other variables that impact family dynamics and influence academic outcomes, and longitudinal studies may be considered to assess long-term effects.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Parental separation can have significant impacts on children, and addressing these effects requires a comprehensive approach. Parents should continue to support their children emotionally through open communication, counseling and therapy, and stability and consistency. Co-parenting strategies must also be practiced in cooperative c-parenting and shared parenting plans. Children should not be involved in conflicts or using them as messengers. Refrain from speaking negatively about the other parent in the child's presence. In a broken home, parents should always create a positive environment. By implementing these recommendations,



## Influence of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

parents can help mitigate the potential adverse effects of separation on their children and promote their overall well-being and development. Future researchers should look for other dimensions that will measure the impact of parental separation on adolescents by conducting qualitative research.

### REFERENCES

- 1) Abalos, J. (2017). Divorce and separation in the Philippines: Trends and correlates. *Demographic Research*, 36, 1515–1548. <https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2017.36.50>
- 2) Buehler, C. (2020). Family Processes and Children's and Adolescents' Well-Being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 145–174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12637>
- 3) Calmorin, L., & Calmorin, M. (2007). *Research Methods and thesis writing*. Manila: Rex Bookstore
- 4) Cameron, L. (2008). The Possible Negative Emotional and Psychological Consequences in Children of Divorce. *ESSAI*, 6(15).
- 5) Ceka, A., & Murati, R. (2016). The Role of Parents in the Education of Children. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(5).
- 6) Chung, G., Phillips, J., Jensen, T. M., & Lanier, P. (2020). Parental Involvement and Adolescents' Academic Achievement: Latent Profiles of Mother and Father Warmth as a Moderating Influence. *Family Process*, 59(2), 772–788. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12450>
- 7) Creswell, J. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- 8) Diquito, T. J. A., Acuña, A. R., Garcia, J. R., & Laganson, J. B. C. (2024). Analysis of Students' Climate Change Learning Using the Affective Domain of Learning. *Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental*, 18(6), e05908. <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n6-075>
- 9) Ejaz, H. (2023). The Role of Parents in Children's Education. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/role-parents-childrens-education-ejaz-hussain>
- 10) Falculan, R. M., Paula, P. A., Ocdamia, J. J. J., & Samiley, S. G. G. (2019). Lived Experiences of Young Adults From Broken Families on Marital Relationships. *Abstract Proceedings International Scholars Conference*, 7(1), 512–529. <https://doi.org/10.35974/isc.v7i1.1129>
- 11) Guntrip, H. (2018). *Personality Structure and Human Interaction: The Developing Synthesis of Psychodynamic Theory*. Routledge.
- 12) Gupta, S., & Shabbir, J. (2008). On improvement in estimating the population mean in simple random sampling. *Journal of Applied Statistics*, 35(5), 559–566. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02664760701835839>
- 13) Holroyd, R., & Sheppard, A. (1997). Parental separation: effects on children; implications for services. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 23(5), 369–378. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.1997.tb00904.x>
- 14) Kalmijn, M. (2023). The association between parental separation at the school level and student outcomes in four European Countries. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 86, 100813. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2023.100813>
- 15) Karhina, K., Bøe, T., Hysing, M., Askeland, K. G., & Nilsen, S. A. (2023). Parental separation and school dropout in adolescence. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 140349482311646. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14034948231164692>
- 16) Nilsen, W., Skipstein, A., Østby, K. A., & Mykletun, A. (2017). Examination of the double burden hypothesis—a systematic review of work–family conflict and sickness absence. *European Journal of Public Health*, 27(3), 465–471. <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckx054>
- 17) Onifade, D. (2017). Effect of Parental Separation on Academic Performance of Adolescent students in Ijemo Titun High School, Ibara, Abeokuta.
- 18) Parker, C., Scott, S., & Geddes, A. (2019). *Snowball Sampling*. SAGE Research Methods.
- 19) Pinantoan, A. (2013). The effect of Parental Involvement on Academic Achievement. <https://www.teachthought.com/learning/the-effect-of-parental-involvement-on-academic-achievement/>
- 20) Sapungan, G., & Sapungan, R. (2014). Parental Involvement in Child's Education: Importance, Barriers and Beliefs. *Asian Journal of Management Sciences & Education*, 3(2).
- 21) Teater, B. (2015). Social Work Theory. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 813–820). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.28092-6>